Partner *for* Quality Care

Information for a Healthy Oregon

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REFORMING HEALTH CARE FROM THE GROUND UP
Local health groups receive $150,000 to put patients at the forefront of care decisions

PORTLAND, ORE. (March 16, 2010) – While the debate over health care reform continues at the federal level, the Oregon Health Care Quality Corp and PeaceHealth Medical Group are taking matters into their own hands. The pair is recipients of a $150,000 grant to implement a pilot program that places patients at every level of decision-making in health systems. The grant is one of three awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide local organizations with the opportunity to develop innovative and exemplary practices in patient-centered care.

The hope is that the development fund grant will help jump-start a revolution in health care improvement. Patients and families can contribute to the work of improving care in all types of health care settings, including hospitals, ambulatory practices and community-based agencies. Health care can be more patient-centered when changes are designed, tested and put into practice in partnership with the very people who will be affected by them.

"Over the last decade, PeaceHealth has engaged patients and families in the development of programs and services across the communities we serve. In all instances, their participation has strengthened our partnerships and identified innovative and low-cost ways to improve care," explained Mary Minniti, quality improvement director for PeaceHealth Medical Group (PHMG) in Eugene-Springfield and director of the grant. "We are reminded how critically important patients are as members of the health care team and in devising solutions to the challenges in health care today. Imagine the level of reform we could achieve in Oregon as multiple organizations invite patients and families into conversations focused on improvement to our systems of care. I believe Oregon is ready to take this collaborative step and lead the nation in this area," she added.

The grant supplies funds for training both patients and physicians on how to work together within the complicated health care system at multiple decision-making levels. When patients and families serve in leadership roles in the governance of health care organizations, thereby bringing the consumer perspective to new programs, health systems can be revolutionized. In partnership with faculty from the Institute for Family

Centered Care, the project will work closely with six selected organizations to mentor and train patient advisors as well as doctors, administrators, staff, and other clinicians on communication, negotiation, and collaborative skills to facilitate working effectively as a group to solve complex problems. Patient advisors and health system leaders will share lessons learned and successes across the state and with other communities around the country. Interested health care organizations should contact Shari Wright at ShWright@peacehealth.org.

Through its initiative, *Partner for Quality Care: Information for a Healthy Oregon,* the Quality Corp recently launched a Web site that compares the quality of primary care provided by some doctors' offices in Oregon. Providers also receive information about the care they give. While the information provided on the Web site is a strong first step toward quality improvement, the goal is to encourage patients and physicians to work together to improve the way that health care is delivered.

"Receiving this grant is a perfect accompaniment to the work we've already begun to improve health care quality. Right now, the health care system is fragmented and can be frustrating for both physicians and patients. We are thrilled that we have the funds now to learn from patients how to make the system work better by placing them in positions where they can influence decision making," said Nancy Clarke, executive director of the Oregon Health Care Quality Corp.

The grant complements funds already provided to the Quality Corp as part of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Aligning Forces for Quality* initiative. *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) signature program to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities throughout the country – as well as reduce racial and ethnic disparities in care and provide models for real reform.

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Partner for Quality Care: Information for a Healthy Oregon is an initiative dedicated to measuring and improving health care through collaboration. Managed by the not-for-profit organization, the Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation, the initiative embraces a three-pronged approach to improving health care: measure the quality of health care; help practitioners use quality measurement information to improve systems of care; and provide the public with tools and information to help them become more involved in their own health care. For more information, visit www.PartnerforQualityCare.org.

The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation is a non-profit partnership managed by a balanced Board of Directors, senior representatives from health plans, physician groups, purchasers, hospitals, consumers and government that work together to improve health care quality. Founded in 2000, Quality Corporation's projects have demonstrated the value of working cooperatively. For more information, visit www.q-corp.org

PeaceHealth Medical Group (PHMG) is dedicated to improving the health of the community and providing access to care when and where patients need it. PHMG is made up of more than 70 primary care doctors and 60 specialists serve patients at clinics in Eugene-Springfield and Junction City. For more information, visit http://www.peacehealth.org/phmg