

Accelerating Improvement in Quality and Safety Across a Hospital System: A How-To Guide

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Background

System expansion is rapidly occurring across the healthcare industry. Hospital Mergers + Affiliations are on the rise with over 100 hospitals announcing new mergers or acquisitions in 2016 and over 3,198 hospitals now a part of health systems. In the first quarter of 2017 alone, there were over 235 health services deals, representing \$7.9 billion of total value. As the frequency of acquisitions increase, so do concerns about decreased competition negatively impacting quality, and consolidations generating higher prices with little evidence to support consolidation resulting in improvement. We hypothesized that through a coordinated effort, quality could be improved across all sites as a result of increased collaboration and partnership.

A Step-by-Step Approach

Standardization
Networking infrastructure
Clear expectations on central local
Technology Shared training MD recruitment
Shared tools
Shared vision and goals
Scheduled representative meetings

A. Build out a new management structure for mergers & acquisitions including quality and safety throughout the due diligence and acquisition process.

- Regular check-in meetings between network development and Q+S
- Establish a clear role for Q+S in the due diligence process: document review, onsite visits and interviews
- Embed Q+S concerns in contracts and planning

B. Engage AMC Stakeholders to create a sense of shared commitment and accountability to the new larger environment/system.

- Obtain Board and CEO commitment
- Establish a steering committee with key leaders from all departments to identify their concerns and priorities
- Maintain a focus on the importance of always staying cognizant of the work that has to continue to happen at the local level and the effort/resources required to do this

C. Formalize a structure to support quality and safety across the system.

- Establish a counsel with quality leadership represented from each site
- Set a clear premise: institutions vary in the scope of services they provide and populations served, however *each* is committed to providing safe and high quality care. Through our affiliations, we can improve the quality and safety for all patients.

Project Aims

To harmonize quality and safety across a hospital system with one large academic medical center and four community hospitals.



MGH Affiliate Hospitals from Left to Right: Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH), Wentworth Douglass Hospital (WDH), Nantucket Cottage Hospital (NCH), Cooley Dickinson Hospital (CDH)

Programs

1 Excellence Every Day Tracers

On-site visits that act as mock joint commission surveys to analyze potential gaps in quality and safety and aid affiliate institutions with regulatory readiness.

Completed: 3

2 Peer Review

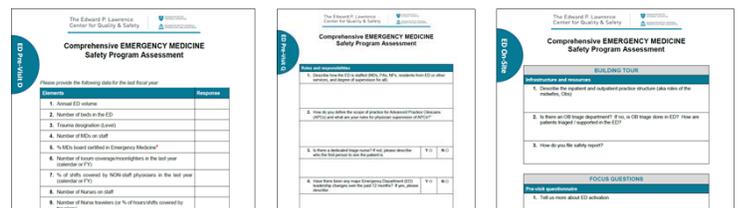
Clinical experts at MGH complete case reviews for affiliate hospitals and contribute their findings to Patient Care Assessment Committee meetings across the affiliates.

Completed: Since the program has started MGH clinical experts have completed 35 external case reviews including the first nurse peer review.

3 High Risk Department Assessments

Focused assessments in high risk clinical areas with an eye to identifying areas for improvement and best practices to spread across the affiliated hospitals. Departments include Surgery, Emergency Medicine, and Obstetrics.

Completed: 6



High Risk Department Assessment Toolkit Examples

Conclusion / Implications

MGH has developed a variety of programs designed for collaboration and quality improvement. EED Tracers, High Risk Department Assessments, and Peer Review each enhances high quality patient care across hospitals, while also strengthening relationships between institutions. Moreover, MGH plans to encourage spoke-to-spoke collaboration between its affiliates leading to unity and further harmonizing quality and safety across the hospital system.