



CONTACT:

Amy Ridolphi
aridolphi@vhqc.org
(804) 289-5320 x 215

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Maryland, Virginia Healthcare Providers in the Spotlight for Patient Safety Awareness Week

[Richmond, VA] – Health care providers want to make every week patient safety week. Over 300 hospitals and nursing homes across Maryland and Virginia are doing exactly that by working with VHQC to avoid patient harm.

“We join the National Patient Safety Foundation in recognizing the progress that healthcare providers are making in improving patient safety,” said VHQC Chief Operating Officer Thelma Baker, MSHA, RHIA, CPHQ. “The hospitals and nursing homes engaged in our improvement initiatives are already showing progress.”

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) funds VHQC to bring together healthcare providers in these Medicare improvement initiatives, create a structure for peer-to-peer learning, and to provide related data analyses, training and improvement coaching.

A total of 64 hospitals in the two states participate in the VHQC-led initiative to eliminate Hospital Associated Infections (HAIs) that started in January 2015 and runs through July 2019. The initiative is focused on battling harmful infections, including *Clostridium difficile*, catheter-associated urinary tract infections and central line-associated blood stream infections. Participating hospitals are implementing comprehensive antimicrobial stewardship programs, which involves promoting appropriate use of antibiotics, reducing microbial resistance and decreasing the spread of infections caused by multidrug-resistant organisms.

Similarly, 191 nursing homes across Maryland and Virginia are engaged in the regional arm of CMS’ National Nursing Home Quality Collaborative. This push for safety in nursing homes focuses on antipsychotic medications, infections, resident mobility, pressure ulcers and avoidable hospitalizations as well as leadership topics, such as staff stability, teambuilding and finance.

Facilities choose one or more of these topics for improvement, and VHQC provides an improvement “toolkit,” performance data reports, and the opportunity to learn from

their peers. By the collaborative's end, more than 75% of the nursing homes in both states will be involved.

In addition, 25 Maryland nursing homes are targeting sepsis through a VHQC-led project that extends the Maryland Patient Safety Center's hospital sepsis collaborative to the long-term care setting. Sepsis, a syndrome in which an infection leads to inflammation that damages organs, is the leading cause of hospital admission from U.S. nursing homes. In partnership with the Maryland Hospital Association, hospitals and nursing homes that share patients will coordinate their infection reduction efforts. In addition, VHQC is helping participating nursing homes to implement processes for identifying infections earlier.

About VHQC

For more than 30 years, VHQC has been leading the way to better health care for providers and other clients by offering expertise in quality improvement, utilization management, analytic services and health information technology support that improves patient outcomes — and often results in cost savings. In addition to its role as the Maryland and Virginia Quality Innovation Network-Quality Innovation Organization, VHQC is the Health IT Regional Extension Center for Virginia and leads the Virginia Practice Transformation Network. For more information, visit www.vhqc.org.

About Patient Safety Awareness Week

"Patient Safety Awareness Week" takes place from March 13th through March 19th. This health observance serves to increase awareness of patient safety among not only the general public, but also to healthcare and patient safety professionals. It is an initiative of the National Patient Safety Foundation. For more information, visit <http://www.unitedforpatientsafety.org/>

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