

Symposium Targets Safety, Errors

An "open dialogue" on patient safety and medical errors planned for November 11th and 12th will "take the issue from the wall of silence, where it has been and put it center stage", according to David Kountz, MD, Associate Dean for Postgraduate Education at the Robert Wood Johnson University Medical School. Dr. Kountz and David Swee, MD, Acting Senior Associate Dean for Education at the Medical School, are program directors for the Symposium on Addressing and Improving Patient Safety, which will feature presentations from thought-leaders on national initiatives and policies, as well as information on Network patient safety efforts. The Continuing Medical Education program is sponsored by the Medical School and RWJ University Hospital.

"The only way to prevent errors is to openly discuss the issue," said Dr. Kountz, noting that the patient safety movement is intensifying and patient and payer expectations are increasing.

Geared to practicing physicians, physicians-in-training, medical students and other health care professionals, the symposium will highlight the scope of medical errors, their impact, and strategies to reduce them. Peter W. Camel, MD, DMedSc, Professor and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery, UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School, Newark, will discuss using ICU design to decrease errors; concurrent workshop sessions will focus on communicating medical errors to patients, families and colleagues, and the use of root cause analysis as a tool to review errors.

The program fee is \$35, waived for physicians-in-training and students. UMDNJ will award a maximum 5 category 1 credits toward the AMA Physician's Recognition Award for attendance. Additional information is available at 973-972-4267 or www.umdnj.edu/ccweb/rwjms.

New Partnership Strengthens MEWA

With an eye towards offering Network physicians continued health plan savings and options, the RWJ Health Network's Multiple Employee Welfare Act (MEWA) plan has partnered with other physician health plans administered by QualCare. By increasing overall membership through the affiliation, the Network MEWA plan will benefit from economies of scale, the economic advantages of reduced risk, and greater plan stability.

The new company, Affiliated Physician Health Plan, currently covers more than 1,000 lives. The new plan offers the same benefits as the Network's plan and will continue to provide numerous options, including an HMO Plan, a High Deductible Plan and dental benefits through Delta Dental. For information call (888) 670-8135 and access option #5.

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Network Revisits Strategic Plan

What strategies will most benefit RWJ Health Network members over the next five years? What new services and programs should be implemented to help improve quality of care and enhance revenue? These questions framed ongoing discussions on the Network's new strategic plan – a comprehensive document that provides a framework for the Network and its role in supporting hospitals and physicians in an economically challenging, highly competitive health care environment.

The original plan, developed in 1997, came two years after the Network was established. Then, as now, the Network's primary objectives focused on quality improvement and patient care management through benchmarking, protocols and sharing best practices as led by the Physician Coordinating Council. The Network has also worked to reduce costs, offer group purchasing opportunities and provide value-added services to Network physicians, such as physician billing and a group health insurance program.

Since 1997, some needs and concerns of Network members have shifted. Moreover, virtually all hospitals have named new chief executive officers, with new insights and perspectives on moving the Network forward.

The new strategic plan, which includes input from all CEOs, reflects interest in ongoing cost reduction, along with continued exploration of new integrated programs to help fill clinical gaps, enhance revenue and increase patient volume.



White House Accolades: RWJUH Hamilton President and CEO Christy Stephenson accepts the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award from Vice President Dick Cheney at a special Washington ceremony in July. Cheney lauded the winners, noting that "each has shown the same basic understanding of how to deliver high value to the customer, and how to improve the functioning of their enterprises." RWJUH Hamilton is the first New Jersey hospital to receive the prestigious business leadership award, and the only health care recipient for 2004.

Hospital Report Cards – Physicians Hold the Key to Improvement

National and state reports of hospital performance have been featured in the media recently and continue to arm consumers with information on health care providers' compliance with evidence-based care practices.

In September, both CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services (NJDHSS) published hospital report cards. The goal is to help consumers make informed healthcare choices and to support hospitals' efforts to continually improve the quality of care. This year's state report marks the second time New Jersey hospitals have been rated on two indicators – heart attack and pneumonia – and compared to top performers. Hospitals have been able to improve scores by "institutionalizing" systems that help physicians and nurses provide and document care. Standing orders, case manager chart review, compliance checklists and physician reminders are examples of successful strategies. Emergency Department physicians, anesthesiologists, surgeons and medical staff help ensure that patients receive the right treatment in the right time frame...every time.

The Network's Physician Coordinating Council (PCC) recognizes the important role physicians have in improving the quality of care. The chief medical officers discuss challenges and successes at their monthly meeting and are developing a Best Practice Summary to formalize communication on this topic. The PCC's work yields results. The chart below compares the latest available data (1st quarter 2005) with the NJDHSS 2004 data, and shows how Network hospitals are improving.

The PCC's continued attention to quality of care standards and best practices will help support Network hospitals in achieving higher scores and top report card rankings that have an impact on consumers' perceptions – and on the care they receive.

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON HEALTH NETWORK HOSPITALS NJ Department of Health & Human Services Hospital Report Card Data-published 9/12/05 Updated with 2nd Quarter 2005 Network Data

	Heart Attack*		Pneumonia*	
	2004	2005 2Q	2004	2005 2Q
Top 10% of hospitals scored equal to or higher than:	98%		92%	
Top 50% of hospitals scored equal to or higher than:	94%		84%	
RWJ University Hospital	99%	99%	92%	95%
RWJ University Hospital at Hamilton	96%	99%	91%	91%
Raritan Bay-Perth Amboy	95%	96%	79%	86%
RWJ University Hospital at Rahway	92%	90%	84%	87%
Raritan Bay-Old Bridge	86%	91%	79%	90%
Bayshore Community Hospital	82%	90%	80%	92%
CentraState Healthcare System	81%	87%	75%	84%

* Overall Score

RWJ Health Network News

- *RWJ Health Network hospitals mobilized to assist in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, including making financial donations, facilitating community collections, and providing care to evacuees in their communities and in the Gulf region. In addition, a Network ambulance was dispatched to the region with EMTs from RWJUH.*
- *Under the guidance of Drs. John Middleton and Constante Gil, Raritan Bay Medical Center became the primary health care lifeline for Hurricane Katrina evacuees relocated to Perth Amboy. From the maintenance staff, which helped renovate and equip an empty building, to physicians, nurses, and laboratory and clerical volunteers, the Hope Clinic, the city's only state-licensed Hurricane-related health care facility, has been a cornerstone of support for the storm's victims since opening in mid-September.*
- *Children's Specialized Hospital's pediatric psychiatrists Drs. Michael Armento and Michele Fantasia joined a select few to receive subspecialty board certifications in Pediatric Rehabilitation, having successfully completed the approved training program of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).*

The Physician Coordinating Council is comprised of the medical leadership of the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network members which include:

- Bayshore Community Health Services, Inc.
- Carrier Clinic
- CentraState Healthcare System
- Children's Specialized Hospital
- Raritan Bay Medical Center (Perth Amboy and Old Bridge)
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (New Brunswick, Hamilton, and Rahway)
- UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (New Brunswick)
- Eric B. Chandler Health Center
- Henry J. Austin Health Center
- Plainfield Health Center
- VNA Community Health Center
- Presbyterian Homes & Services, Inc.

It is the only health care network in New Jersey to include a medical school among its partners.

Please direct questions about any information contained in PCC Pulse to your chief medical officer or the Network's Director, Clinical Integration lois.doman@rwjuh.edu.

The Robert Wood Johnson Health Network operates a quality physician billing service at competitive rates. Call Peg Douglas for more information – 732-418-8055

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