



15 Patient Safety Collaboratives Funded in England



A new national programme will be launched today by Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, to improve the safety of patients and ensure continual learning sits at the heart of healthcare in England.

The programme, coordinated by NHS England and NHS Improving Quality (NHS IQ), will be the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in the world.

A network of 15 Patient Safety Collaboratives are being established, each led by an Academic Health Science Network (AHSN). They will focus on improving safety and empowering patients, carers and staff to highlight, challenge and implement local improvements in patient care. AHSNs provide a unique combination of NHS, academia, third sector and industry partners and work across defined geographical areas.

The collaboratives will bring together patients, healthcare staff and other partners from across the health and care economy to determine their local patient safety priorities and to develop and implement solutions to these problems. Some of the issues that the Collaboratives may tackle on a 'whole patient pathway' basis include reducing infections, pressure ulcers, medication safety, falls and problems with patient transfers and discharge.

NHS IQ and NHS England will work nationally with the AHSNs to provide support and opportunities for the Collaboratives to learn from each other, ensuring the most effective and successful solutions are rapidly spread and adopted across England.

Each Collaborative will be funded for the next five years by NHS England and will support individuals, teams and organisations to build skills and knowledge about patient safety and quality improvement to create space and time to work on the challenges, and provide opportunities to learn from each other.

The programme is borne out of Professor Don Berwick's report last year into the safety of patients in England

and builds on learning from the Francis and Winterbourne View recommendations. The report, [*A Promise to Learn*](#) – a commitment to act , made a series of recommendations to improve patient safety; and called for the NHS “to become, more than ever before, a system devoted to continual learning and improvement of patient care, top to bottom and end to end.”

Dr Mike Durkin, NHS England Director of Patient Safety, said: “Having worked closely with Don Berwick and his advisory group it is fantastic to see the collaboratives about to begin work on what will be the biggest patient safety initiative in the history of the NHS. They will invigorate Don Berwick’s vision of bringing people together at every level, from the patient to the surgeon and the GP to the chief executive, to rapidly accelerate safety improvements in every healthcare setting on both a local and national level.”

Steve Fairman, NHS Improving Quality Managing Director, added: “Within NHS Improving Quality we have the knowledge, skills and expertise of collaborative working from previous successful clinical collaboratives. This will be powerful when combined with the specialist knowledge on safety priority improvements in NHS England and the local dimension brought by the AHSNs to this work. We look forward to working with and supporting them to share the learning and good practice nationally.

Dr Chris Streater, Managing Director Health Innovation Network (AHSN for South London) said “We have a pretty unique combination of skills and expertise that will help us move patient safety forward in a way we’ve not achieved before.

“We also know that keeping bureaucracy to the minimum, focusing on local needs and practicalities and creating learning environments that promote safety, will be vital if these Collaboratives are to succeed and create a real culture shift throughout our health and care system.”

Dr Liz Mear, Chief Executive, North West Coast AHSN added, “Leadership, culture and how we measure achievements will underpin the programme. Another important factor will be training and equipping our staff to maintain a continual focus on safety issues.”

Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said: “We have focused unprecedented attention on improving patient safety in the NHS, but there’s always more to do and these collaboratives will help drive standards even higher. The collaboratives also support our Sign up to Safety campaign, which sets out our ambition to halve avoidable harm over the next three years and save up to 6,000 lives.”

The programme is aligned with and supports the ‘Sign up to Safety’ campaign to make the NHS the safest healthcare system in the world by creating the culture to support a system devoted to continuous learning and improvement.

Source: NHS Improving Quality

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