

The Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality alliance recently announced it has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in *Aligning Forces for Quality*, an effort to lift the quality of health care in select communities nationwide.



Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, Executive Director of the [Institute for Community Health](#), (pictured left to right) served on the planning team for this initiative and CHA will be part of it going forward.

Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) joins Greater Boston and 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.

Priscilla Dasse, RN, MPH, CHA's Senior Vice President of Performance Improvement, and

More on this effort below:

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.

Greater Boston Quality Coalition’s AF4Q Leadership Team Organizations

Associated Industries of Massachusetts	Lahey Clinic
Atrius Health/Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates	Massachusetts Business Roundtable
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Boston Medical Center	Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan	Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP)
Boston Public Health Commission	Mount Auburn Cambridge IPA
Caritas Christi Healthcare	Neighborhood Health Plan
Cambridge Health Alliance	New England Healthcare Institute
Children’s Hospital Boston Integrated Care Organization	Partners Community Healthcare, Inc.
Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital	Partnership for Healthcare Excellence
Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI)	Roxbury Comprehensive Health Center
Employers Action Coalition on Healthcare (EACH)	The Dimock Center
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care	Tufts Health Plan
Harvard Medical School	Tufts Medical Center
Health Care for All	Winchester Healthcare Management, Inc.