

June 26, 2014

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The noble mission of the Florida Hospital Association (FHA) is to improve the state of our state's health. The FHA does that by sharing best practices, advocating for patients with our legislators, developing policies which are beneficial for all, and generally encouraging change for the better.

Traditionally, our 214 FHA member hospitals—ranging from small community hospitals to large academic institutions with everything in between—were most concerned about the welfare of their own hospitals. Today, with renewed emphasis on quality, outcomes, transparency, access, and cost for all patients along with decreased payments for care, the focus of hospital associations like FHA has changed to see how best to migrate to new and more efficient ways to care for everyone. For example, here's a recap of what we discussed at a recent FHA board meeting.

We started with a bracing report from the Quality Committee of the FHA on the two issues that put hospital out-of-business—quality and finances. We reviewed both good and bad stories about quality, including correctly and quickly identifying a patient with MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), a successful recovery from a two-day unplanned computer system downtime, and good use of a global trigger tool to avoid harm, among other events reported by members.

We moved next to ongoing improvements in quality and safety. The heartening news was that 54% of the 145 hospitals participating in Florida's Hospital Engagement Network (HEN) achieved the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) goal of 40% reduction in patient harm (infections and complications) and a 20% reduction in 30-day readmissions. This is good news, but we still have less than 50% of all hospitals in Florida enrolled in HEN.

Accordingly, our next topic was how to encourage non-participating hospital to participate in these important associations. The harsh reality is that as a state viewed by outside payers, such as Medicare and Medicaid, we are viewed all together. Also, in this age of transparency with the internet, patients will have access to the information so we are all better off cooperating in working to improve. Thus, our excellent FHA staff was charged with informing every hospital CEO and quality manager—including at the state's 100 non-FHA members—about their respective quality parameters compared to the state average and other peers. Self-awareness is an early step towards improvement.

Engaging the leadership teams and Boards of healthcare systems to move forward and focus their attention on quality was a major motion of the FHA Board. Moving Florida from the bottom quartile upward over the next five years is a challenge which can and should be accomplished. Other states are improving at rates faster than Florida, which makes the challenge even more critical. <http://datacenter.commonwealthfund.org/#ind=1/sc=1>

The task of keeping the legislature well informed about the state's healthcare issues is another important FHA responsibility. The FHA's goal, of producing the greatest good for our patients, should be the same goal that our legislators embrace. The FHA is clearly a force for positive change. It separates any internecine discourse among the participants from the purer motive of making a positive long-term difference for our state, our communities, and most important, the individual patients we care for daily.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. DO YOU HAVE A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE UPDATES?

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