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Patient and Family Engagement Key to Improved Healthcare

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation Aims for New Approach, Announces Patient Care Program

WASHINGTON (August 28, 2012) – The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation launched a new national Patient Care Program today that seeks to eliminate all preventable harms to patients. The Foundation expects to allocate a half billion dollars over ten years if the Program develops as anticipated. The Patient Care Program will focus on both meaningfully engaging patients and their families in their own healthcare and developing a systems approach that optimally reconfigures interprofessional teams, processes, and technology to be supportive of that engagement. Such work should also decrease healthcare costs.

The new Program will build on the achievements and current work by others in the field, collaborate with like-minded organizations, and fund research and clinical projects that will develop and fully integrate these two critical areas.

“By developing and connecting these two critical aspects of healthcare, we believe that healthcare will be better, more cost-effective and more respectful for patients and their families, and the healthcare professionals who serve them,” said Steve McCormick, president of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Dr. George Bo-Linn, chief program officer for the Patient Care Program, said the effort will begin with a focus on eliminating all preventable harms to adult patients in acute-care settings. The loss of dignity and respect that some patients and families experience are preventable harms that must be addressed as well, he added.

Each year tens of thousands of preventable deaths occur in U.S. hospitals, and millions of dollars are spent on complications and patient readmissions that could be averted. Additionally, fewer than half of all patients report feeling part of and respected by the healthcare system that serves them.

“Improvements in patient care will be more significant and lasting if patients and their families are actively engaged—especially if we reconfigure clinical processes, care teams and technology into an integrated whole to focus on patient safety,” Bo-Linn said. “Much improvement has occurred but too many patients still suffer from lapses in quality and safety. It’s ambitious to attempt to prevent all harm, but we must strive for no less.”

Today’s launch included the announcement of a strategic partnership with the Johns Hopkins Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality, where an interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, engineers, bioethicists, and others will identify ways to eliminate all harm to

patients, engage families in the care of their loved ones, and reduce costs beginning in the intensive care unit. The \$8.9 million grant from the Foundation will support their work. The project, led by Institute Director Dr. Peter Pronovost, will focus on identifying improvements that could be applied in other healthcare settings.

“Patient safety should not have to rely on the heroism of individual healthcare professionals working in frequently chaotic environments; we should redesign healthcare delivery using an interdisciplinary systems approach in the same way that engineers manage dynamic complexity,” Pronovost said. “And we should do so while incorporating the perspective of patients and families.”

The Foundation’s new Program is also working with the Institute of Medicine (IOM), RAND Corporation, *Health Affairs*, University of California, San Francisco, Stanford University, and others.

To assist in fostering this approach, the IOM will partner with the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) to initiate a collaborative convening of leaders from leading universities with joint medicine and engineering initiatives, healthcare organizations experienced in systems engineering processes, and information technology, patient advocacy, government, and large healthcare systems with the potential to catalyze change.

“The group will consider the issues and activities most important to advance the field, and explore ways to facilitate progress,” said IOM President Dr. Harvey V. Fineberg, who joined with NAE President Dr. Charles Vest in underscoring the importance of such collaborative work.

The Patient Care Program includes and builds on the achievements of the Foundation’s Betty Irene Moore Nursing Initiative, which is significantly improving adult patient care in northern Californian hospitals, and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the University of California, Davis, which is transforming healthcare through nursing education, research, and leadership.

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The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, established in 2000, seeks to advance environmental conservation, scientific research, and patient care. The goal of the Foundation’s Patient Care Program is to create, in collaboration with others, a fundamentally better healthcare approach that improves quality and safety, reduces costs and ensures dignity and respect to both patients and those who serve them. For more information, please visit www.moore.org.