

# Advancing Patient and Family Engagement: Developing a “Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Health Care Quality and Safety in the Hospital Setting”

Improving the quality and safety of health care in the United States is one of the most significant challenges facing the American health care system today. A critical step on the path towards safer, higher quality care is encouraging and facilitating patient and family engagement to improve health care experiences, care delivery, and outcomes.

In September 2009, the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)** awarded a 3-year contract to a team of organizations to develop, evaluate, and implement a *Guide to Patient and Family Engagement* (the *Guide*) to promote patient and family engagement in hospital settings.

Led by the **American Institutes for Research (AIR)**, the team working on this project is an unparalleled collaboration of partners with experience in and commitment to patient and family engagement, hospital quality, and safety. In addition to AIR, the team includes **Carilion Health Clinic**, the **Institute for Family-Centered Care (IFCC)**, **Consumers Advancing Patient Safety (CAPS)**, the **Joint Commission**, and the **Health Research and Education Trust (HRET)**. Other organizations contributing to the project include **Planetree**, the **Maryland Patient Safety Center (MPSC)**, and **Aurora Health Care**.

## What are the goals of this project?

The purpose of this project is to build a guide that will help patients, families, and health professionals in the hospital support one another to improve quality and safety. This project aims to build and expand on existing efforts to facilitate patient and family engagement through the creation of evidence-based guidance and tools that will create a foundation for culture change.

Specific tasks for this project include:

- **Developing a Patient and Family Hospital Engagement Guide.** The *Guide* is broadly conceived of as tools, materials, and/or training for patients, families, hospital clinicians and staff, hospital leaders, and those who will implement the *Guide*. The tools in the *Guide* will support the involvement of patients and family members in their care, encourage the involvement of patients and family members in improving quality and safety, facilitate the creation of partnerships between health professionals and patients, and outline the steps needed to implement changes.
- **Implementing and pilot testing the *Guide*.** To ensure that the *Guide* is feasible to implement, effective, and accepted by patients, family members, and health professionals, we will conduct both short- and longer-term implementations of the *Guide* in several diverse hospital settings.
- **Assessing the impact of the *Guide* on key outcomes of interest.** We will evaluate how implementation of the *Guide* affects key outcomes, including: patient/family involvement in their own health care; patient/family involvement in quality improvement and patient safety activities; patient and staff satisfaction; organizational culture with respect to patient-centered care; and hospital policies and practices. We also will use the evaluation to understand implementation challenges and facilitators and to inform revisions to the *Guide*.
- **Disseminating the *Guide*.** To ensure that hospitals, the public, and patients and families will benefit from this *Guide*, we will identify and implement methods and strategies to promote the *Guide*, including identification and outreach to distribution partners.
- **For more information** on the “*Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Health Care Quality and Safety in the Hospital Setting*,” please contact: Dr. Kristin L. Carman, Managing Director, AIR, [kcarman@air.org](mailto:kcarman@air.org) or Ms. Marjorie Shofer, Senior Program Analyst, AHRQ, [Marjorie.Shofer@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:Marjorie.Shofer@ahrq.hhs.gov).