



Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative

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Second Cardiac Forum looks at doing right things right

Roll rocks down a 10,000-foot hill, and they cannot be stopped: this is because of the mountain, not the rocks...This is because of the momentum, not the individuals. --Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 4th century BC

This quote was a fitting kickoff for the Second Cardiac Forum March 8-9, reminding participants that their collaboration forms the mountain, providing the momentum for improvement. The Cardiac Forum is sponsored by PRHI's Cardiac Working Group, a multi-disciplinary group of clinicians, data analysts, and health care research personnel who volunteer their time to work together to improve the quality, safety and effectiveness of cardiac care in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

"If you did one thing that always improved patient outcomes, wouldn't you want everyone to know how you do it?"

The goal of the Cardiac Forum is to share learning from institutions across the region. Four physicians from different facilities presented their protocols for maintaining blood sugar levels following coronary artery bypass surgery. Although the goal was common, the processes were unique, and so were the implementation experiences.

In his keynote address "Doing the Right Thing: Doing the Right Thing *Right*," Dr. David Wennberg of the Maine Medical Center outlined some of the past successes of the 15-year history of the Northern New England Cardiovascular Disease Study Group (NNE). Prior clinical presentations of the Northern New England group persuaded the Pittsburgh Cardiac Working Group to adopt four initiatives to improve patient care following coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery.

Through collaborative efforts, forums and site visits, NNE identified unwanted variation in patient outcomes. Adopting these four process steps

throughout the region enabled NNE to reduce mortality rates associated with CABG. By coupling its regional cardiac registry with efforts in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), physicians have been able to reduce mortality and determine the relative risk for surgery preoperatively. This is what Dr. Wennberg refers to as "Doing the Right Thing Right."



1. ENCOURAGE USE OF PREOPERATIVE ASPIRIN
2. MAINTAIN ADEQUATE CONTROL OF HEART RATE AT INDUCTION OF ANESTHESIA
3. USE THE INTERNAL MAMMARY ARTERY GRAFT AS A HARVEST SITE
4. AVOID EXCESSIVE DILUTION OF THE BLOOD DURING CARDIAC SURGERY

Patients as Partners

When adjusted for age and size of population, studies showed that cardiovascular procedures were performed at a rate two times higher than for comparable populations in New York than in Ontario. Many New York procedures were done on older patients with higher risks of unfavorable outcomes. When patients were educated about their disease state and became discerning consumers of health care, many opted for more conservative treatments. This educational interaction between patients and healthcare providers provides the basis for shared

decision-making. Educated patients can be powerful allies in making informed healthcare decisions that are critical to their care and related to favorable outcomes.

Perfecting Patient Care at the VA

Saturday morning Vickie Pisowicz and Peter Perreiah of the PRHI Center for Shared Learning presented the Perfecting Patient Care System’s work on nosocomial infection at the VA Learning Line. Although some participants understood the Perfecting Patient Care System, most were surprised by such a highly disciplined

always the first consideration, the Perfecting Patient Care System holds promise for quickly improving patient care in the ultimate quest for perfection.

Shared Learning Sessions

Small breakout sessions intensified learning in the subjects of Glycemic Control Following CABG Surgery, Teams In Need of Intensive Care, and the Perfecting Patient Care System Learning Line on Nosocomial Infections. Physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals joined in these multi-disciplinary intra-



Dr. David Wennberg of the Maine Medical Center gave the keynote address at March’s Cardiac Forum, on the topic of “Doing the Right Thing Right.” Dr. Wennberg is a member of the Northern New England study group.

system designed to provide, without fail, what patients need, when they need it, in the quantity needed, immediately, without waste or error.

This unique patient-focused system demonstrated the uncommon power of common sense in today’s complex systems. Based on fundamental learning from the world of manufacturing and the tenet that the patient’s need is

facility opportunities to share learning and advance plans for regional improvement in cardiac care.

Clinicians heralded the unique opportunity to share thoughts and concerns not only on the presentations of the forum but on a wide variety of issues relating to cardiac care. Solidification of these informal relationships provides the strength understanding

and needed to continue and expand the work begun by the PRHI Cardiac Working Group. ☞



PRHI ESTIMATES THAT AREA PHYSICIANS HAVE CONTRIBUTED OVER 12,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS—AT A VALUE OF OVER \$1.8 MILLION.

Cardiac Working Group. PRHI partner physicians and other cardiac care experts constructed the PRHI Cardiac Care Improvement Registry to measure key processes of care and how they link to patient outcome. Currently 12 of the region’s 13 cardiac centers participate in the Registry and the quarterly Cardiac Forums, held to discuss the results.

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