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PAHL Program Focuses on Mentorship and Learning Between Hospitals

OAK BROOK, Ill., August 31, 2007 – In an effort to promote education, mentorship, and a sense of community among hospitals across state lines, the Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care (IFQHC) launched the Peer Assistance and Health Care Leadership (PAHL) program in March 2007.

PAHL is modeled after a pilot project created by Health Care Excel, Indiana's Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), and developed to provide an environment for health care providers in the SCIP6 (Surgical Care Improvement Project) states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin) to share successful quality improvement methodologies. The focus of SCIP6 is to support the national SCIP project by accelerating improvements in surgical care through a forum of learning, sharing information and promoting best practices and system improvements on a local and regional level.

Five of the current 37 PAHL hospitals are located in Illinois. They are Edward Hospital, Naperville; Evanston Northwestern Healthcare, Evanston; Palos Community Hospital, Palos Heights; Rush-Copley Medical Center, Aurora; and Rush North Shore Medical Center, Skokie.

“This multi-state collaborative is a unique opportunity to exchange creative ideas between organizations,” said Marion Powell, RN, MBA Senior Manager of Quality at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare. “Due to this collaboration, we have been able to identify, improve and implement strategies which impact the quality of surgical care across all facilities in our system.”

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The participating hospitals were divided into peer groups, classified by hospital bed size, total number of Medicare discharges, case mix index, and length of stay. The peer groups were further categorized by areas of strengths, weaknesses and interest. These peer groups are required to meet regularly via e-mail, telephone or online to share results and bounce ideas off one another.

“We have been involved in the program since its inception and have found it beneficial to learn how changes have been implemented at our partner hospital in Kentucky,” said Doreen Jantz-Makofski, RN, BS, MPA, CAPA, manager of day surgery/PACU/GI Lab and Pain Clinic at Rush-Copley Medical Center. “Also, I like the way the hospitals have been partnered by strengths and weaknesses – this is a great learning experience for a hospital struggling in some areas to learn from a hospital that is doing well in that area and vice versa.”

According to IFQHC Quality Improvement Consultant Mari Baran, RN, BSN, “We are extremely pleased how well this program has been received in such a short amount of time and we look forward to more hospitals joining the program.”

Hospitals interested in the PAHL program have until January 1, 2008 to join. For more information about SCIP or the PAHL program, contact Mari Baran at (800) 386-6431 ext. 5857 or mbaran@ilqio.sdps.org.

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Located in Oak Brook, Ill., IFQHC is the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for the state of Illinois. QIOs work with physicians and health care professionals to promote high quality medical care for Medicare beneficiaries. IFQHC is contracted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to perform designated quality improvement activities with healthcare providers across Illinois. For more information on IFQHC, visit our Web site at www.ifqhc.org.