



**Aligning
Forces for
Quality**

A Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Program



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Contact:

Christine Larson, Center for Health Improvement
(916) 930-9200

Ten Communities Added to *Aligning Forces for Quality*

The Center for Health Improvement Serves as National Program Office for Three-Year Program Seeking to Improve the Quality of Health Care for the Chronically Ill

February 1, 2007 (Sacramento, Calif.) – *Aligning Forces for Quality: The Regional Market Project*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), today awarded grants to ten communities as part of an effort to help improve the quality of health care provided to people with chronic illnesses. These ten communities will join four pilot communities, announced in 2006, in the three-year effort.

The Center for Health Improvement (CHI), a Sacramento-based nonprofit health policy center, runs the *Aligning Forces for Quality* national program office. CHI worked with the foundation on the development of the program and will provide a range of assistance to the 14 selected communities to help them improve the quality of care for chronic illnesses in their regions.

Aligning Forces for Quality is a part of the Foundation's work to ensure that all Americans, especially those with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, depression and heart disease, receive high-quality health care. Americans get only half of the care recommended for their chronic conditions, according to studies the Foundation has commissioned.

"We are proud to be involved with this groundbreaking program, which seeks to help doctors, nurses and other health providers to work together to deliver better care, and educate patients and consumers to make better, more informed choices," said Pat Powers, MPPA, president and CEO of the Center for Health Improvement, who directs *Aligning Forces for Quality*. "Market-based, regional collaboratives can help us achieve this; they represent a logical next step in the national drive to improve quality."

The ten newly selected communities are Cincinnati, Cleveland, Grand Rapids, Humboldt (Calif.), Kansas City, Madison, Maine, Portland (Ore.) Western New York, and York (Pa.). They were chosen from a broad pool of well-qualified applicants and join four pilot communities announced in 2006 – Detroit, Memphis, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Seattle – in the three-year, \$14-million program.

Aligning Forces for Quality is designed to help communities do three things to advance the quality of chronic care provided in doctors' offices, clinics and other outpatient settings: (1) help health care providers improve their own ability to deliver quality care; (2) help providers measure and publicly report their performance; and (3) help patients and consumers understand their role in demanding high-quality care.

(more)

“No one person, group or profession can improve care for chronic illness without the support of others,” said Michael W. Painter, J.D., M.D., senior program officer at RWJF. “This program seeks to align the efforts of community leaders, consumers, doctors, nurses, employers and insurers in a collaborative effort. These communities can teach us how to bring the large body of quality improvement knowledge to bear where care is delivered—in communities.”

For years, RWJF has supported a variety of projects and programs to develop strategies and tools to improve health care quality. These efforts include funding for the development of quality measures, early pay-for-performance experiments, a new model for providing of chronic care overall, and efforts targeted at specific diseases such as asthma, diabetes and depression.

RWJF conceived of *Aligning Forces for Quality* as an effort to help communities use multiple market forces to drive and sustain quality. The goal is to help these communities retool their health care markets so that they can function as markets should. Successful *Aligning Forces* communities will have: 1) civic, business and health care leadership that is committed to quality care; 2) doctors, nurses and other providers who are committed to improving and who have the resources and capability to improve; 3) purchasers who are willing to reward high quality care; and 4) patients and consumers who receive accurate understandable information about the performance of providers and are motivated to act on that information when making health care decisions.

The communities were selected with the guidance of national experts and after intensive site visits that confirmed the communities had taken significant initial steps toward the program’s goals and had the capacity for further improvement. The communities will each receive grants of up to \$600,000 to use over three years for planning, convening, coordination and infrastructure development. In addition to their grant awards, communities can also receive technical assistance.

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 30 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 Center for Health Improvement is a national, independent, nonprofit health policy center dedicated to improving population health and encouraging healthy behaviors. CHI uses evidence-based research as the basis for policy innovation and implementation. Since 1995, CHI has partnered with all levels of government, advocacy and community organizations, philanthropic foundations, and educators. For more information, visit www.forces4quality.org.

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