



HEALTH RESEARCH &
EDUCATIONAL TRUST
In Partnership with AHA

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NEWS RELEASE

HRET Awarded New Contract from AHRQ Efforts aim to better inform patients and improve patient care

CHICAGO – November 6, 2013 – Today it was announced that the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) of the American Hospital Association (AHA) has been awarded a contract by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to develop a comprehensive patient safety and medical liability communication and resolution resource toolkit. The toolkit will promote communication between patients, doctors and hospitals to improve the quality of care, reduce preventable injuries and ensure timely and appropriate restitution when harm results from care.

“HRET has a long track record of accelerating quality improvement, and we are therefore pleased to support AHRQ’s efforts in this area,” said Maulik Joshi, president of HRET and senior vice president of AHA. “This toolkit will help distill ongoing research in a way that can contribute to better patient care, lower costs and more effective use of limited resources.”

As part of AHRQ’s Patient Safety and Medical Liability Reform Initiative several efforts have been funded and developed to test a variety of efforts to improve patient safety and reduce medical liability costs through improved risk monitoring and communication with patients. The project intends to move the health care system toward a non-punitive, systems-oriented approach and away from defensive medicine that may impede best care practices.

HRET will work with AHRQ to highlight the successes achieved from these projects to improve patient safety and communication and to reduce medical liability costs through the creation of a single, comprehensive toolkit resource for hospitals and care givers. The toolkit will highlight how these projects have put patient safety first and worked to reduce preventable injuries by fostering better communication between doctors and their patients. The toolkit is expected to be of particular use to patient safety and quality improvement officers, medical directors and other professionals working on the frontlines of care with a goal of improving patient care, reducing defensive medicine and lowering health care costs in the future.

“Over the past several years, we’ve had the good fortune to build a comprehensive approach to patient harm with input from many other national experts and esteemed institutions,” said Tim McDonald, MD, JD, chief safety and risk officer for health affairs at the University of Illinois (UIC) and co-executive director for UIC’s Institute for Patient Safety Excellence. “Our team is excited to work with HRET and AHRQ in the development of this patient-centered toolkit incorporating the concepts.”

The contract will be administered by HRET in partnership with UIC and other leading organizations. Dr. McDonald developed the Seven Pillars approach to harm, a previously funded AHRQ initiative to improve patient safety and reduce medical liability, that was implemented across their system and other hospitals and health systems. Previous published research demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach as well as its impact and sustainability over time.

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Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET)

Founded in 1944, the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) is the not-for-profit research and education affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA). HRET’s mission is to transform health care through research and education. It focuses on identifying and exploring key issues affecting the health care delivery system. HRET’s applied research focuses on improving quality, eliminating disparities, improving care coordination, improving leadership and governance, conducting data analysis and supporting the spread of improvement. Through AHA’s Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence (HPOE) strategy, HRET has helped hospital leaders to accelerate performance improvement by disseminating best practices, producing actionable reports and toolkits, conducting leadership development programs and implementing national improvement projects. For more information, visit www.hret.org.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

AHRQ’s mission is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. The research sponsored, conducted, and disseminated by AHRQ provides information that helps people make better decisions about health care.