

For Immediate Release

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FIRST PHASE OF COLLABORATIVE COMPLETED

Hospitals Successfully Improve Care for ICU Patients

Providence, RI – Hospitals from across the state gathered today to recognize the completion of the first phase of the Rhode Island ICU (Intensive Care Unit) Collaborative. Launched in 2005, the Collaborative has aimed to improve the quality and safety of care for adult ICU patients by reducing length of stay, complications and associated costs. ICU teams have implemented and evaluated proven strategies that address these issues.

Intensive care units make use of the greatest advancements in medical science and represent areas with great opportunity to prevent medical death and reduce costs. Over the past two years, ICU teams have worked to reduce the rate of catheter-related blood stream infections, ventilator-associated pneumonia, and improve the culture of safety, which ultimately drives clinical performance. Hospitals' performance has included:

- » Improving the culture of safety in more than 90 percent of ICUs
- » Decreasing the rate of catheter-related blood stream infections by 58 percent
- » Nearly half of ICUs reporting zero occurrences of ventilator-associated pneumonia for six consecutive months

The Rhode Island ICU Collaborative was unique from the start when 100 percent hospital and intensive care unit participation was achieved for the project. Work with this Collaborative has positively impacted the care provided to patients in all 263 ICU beds across the state. Hospitals in Rhode Island care for over 16,000 patients each year in the ICU setting.

The Collaborative has aimed to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and change culture. Further, it worked to improve patient, family and staff satisfaction. The Collaborative facilitated peer-to-peer ICU team sharing strategies that were successfully implemented in similar ICU improvement work conducted by Johns Hopkins University. The work augmented existing hospital quality improvement efforts in Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island ICU Collaborative was formed by the Rhode Island Quality Institute, Quality Partners of Rhode Island, and the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island and UnitedHealthcare of New England have funded the project's management costs and hospitals supported the internal costs of the program.

“Research has suggested that ICU complications, such as blood stream infections, more than triple the risk of death and add an average of \$35,000 in cost to an ICU stay,” said Laura L. Adams, president and CEO of the Rhode Island Quality Institute. “With every adult ICU in the state engaged in this effort, Rhode Island is well on its way to becoming the safest place in the nation to receive ICU care.”

"The success of this collaborative demonstrates that all involved in health care need to continue to work collaboratively, sharing solutions and driving positive change," said H. John Keimig, CEO of Quality Partners of Rhode Island. "Health care needs to continuously challenge itself to ensure that every policy, performance and protocol is leveraging the best practices in quality improvement and patient safety. The care of patients must be the ultimate goal."

"Measuring and improving clinical performance has long been a top priority for hospitals in Rhode Island," said Edward J. Quinlan, president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. "The results of the Rhode Island ICU Collaborative are among many examples of how care is improved through the sharing of best practices and a commitment to quality and patient safety."

"We're very enthusiastic about the work being accomplished through the ICU Collaborative," said Jim Purcell, president and CEO of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island. "We believe it is our responsibility to represent our members and the people of Rhode Island in their pursuit of affordable, high-quality healthcare and this initiative will help enhance the quality of care for the people of Rhode Island."

"Phase one has produced compelling results which are a direct result of this collaborative effort of healthcare leadership here in Rhode Island," said Stephen J. Farrell, CEO, UnitedHealthcare of New England. "When leaders such as these come together for a cause as worthwhile as the ICU Collaborative, the results are impressive. The medical evidence to support this ICU initiative is at the core of the UnitedHealthcare mission to ensure patients are as healthy as possible throughout their lives."

The Rhode Island ICU Collaborative will continue its work and all ICU units have agreed to participate in the second phase which will run from September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2009. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island and UnitedHealthcare of New England have agreed to continue their financial support. Hospitals will again dedicate the time and resources necessary to continue their ongoing commitment to quality improvement and patient safety efforts. Efforts will include continuing the momentum established during Phase I and raising the bar on the care provided to ICU patients in our state.

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