



THE HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT FOUNDATION  
*Building Partnerships For Better Health Care*



## **PARTNERSHIP FOR PATIENT CARE**

### **2009-2011 High-Reliability Initiative**

Development of a strong culture of safety within the Southeastern Pennsylvania region is one of the high priority goals of the Partnership for Patient Care (PPC). As the next major PPC initiative, an agreement is now in place with **Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI)**, a nationally prominent consulting firm based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to work with area hospitals in achieving high-reliability performance. HPI's methods integrate traditional cultural improvement concepts of teamwork, communication and safety leadership with new ideas from human factor science. High-reliability industries such as nuclear power and aviation have recognized that optimal results require the integration of process design and behavior accountability. While healthcare historically has focused on traditional process improvement as a means to better outcomes, behavior accountability focuses on preventing initial human errors that can lead to events of harm or untoward outcomes. The approach is data-driven, based on each organization's unique norms and characteristics, and has achieved demonstrated results in reducing the rate of serious safety events (and then sustaining that improvement) at multiple health systems across the country.

#### **Program Goals**

The Health Care Improvement Foundation, Independence Blue Cross, and HPI are excited about the opportunity to achieve safety transformation throughout the hospital community in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Over the next three years, the goals of this initiative are:

- To implement the integrated approach offered by HPI to improve the culture of safety in the region – as broadly as possible across hospitals and health systems;
- To incentivize hospitals/systems to participate through PPC core funding for three years, plus generate additional support through matching funds;
- To accelerate the adoption of safety culture practices through leveraging resources of consultants, hospitals, HCIF and funders.

#### **Program Deliverables**

The Partnership for Patient Care sponsored the kick-off of this initiative on February 5, 2009, with a major educational conference that introduced the region's hospitals to the concepts of high reliability. Additional educational webinars and meetings will be offered region-wide to provide foundational principles and skill-building. The major deliverable, however, will be the individualized engagement of HPI consultants at each hospital or health system. The HPI approach with individual clients typically includes two phases, performed on an entirely confidential basis:

- Diagnostic Assessment phase, to review human performance issues at each participating facility and recommend safety culture interventions based on common causes of past events (typically 3-6 months);
- Implementation phase, to focus on education and training for specific interventions and build accountability systems to sustain improvement over time (typically 2-3 years).

For each participating organization, PPC funds will support 50% of the fees to conduct the Diagnostic Assessment. Fees are based on system size. Further customization is possible based on the needs of the organization – for example, multi-campus organizations may engage in the assessment at all sites, or at single sites, and organizations with non-acute operations may wish to include them in the assessment process.

Interested organizations will be scheduled over three-month intervals throughout 2009, 2010, and 2011. In this way, every Southeastern Pennsylvania organization can be served within the three-year PPC window.

Following the assessment, participants will be encouraged (but not required) to continue to work with HPI on implementation of safety culture recommendations. Typically, implementation is scheduled over 18–24 months. Those engagements shall be contracted directly between the organization and HPI, given the highly variable nature of each organization's project. Organizations may also choose to implement the recommendations with other external partners or internal resources.

### **Participation Requirements**

The success of the Partnership for Patient Care has always relied on organizations' willingness to collaborate, share success stories and challenges, and leverage the knowledge base of 40+ organizations working together in a trusted environment. Although much of the proposed safety culture work will be individualized to each hospital, the intent is to identify common themes and experiences to raise the bar for all. Those organizations scheduled for assessments in 2009 will be asked to share results and information with the rest of the region, and all hospitals participating in the Diagnostic Assessment are explicitly asked to share certain metrics with HCIF, which will be aggregated and de-identified for measuring progress for the region as a whole.

### **How to Get Started**

HCIF will facilitate conference calls or in-person meetings with senior consultants at HPI to describe the Diagnostic Assessment process in more detail and answer your questions. Prior to assigning a start date, organizations must complete an enrollment contract package which includes the consulting agreement as well as appropriate confidentiality agreements between HPI and HCIF. To begin the process, please contact Kate Flynn at HCIF at [kflynn@hcfonline.org](mailto:kflynn@hcfonline.org) or at (215) 575-3757.