

An initiative of the Greater Boston Quality Coalition and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

## **GREATER BOSTON AF4Q UPDATE: COMING TO A CLOSE**

### **A NOTE FROM LESLIE KIRLE, GB AF4Q DIRECTOR**

This is a bittersweet moment in the Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality journey as this will be the last update to our AF4Q community about the exciting work that was implemented under this initiative. The AF4Q experience has been a wonderful opportunity to test new ground with consumer and community engagement, strengthen our measurement and reporting, reduce variations in resource use, and contribute to building a foundation for health equity measurement. As the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant has ended we would like to take this opportunity to look back on some of the important milestones of the past several years, take a moment to celebrate our successes and thank our partners for their commitment, passion, and engagement in this effort.

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR HEALTH**

AF4Q was instrumental in our efforts to engage a broad group of stakeholders in building community capacity for health and bringing the voice of the patient and community front and center to the work that we do. When we updated you last October, the Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality's Healthier Roxbury was about to launch Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes, a month-long effort to raise awareness about the prevention and management of Type-2 Diabetes in Roxbury, a community with high rates of diabetes hospitalizations. For more information, read this [RWJF article](#) on GB AF4Q featuring Healthier Roxbury. The idea for this series of community-wide events came from "listening and learning" sessions with more than 120 Roxbury residents living with diabetes. For more information, read this summary of the [Listening and Learning Sessions](#).

**ROXBURY RISING AGAINST  
DIABETES BROUGHT OVER 30  
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COMMUNITY RESIDENTS.**

The Healthier Roxbury Coalition, co-chaired by Dr. Holly Oh, Chief Medical Officer at the Dimock Health Center and Dr. Paul Mendis, Chief Medical Officer at Neighborhood Health Plan, brought over 30 organizations together for this month long series of events with over 800 community residents participating in health screenings, nutrition workshops, and fitness classes. The story of Healthier Roxbury captures the impact of building new relationships and connecting the dots among providers, community organizations, residents, and public health agencies. New relationships were formed between organizations that prior to Healthier Roxbury had never worked together and are now collaborating on joint programming and other related initiatives within the community.

Healthier Roxbury also produced a [Resource Guide](#) of services in the community for individuals with diabetes. This hard copy guide was distributed to all Healthier Roxbury Coalition members and organizations that contributed to its development. Healthier Roxbury also worked with Children's Hospital's HelpSteps to integrate the resource guide content into the HelpSteps online interactive tool. HelpSteps online tool helps connect individuals and providers with

community resources, especially in Boston. With support from Greater Boston AF4Q, HelpSteps was able to add resources specific to diabetes that addressed factors other than clinical care, such as self-management, exercise classes and nutrition programs. Visit [www.HelpSteps.com](http://www.HelpSteps.com) to access HelpSteps online.

### **TRANSITIONS TO SUSTAIN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

With the AF4Q grant coming to an end, we have put together a fundraising toolkit to support coalition and/or leadership team members interested in continuing to convene the coalition and expanding the work that was started with Healthier Roxbury. In addition, the Roxbury YMCA will be leading the effort to hold a one-day Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes event. This event will build on the successful Seafood Throw Down that was held as part of the Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes month-long series of community-wide activities

As noted in our last communication, the Healthier Roxbury asthma work has been transitioned to the Boston Public Health Commission's Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund Asthma Activities. The PWTF Asthma Initiative works to advance goals around comprehensive case management for high risk children with asthma in Roxbury and North Dorchester. Healthier Roxbury played a key role in helping to set the foundation for the asthma work under the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund. The Boston Area Nurses Collaborative was reestablished and is now an ongoing support for a large number of nurses and asthma champions. An annual health fair was started at the high school in Roxbury, the vision of reducing missed school days that began with Healthier Roxbury is now part of the vision for the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund work, and GB AF4Q continued to support data collection on missed school days and asthma education for school nurses.

### **IDENTIFYING AND HELPING SUPERUTILIZERS**

Another example of our efforts to connect provider and patient goals with resources that are available in the community is the expansion of the Healthy Lives (Superutilizer) Initiative into the community of Roxbury.

Healthy Lives, supported with funding from Aligning Forces for Quality, was created by the Brookline Community Mental Health Center to serve patients with serious co-occurring medical and behavioral health issues. Working with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Bowdoin Street Health Center, this innovative program has seen improvements in health outcomes and reductions in emergency department visits and inpatient hospital admissions for patients that are high-utilizers of the health care system.

In one instance, the Healthy Lives Team was able to engage a developmentally disabled adult with uncontrolled diabetes and a history of alcohol abuse with no support in the home, by meeting the client in the home. They partnered with a visiting nurse service that was able to meet the client's needs and administered medications at the client's home and workplace. Through the team's relationship with the patient, all providers were able to ascertain a more comprehensive understanding of the patient and his needs. The team was able to transport the patient to medical appointments and arrange for follow-up care. As of today, the patient is up-to-date on all preventive care with an A1c of 7.0 percent (down from 13.7 percent). The team was also able to work through a lapse of insurance coverage without a disruption of care and is now working to address the issues that led to this lapse in coverage.

**THE HEALTHY LIVES PROGRAM  
ENGAGED COMMUNITY  
SERVICES AND BRIDGED CARE  
WITH PROVIDERS FOR PEOPLE  
WITH COMPLEX PHYSICAL AND  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS.  
THIS IMPROVED THE QUALITY  
OF CARE AND HEALTH OF  
PATIENTS AND LOWERED  
HOSPITAL READMISSION RATES.**

In addition to the individual patient stories that illustrate the positive impact of this innovative care model, the team is testing a measurement tool to track integration effectiveness in complex patient populations. These are just some of the results that are coming out of this exciting initiative, and in the months ahead, as the Healthy Lives team continues to expand the program and test new care integration measures, we anticipate seeing even more positive results.

## ENGAGING THE PATIENT VOICE IN HEALTHCARE

### CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN GOVERNANCE

MHQP's Consumer Health Council (CHC) is made up of patients, family caregivers, and other members of the public who have been active in and have advocated for patient-centered care and for improvement in health care quality and affordability. CHC members have been bringing the patient and consumer perspective to Greater Boston AF4Q and MHQP's initiatives since its inception in 2011,

- Through the design and testing of [healthcarecompassma.org](http://healthcarecompassma.org), Massachusetts guide to quality care;
- By participating on multi-stakeholder workgroups to develop measurement benchmarks for physician and public reporting on healthcare quality;
- By working on the editorial team to review MHQP's Consumer Reports publication to make sure the language was appropriately targeted to consumers;
- Through the development and implementation of consumer messaging frameworks and campaigns including Choosing Wisely Massachusetts;
- By being active participants of the GB AF4Q Leadership Team and Healthier Roxbury Coalition as well as MHQP's governance and working groups;
- By representing healthcare consumers from Greater Boston and Massachusetts as a whole at national meetings, such as the AF4Q grantee meetings; and
- By sharing the work of MHQP with their individual networks.

### CAPTURING THE PATIENT VOICE IN HEALTHCARE: MA STATEWIDE PATIENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

MHQP's track record for measuring and reporting statewide on patients' care experiences with their doctors was a cornerstone of our GB AF4Q work in measurement and reporting and consumer engagement. "To make our healthcare system in Massachusetts and across the nation truly patient-centered, we must continue to advance efforts to capture and report how patients experience their care", said Barbra Rabson, GB AF4Q Leadership Team Chair and CEO and President of MHQP.

For nearly a decade, MHQP supported efforts to provide patient-centered care by fielding the statewide Patient Experience Survey (PES) with a turnkey approach that focuses on actionable reporting. In 2014, MHQP moved to a multi-stakeholder funding model for the statewide survey, which engaged health plans, provider organizations and the state in this effort. The results have proven valuable for providers' and health plans' quality improvement, and for the state's efforts to track performance across the Commonwealth.

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, MHQP sponsored a national meeting where experts and thought leaders in the field of patient experience reporting came together to identify specific actions that would "Advance the Ambulatory Patient Experience Measurement and Reporting Agenda" nationwide. MHQP also developed a [white paper](#) that stimulated discussion about the future of capturing and reporting comparable data for ambulatory care.

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**--BARBRA RABSON, CEO & PRESIDENT MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH QUALITY PARTNERS**

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## GUIDING PATIENT & FAMILIES TOWARD QUALITY CARE



In June 2014, MHQP, with support from the Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality initiative, launched its new consumer-friendly website [healthcarecompassma.org](http://healthcarecompassma.org), designed in partnership with MHQP's Consumer Health Council.

The website helps consumers use healthcare quality data to make informed decisions about where to get their primary care and learn more about how to work with their doctor to improve the quality of care they receive. Consumers can use the website's search functions to compare primary care doctors' offices across quality measures, including Patient Experience and Clinical Quality ratings.

[Healthcarecompassma.org](http://Healthcarecompassma.org) puts data into context for consumers, setting it apart from other healthcare ratings websites. It does this with a comparison tool that allows users to view descriptions of each rating to explain what they mean, why they matter, and how patients can apply this information. A promotional email that Consumer Reports sent to Massachusetts subscribers yielded over 10,000 hits to the site within its first 48 hours.

This site embodies MHQP's commitment to collaboration. MHQP's Physician Council supported this new approach to public reporting, citing the importance of the public having access to MHQP's reliable data. MHQP's Health Plan Council member organizations shared data and resources to support ratings development, and MHQP's Consumer Health Council committed valuable time and insight into ensuring the site would be consumer-friendly and useful.

## EXPLORING NEW MEASUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN QUALITY AND RESOURCE USE

Early on in our GB AF4Q grant, MHQP and statewide provider organizations convened with Blue Cross Blue Shield MA in a pilot Practice Pattern Variation Analysis (PPVA) program to identify and discuss variation related to how physicians treat patients for similar conditions. Studies show that unexplained variation in care can lead to higher resource use and costs and lower quality associated with unnecessary or inappropriate care. MHQP took the lessons learned from the BCBSMA pilot and has since developed and implemented the first statewide, collaborative PPVA initiative in Massachusetts.

In 2012 MHQP convened a broad stakeholder task force to oversee the implementation of a multi-payer PPVA project. By 2014, MHQP generated the first cycle of its multi-payer analysis, using three years of statewide data from the Massachusetts All Payer Claims Database. Through a respectful and accountable process that engages and deepens physicians' and others' understanding of practice variation, the PPVA program provides analytic tools and statewide opportunities for the clinical community to bring about data-focused, physician-led quality improvement.

One unique element of MHQP's program is our multi-specialty stakeholder group of physicians and leaders from member health plans and provider organizations. This multi-specialty stakeholder group selected two conditions to focus initial measurement efforts: surgery for low back pain and ischemic heart disease catheterization.

As GB AF4Q finishes, MHQP will continue to explore avenues for building on the PPVA to help guide improvements in quality and utilization in healthcare.

## **HEALTH EQUITY MEASURE SET**

With funding from AF4Q, the Boston Public Health Commission has continued to make progress on its initiative to implement a Boston Health Equity Measure Set. Working with hospitals and the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers agreement was reached on a new set of measures that are aligned with existing reporting requirements, such as the Meaningful Use Stage 2 measures, a contractor for collecting the data was selected, and an implementation plan was put into place. The expectation is that all institutions will be submitting the required data by July, 2016.

## **WHAT'S NEXT FOR GREATER BOSTON AF4Q**

As we finish out our time with Aligning Forces for Quality and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant, we are pleased to note that many of the activities that began under this grant will find a home in existing programs.

- MHQP will continue its work on consumer engagement, measurement & reporting, and practice pattern variation analysis.
- The Boston Public Health Commission will continue its work on Health Equity and as a result of this grant will be in a much better position to fully implement a city-wide health equity dashboard.
- The school-based asthma improvement efforts that began in Healthier Roxbury will continue under the umbrella of the Boston Public Health Commission's Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund
- The Roxbury YMCA will take the lead on a one-day Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes event
- Brookline Community Mental Health Center together with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Bowdoin Street Health Center will continue its work with superutilizers.