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GREATER BOSTON COALITION SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE

*The Greater Boston Quality Coalition Joins
the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's
Unprecedented 'Aligning Forces for Quality' Initiative*

Boston – The Greater Boston Quality Coalition (GBQC) announced today that it has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q), an unprecedented effort to lift the quality of health care provided in select communities nationwide. The largest health care philanthropy in the U.S., RWJF is investing up to \$300 million in long-term commitments to improve the quality and equality of health care in America. Greater Boston joins 16 other select regions that are coordinating efforts to improve the quality of health care at hospitals and in doctors' offices, reduce racial and ethnic disparities in care, and provide models for implementing national reform.

“Across America, there are serious gaps between the health care that people should receive and the care they actually receive,” said Anne Weiss, who directs this work for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Despite having the most expensive health care system in the world, patients are subject to too many mistakes, too much miscommunication and too much inequity. As a result, too many Americans aren't receiving the care they need and deserve. This unprecedented commitment of resources, expertise and training will turn proven practices for improving quality into real results in Greater Boston.”

The work will be grounded on the core principle that in order to transform the health care system, everyone who gives care, gets care and pays for care must work together. The Greater Boston Quality Coalition's AF4Q initiative will focus on four key areas:

- **Performance measurement and public reporting:** using common standards to measure the quality of care that doctors and hospitals deliver to patients and making that information available to the public.
- **Consumer engagement:** encouraging patients to be active managers of their health care, and make informed choices about their doctors and hospitals.
- **Quality improvement:** implementing techniques and protocols that doctors, nurses and staff in hospitals and clinics can follow to raise the level of care they deliver to patients.
- **Health Equity:** reducing disparities in care for patients of different races and ethnicities.

Specifically, the Coalition's AF4Q initiative will initially center its work on reducing preventable emergency department visits and associated admissions. This indicator of primary care access, primary care effectiveness, appropriate treatment in community settings, and system integration has been overwhelmingly supported by GBQC stakeholders. Improving access to primary care and the patient-centeredness of ambulatory chronic care provide compelling starting points from which to build models of quality improvement for the Greater Boston community.

“The most effective way to implement lasting change is to join forces so that all parties are working toward a common goal. The RWJF Aligning Forces for Quality initiative presents an important opportunity and catalyst to align the many exciting health reform and quality improvement efforts in the Greater Boston area to make the changes needed to meet our vision of ensuring the delivery of appropriate care to all residents of Greater Boston,” said Barbra Rabson, GBQC co-chair and executive director for Massachusetts Health Quality Partners.

Greater Boston’s selection in AF4Q will bring financial support, technical assistance and training to GBQC from national experts, coordinated by the Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University, the national program office of AF4Q.

“Doctors, nurses and hospitals – everyone in health care – want to deliver high-quality care,” said GBQC co-chair Stuart Altman, Sol C. Chaikin Professor of National Health Policy at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy, and chair of the Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative Executive Committee. “The fragmented nature of health care often prevents key players from working together. As a result, too many Americans aren’t receiving the best care at the right time. We want to help change that, and because of AF4Q this region is ripe for putting ideas into action.”

In addition to Greater Boston, RWJF is investing in 16 other states and communities, including: Albuquerque, Central Indiana, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Humboldt County (Calif.), Kansas City (Mo.), Maine, Memphis, Minnesota, Puget Sound (Wash.), South Central Pennsylvania, West Michigan, Western New York, Willamette Valley (Ore.) and Wisconsin.

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

The Greater Boston Quality Coalition (GBQC) is a multi-stakeholder collaborative representing the broad range of interests coming together to reduce disparities in care and improve the quality of care for residents of Greater Boston. The Aligning Forces for Quality initiative of GBQC is led by Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and the Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI) and is supported by more than 35 Boston-area organizations. MHQP is a non-profit, broad-based coalition established in 1995 that measures and reports reliable physician performance information to help physicians improve the quality of care they provide their patients and help consumers take an active role in making informed decisions about their health care. EMHI is a collaborative of hospitals, health plans, provider groups, and universities with the shared vision for creating a high performance health care system for the region. GBQC’s mission is to create substantive change and improvement in health care in Greater Boston.

Greater Boston Quality Coalition’s AF4Q Leadership Team Organizations

Associated Industries of Massachusetts
Atrius Health/Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Boston Medical Center
Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan
Boston Public Health Commission
Caritas Christi Healthcare
Cambridge Health Alliance
Children’s Hospital Boston Integrated Care Organization
Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital
Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI)
Employers Action Coalition on Healthcare (EACH)
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
Harvard Medical School
Health Care for All
Lahey Clinic

Massachusetts Business Roundtable
Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors
Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Massachusetts General Hospital
Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP)
Mount Auburn Cambridge IPA
Neighborhood Health Plan
New England Healthcare Institute
Partners Community Healthcare, Inc.
Partnership for Healthcare Excellence
Roxbury Comprehensive Health Center
The Dimock Center
Tufts Health Plan
Tufts Medical Center
Winchester Healthcare Management, Inc.