



**Aligning
Forces for
Quality**

A Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Program



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

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

Nancy Clarke, Oregon Health Care Quality Corp
503-241-3571

nancy.clarke@q-corp.org

**Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation Receives \$600,000
for a Community-Based Initiative
Aimed at Improving Health Care Quality for Chronic Illnesses**

The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation Will Work on Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Three-Year National Program Which Uses Local Market Forces to Help the Chronically Ill Receive High-Quality Health Care

February 1, 2007 (Portland, Ore.) – The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation received a \$600,000 grant from *Aligning Forces for Quality, The Regional Market Project*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), designed to help Willamette Valley communities improve the quality of health care provided to people with chronic illnesses.

“We are excited to join a program that seeks to align the efforts of Oregon and Willamette Valley communities' leaders, consumers, doctors, nurses, employers and insurers in a collaborative effort to improve the care we provide for chronically-ill patients,” said Nancy Clarke, Executive Director of the Quality Corp. “No one person, group or profession can improve care for chronic illness without the support of others, and this program can help us identify ways to drive ongoing quality improvement.”

The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation joins 13 other grantees in the three-year, \$14-million program. The selection process entailed guidance of national experts and intensive site visits to confirm that Oregon and Willamette Valley leaders have taken significant initial steps toward the program's goals and has the capacity for further improvement. The Quality Corp will receive \$600,000 to use over three years for planning, convening, coordination and infrastructure development. In addition to the grant award, the Quality Corp can also receive technical assistance.

Through *Aligning Forces for Quality*, the Quality Corp will participate in 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 want to help doctors, nurses and other health care providers work together to deliver better care, and educate patients and consumers to make better, more informed choices,” said Patricia Powers, M.P.P.A., the president and chief executive officer of the Center for Health Improvement based in Sacramento, Calif., 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.”

(more)

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.

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 Willamette Valley communities retool their health care markets so that they can function as markets should. For the Quality Corp to improve the quality of care in the Willamette Valley, there needs to be participation on many fronts: 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 other grant recipients are:

- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Community Health Alliance of Humboldt-Del Norte – Eureka, Calif.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit, Mich.
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati, Ohio
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- Maine Quality Forum – Augusta, Maine
- MetroHealth System – Cleveland, Ohio
- Minnesota Community Measurement – Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.
- P² Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Puget Sound Health Alliance – Seattle, Wash.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

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.

The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation is a non-profit organization that promotes community-wide collaboration on strategically-chosen projects. Community leaders on the Board of Directors enlist cooperation from a broad range of stakeholders, including purchasers, hospitals, doctors, health plans, government and others, to drive a shared commitment for quality improvement. For more information visit www.q-corp.org.