



NETWORK FOR REGIONAL HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT EXPANDS AFFORDABILITY INITIATIVE

February 3, 2017 Portland, ME — At a time of heated debate over the cost of healthcare and an intensifying quest to make it affordable, the Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement (NRHI) is expanding its groundbreaking initiative that compares costs of health services in different regions of the country and what is driving them. Three regions - Massachusetts, Eastern Pennsylvania and Virginia - are joining NRHI's growing Getting to Affordability project as it enters its third phase.

“Identifying regional differences in healthcare costs is important because high costs are depleting family budgets. Entire communities pay the price as money that could go to schools, housing and other needs is instead eaten up by healthcare costs,” says Elizabeth Mitchell, president and CEO of NRHI. “This information will enable physicians to identify cost drivers in their communities, address them, and get better outcomes. The more regions participating in this data collection and comparison, the greater the number of American healthcare consumers who will benefit.”

The [Health Care Improvement Foundation](#), an NRHI member and regional health improvement collaborative representing Eastern Pennsylvania and [Virginia Health Information](#), the nonprofit organization that implements Virginia's health data reporting laws including serving as the administrator of the state's All Payer Claims Database (APCD), will join [Washington Health Alliance](#) and [Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation](#) on work aimed at breaking down barriers to reporting total cost of healthcare in their communities and sharing their strategies and lessons with other regions facing similar challenges, including one region reporting on its Medicaid population.

The third new regional organization, [Massachusetts Health Quality Partners](#) (MHQP) will participate in what is known as the Total Cost of Care Benchmark Project, which earlier this year released a first-of-its-kind report that analyzed spending by commercial health insurance plans in five different regions nationwide (Utah, Maryland, St. Louis, Minnesota and Oregon). Analysts found a whopping \$1,080 yearly difference in the amount plans spend, on average, per enrollee, with a high of \$369 per-enrollee-per-month in Minnesota and a low of \$279 in Maryland. You can read the full report here: [From Claims to Clarity: Deriving Actionable Healthcare Cost Benchmarks from Aggregated Commercial Claims Data](#).

In Phase III, MHQP will add its results to create national benchmarks along with [The Health Collaborative](#), the [Center for Improving Value in Health Care](#), [Midwest Health Initiative](#), [Minnesota Community Measurement](#), [Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation](#), [HealthInsight Utah](#) and the [The Maryland Healthcare Commission](#). Most regions will also produce and share underlying reports to inform practice level improvement opportunities – a crucial step toward making healthcare more affordable.

“MHQP is thrilled to join the Getting to Affordability team as Massachusetts has been a leader in healthcare transparency for years and has much to contribute to this work,” says Barbra Rabson, President and CEO of MHQP. “Participation in this project will also help inform how Massachusetts compares to other states across the country and how we can reduce healthcare costs for residents of the Commonwealth.”

The following partner organizations have been selected as Technical Advisors for Phase III of the Getting to Affordability initiative: Utah Office of Healthcare Statistics, Q-Corp/HealthInsight Utah, and Minnesota Community Measurement.

“Everyone wins when we have access to better healthcare cost data,” said Mitchell. “If players in a given health market use these data and work together, we have an opportunity to deliver higher quality care at a lower cost.”

To find out more about the Getting to Affordability initiative, which is funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, please visit nrhi.org.

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About NRHI

The Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement is a national organization representing over 35 regional multi-stakeholder groups working toward achieving the Triple Aim of better health, better care, and reduced cost through continuous improvement. NRHI and all of its members are non-profit organizations, separate from state government, working directly with physicians, employers, hospitals, health plans, and patients using data to improve healthcare. For more information about NRHI, visit www.nrhi.org. Follow NRHI on Twitter at @RegHealthImprov.

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