



## **Aligning Forces for Quality: Community Snapshots**

### **Cincinnati, Ohio**

*Cincinnati loves . . . Bengals, chili and good health!*

*Leadership Team:* Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati, *Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality*

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The Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati leads *Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality* (*Cincinnati AF4Q*). Established in 1992, the Collaborative is a diverse coalition of health care stakeholders representing the hospital, physician, employer, insurer, government, education and consumer sectors. Its mission is to stimulate significant and measurable improvement in the health status of the people in Greater Cincinnati through collaborative leadership.

*Cincinnati AF4Q* seeks to enhance local infrastructure and to align key drivers of overall health care improvement. The initiative has identified diabetes as its initial condition of focus, to be followed by additional conditions. Programmatic aims include aligning diabetes care messaging among employers, health plans, providers and community-based organizations; initiating quality improvement among primary care providers; and initiating region-wide public reporting of selected primary care practices' quality-related outcomes.

### **Cleveland, Ohio**

*Cleveland loves . . . rock 'n roll, LeBron and quality care!*

*Leadership Team:* Better Health Greater Cleveland

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The Better Health *Greater Cleveland* initiative consists of more than 20 organizations representing providers, patients, payers, plans and state and local governments. The collaborative was founded by the Center for Community Solutions, Health Action Council Ohio and The MetroHealth System and is led by physician leaders from large organizations and most of the region's safety-net practices.

Better Health *Greater Cleveland* is dedicated to promoting high-quality and equitable care for people with chronic medical conditions; helping people be more active and confident in their care; and bringing patients and doctors together to make Greater Cleveland healthier.

Physician practices across the region volunteered to report measures of outcomes and care to produce Cleveland's first Community Health Checkup. The report will be based on data from medical records of outpatient care with attention to socioeconomic group and whether the care was paid for through a government or commercial health plan or was provided to a patient without insurance.

## **Detroit, Michigan**

*Detroit loves . . . cars, the Red Wings and healthy living!*

*Leadership Team:* Greater Detroit Area Health Council

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The *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Detroit is led by the Greater Detroit Area Health Council (GDAHC), a multi-stakeholder regional health coalition that has served the residents of seven counties in southeastern Michigan for 64 years. Members of this nonprofit community organization represent the region's major purchasers (corporations and labor organizations), health systems and health plans, insurers, government, universities, physician groups, consumers and community opinion leaders, as well as other health care organizations and associations. As the region's foremost health care coalition, GDAHC provides a forum for multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships to develop, facilitate and execute promising solutions aimed at improving cost, quality and access to health care.

As one of the *AF4Q* pilot sites, GDAHC implemented *Save Live Save Dollars*, a multi-year initiative of coordinated immediate and long-term actions to drive quality improvement (save lives) and derive cost reductions (save dollars). As GDAHC enters the second phase of *AF4Q*, its mission is to continue to lead improvements in the quality, cost-effectiveness and accessibility of health care.

## **Humboldt County, California**

*Humboldt County loves . . . redwoods, the Lost Coast and good health!*

*Leadership Team:* Community Health Alliance of Humboldt-Del Norte

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The *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Humboldt County is led by the Community Health Alliances of Humboldt-Del Norte (CHA). The mission of CHA is to build a healthy community by managing and promoting a high-quality, cost-effective health care system through partnerships and collaborations. A broad-based local 501(c)(3) organization established in 2000, CHA is a network of health care stakeholders, including providers, consumers, employers and community leaders.

The Humboldt County-*AF4Q* initiative is a collaborative project of many local organizations and individuals interested in improving the quality of health care. The effort fosters a high-quality, integrated, patient-centered system of care that is accessible to all North Coast residents. The project has three aims—provider measurement and public reporting, patient involvement, and medical care improvement activities—to improve the medical care and self-care of patients, particularly those with diabetes.

## **Kansas City, Missouri**

*Kansas City loves . . . barbecue, fountains and feeling good!*

*Leadership Team:* Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium

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The Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium (KCQIC) leads the Greater Kansas City area's *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative. Established in 2000 by the UAW-Ford Community Health Care Initiative and local health care stakeholders, KCQIC brings together an unprecedented commitment of resources and expertise among physicians, health plans, medical societies, medical schools, quality improvement organizations and community organizations. The KCQIC team creates a forum for health practitioners to exchange ideas about proven practices for improving patient outcomes in the community. KCQIC promotes quality health care through collaboration and strategic leadership, education and training, and dissemination of information and tools.

The *AF4Q* goals of KCQIC are to equip patients to make informed health care choices, engage physicians in public reporting and other processes to improve the quality of health care for patients, and increase the role that family and community resources play in helping people with their health care selections and services.

## **Maine**

*Maine loves . . . lobster, the outdoors and quality care!*

*Leadership Team:* Quality Counts

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The *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Maine is led by Quality Counts (QC). Established in 2004 by a network of 35 organizations, QC is a multi-stakeholder statewide health care coalition that is committed to working across organizations and communities to improve health care systems and outcomes for the people of Maine. Its mission is to coordinate existing, but disparate, efforts across the state that promote local, coordinated systems of care and the resources that support them.

QC forges collaborative relationships between providers, employers, payers and policy-makers in order to facilitate the successful adoption and implementation of care improvement strategies. Its *AF4Q* work places a special focus on improving the key relationship between primary care providers and patients/families, supported by the communities in which they live and work. The initiative aims to increase awareness of quality, increase the use and understanding of publicly available quality information, and support the roles of both consumers and providers in achieving patient-centered care.

## **Memphis, Tennessee**

*Memphis loves . . . great music, barbeque and healthy lifestyles!*

*Leadership Team:* Healthy Memphis Common Table

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The Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT) leads the city's *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative. The organization was established in 2003 as a result of a community-wide forum calling for the creation of an organization to coordinate health improvement activities throughout Memphis. Its mission is to support and encourage people to work together to improve the health of everyone in Memphis. Nearly 800 individuals from more than 150 organizations have joined HMCT, representing every stakeholder in the community.

HMCT identifies and implements results-driven, quality improvement solutions that are informed by the expertise of community partners, including schools, faith-based organizations, local governments, social agencies, hospitals, health plans, physicians, employers and corporations. Its AF4Q initiative develops a sustainable infrastructure for physician quality improvement activities, placing an emphasis on performance measurement and public reporting in its programming.

## **Minnesota**

*Minnesota loves . . . its lakes, skyways and feeling good!*

*Leadership Team:* MN Community Measurement

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MN Community Measurement (MNCM) leads the *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Minnesota. The mission of MNCM is to accelerate the improvement of health by publicly reporting health care information. Its goals are to be the trusted source for performance measurement and public reporting of quality data and to serve as a resource for providers to improve care and for patients to make better health decisions. Established as a nonprofit community-based organization in 2005, MNCM has an 18-member board of directors representing health plans, physicians, employers and consumers.

The Minnesota *AF4Q* initiative is guided by a broad stakeholder group forming the *AF4Q* Leadership Team. Under *AF4Q*, the site is expanding performance measurement to publicly report new measures, such as patient experience of care, and more detailed data, such as new clinic-level results for select chronic disease measures. The site's *AF4Q* initiative is also furthering consumer engagement through its Consumer Engagement Workgroup, first with a targeted focus on patients with diabetes. A new consumer-centered Web site, [www.theD5.org](http://www.theD5.org), features diabetes care quality information, which will be promoted through a community communications campaign. The next phase of consumer engagement work will focus on the needs of traditionally underserved populations. Efforts to improve provider capacity to undertake quality improvement include a Patient Activation Redesign Collaborative, led by the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, and alignment of continuing medical education offerings around quality improvement topics, particularly data transparency.

## **Seattle, Washington**

*Seattle loves . . . coffee, wild salmon and good health!*

*Leadership Team:* The Puget Sound Health Alliance  
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The Puget Sound Health Alliance (the Alliance) leads the *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Seattle. The Alliance, an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in December 2004, is a regional partnership that combines the expertise of private and public employers, physicians, hospitals, consumers, health plans and other stakeholders. The Alliance covers the five counties that comprise the Puget Sound region: King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston. More than 50 consumers and 160 organizations have joined the Alliance thus far. The mission of the collaborative organization is to build a strong leadership network among these partners to promote health and high-quality health care.

The Alliance focuses on improving quality, affordability and efficiency while reducing the rate of health care cost increases caused by overuse, underuse and misuse of health care services. Its *AF4Q* work includes developing and promoting quality improvement strategies that provide key stakeholders with action steps for targeted clinical areas, in addition to providing resources and tools to enhance quality improvement efforts. The Alliance is also active in the consumer engagement arena, with activities including promoting health risk assessments and improving health literacy. In January 2008, the Alliance released its first public report on regional health care quality and expects to publish updated and expanded “Community Checkup” reports semiannually.

## **South Central Pennsylvania**

*South Central Pennsylvania loves . . . barbells, battlefields and good health!*

*Leadership Team:* Healthy York County Coalition  
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The Healthy York County Coalition (HYCC) leads the area’s *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative. The mission of *AF4Q* is to apply ongoing citizen efforts to improve the quality of health care for all who live, work and play in South Central Pennsylvania. HYCC accomplishes its goals by sharing resources and information, implementing proven practices on the ground and measuring outcomes. The leadership team includes representatives of five main community stakeholder groups: providers, employers, consumers, community leaders and health plans. Healthy South Central PA health care partner providers (Family First Health, Hanover Hospital, Memorial Hospital and WellSpan Health) are championing the incorporation of more efficient strategies to manage care within their health systems.

*AF4Q South Central Pennsylvania* seeks to improve the quality of health care, with initial foci on diabetes, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease. The overall goals of the initiative are to strengthen the partnership between consumers and their health care teams and encourage consumers to take actions based on the information and data they receive.

## **Western Michigan**

*Western Michigan loves . . . its Great Lake, the great outdoors and great health!*

*Leadership Team:* Alliance for Health

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The *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Western Michigan is led by The Alliance for Health (the Alliance), a 60-year-old 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership corporation operating as a broad-based community health coalition. The Alliance represents those who receive care, give care and pay for care, including providers, citizens and employers. Its mission is to ensure that all people in Western Michigan have the highest-quality, most equitable and affordable health care services available.

The *AF4Q* work of the Alliance focuses on influencing, inspiring and motivating consumers to become more active partners in their health care. The initiative aims to increase consumers' understanding of what high-quality health care is—in general and within the context of diabetes, the Alliance's first focus area—and to engage diabetes patients in evidence-based self-management activities to improve health and minimize the negative effects of the disease. This activity is complemented by measuring the performance of area caregivers, publicly reporting the performance measurements and developing the West Michigan Center for Quality Improvement to serve the region.

## **Western New York**

*Western New York loves . . . wings, waterfalls and wonderful health care!*

*Leadership Team:* P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative of Western New York

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The P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative of Western New York (P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative) leads the area's *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative. The mission of this nonprofit organization is to improve the health of people in Western New York by empowering patients to maintain healthy lifestyles, ensuring access to the highest quality of care and promoting the implementation of proven practices in medicine. Incorporated in 2002, the P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative facilitates the development of a community-wide standard for the promotion of wellness and initiates dialogue with government leadership to promote policy change. The organization includes a 12-person board of directors that represents the three major health plans in the area, health care providers, consumer advocates, businesses, labor organizations, the media, faith-based organizations, the education community and a university medical school.

The P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative's *AF4Q* initiative aims to 1) educate the Western New York community about the importance of health care quality and how consumers (particularly those with diabetes) can take a proactive role; 2) engage the community to incorporate the most up-to-date best practices in treating patients suffering from diabetes and related conditions; 3) create a platform for consumers with diabetes to report on the quality of care they receive; and 4) disseminate resources to diabetes educators, consumers, providers, employers and health plans.

## **Willamette Valley, Oregon**

*Willamette Valley loves . . . GORE-TEX, green living and good health!*

*Leadership Team:* Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation

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The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (Q-Corp) leads the *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative in Willamette Valley. The mission of this nonprofit collaborative is to improve the quality of health care in Oregon through community-wide collaboration.

Established in 2003, Q-Corp works statewide, but focuses on having a measurable impact in Oregon's Willamette Valley (Portland, Salem, Albany, Corvallis and Eugene). Q-Corp is managed by a large board of directors, including leaders from across the Oregon health care market stakeholder groups. Purchaser, health plan, delivery system, consumer and government sectors are truly balanced at the table.

Q-Corp provides a forum for sharing information and best practices for improving the quality of health care. The priorities of Q-Corp are to promote the availability and use of understandable quality information to inform decision-making, stimulate cooperation among all health care stakeholders and support the development of a health information infrastructure so that Oregonians' health information is always available.

## **Wisconsin**

*Wisconsin loves . . . football, cheese and feeling good!*

*Leadership Team:* Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality

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The Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality (WCHQ) leads the state's *Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)* initiative. Established in 2002, WCHQ is a voluntary consortium of organizations learning and working together to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care for the people of Wisconsin. The mission of WCHQ is to develop and publicly report measures of health care performance; design and promote quality improvement initiatives; and advocate for enlightened policies that support WCHQ's work. A 19-member board of directors—including private-sector purchasers, physician groups and hospitals—governs WCHQ.

WCHQ released its first public report of evidence-based measures for inpatient and outpatient care in 2003. Today, its *Performance and Progress Report* is published online at [www.wchq.org](http://www.wchq.org) and is a rich source of information that is regularly updated with new measures and performance results. The consortium is committed to identifying and sharing best practices to improve the performance of all members. Its initial consumer engagement efforts are focused on addressing the issue of low health literacy and its adverse impact on health outcomes. Many Wisconsin organizations are working together to implement the *Ask Me 3* program, which is designed to apply practical solutions—like asking essential questions of your provider—to promote effective patient-provider communication.