



**Leading teachers and scholars in health care improvement laud federal initiative as evidence of “a critical new direction in America’s health care reform.”**

**McLean, VA, April 15, 2011** -- The Academy for Healthcare Improvement (AHI) today responded with admiration and enthusiasm to the announcement of the Partnership for Patients to Improve Care and Lower Costs for Americans, a major national initiative to improve hospital safety and care transitions in the US. For many years, America has invested in medical research to improve health care and has counted on better aligned funding to improve delivery of services. While those approaches are important, America needs to work on the delivery system itself, making it more reliable, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the people, and this initiative is a major start on that work.

“The initiative announced by Drs. Sebelius and Berwick is a critical next step in improving the healthcare system in the US. The Academy for Healthcare Improvement (AHI) fully endorses this effort. AHI will work to activate the health professional faculty and students of its membership to participate in this initiative and to help understand its impact on patients, families and health professionals.” Mark E. Splaine, MD, MS, of the Dartmouth Institute and President of AHI.

“This initiative is the right next step,” added Paul V. Miles MD, of the American Board of Pediatrics and President Elect of the Academy for Healthcare Improvement.

Improving the delivery system is not just a matter of managing the payments to providers. Each community’s health care needs to have its performance visible, including the shortcomings. Nearly every person who has been through a hospital discharge of a chronically ill relative knows that errors – and anxiety – are part of the package. Getting infections in hospitals, or having injuries from falls or care that is not coordinated is all too common. . Health professional faculty and students know it is time to buckle down and make the care system safer.

The methods of continuous quality improvement have important roles in this work. Hospitals, health systems, and health care providers will need to monitor performance, test improvements, make useful strategies part of their routines, and share gains and challenges. The effort to improve the seamlessness of care plans across settings for persons living with chronic conditions will require developing effective coalitions in local areas that can standardize procedures, report and fix problems, and work with unconventional providers like supported housing and support to family caregivers. These methods have not yet had a major role in health care, though continuous quality improvement is central to most successful businesses and manufacturing. This focus on building a highly reliable and effective delivery system marks the most important change in America’s approach to health reform.

*The Academy of Healthcare Improvement, [www.a4hi.org](http://www.a4hi.org), is the professional organization for teachers and scholars of improvement science in health care, and represents the leadership of the field worldwide. For further information, contact Mark Splaine, MD, MS at [mark.splaine@dartmouth.edu](mailto:mark.splaine@dartmouth.edu) or 603-653-3229.*