

For Immediate Release

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Statewide Community Health Needs Assessment Finds Three Key Areas of Concern

PROVIDENCE, RI – November 6, 2013 – Hospitals will collaborate to address three key health care needs identified during a recent study. Mental health and substance abuse, diabetes and heart disease were found to be important areas impacting the health of Rhode Islanders.

Hospitals gathered in the spring to review the findings of a statewide community health needs assessment and prioritize areas that hospitals could address collectively. Following that session, hospitals agreed to collaborate over the next three years to address mental health and substance abuse, diabetes, and heart disease. While hospitals have community-specific implementation plans to address these and other areas, they will continue to meet collectively to address these issues collaboratively and analyze the impact of their activities.

The statewide community health needs assessment was a comprehensive study of the health care needs of Rhode Islanders. The process was conducted earlier this year by Holleran and included:

- An analysis of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey
- An analysis of secondary data provided by the Healthy Communities Institute
- 49 key informant interviews that included elected officials, health care providers, health and human services experts, long-term care providers, representatives from the business community and educators
- Two focus groups to gather feedback regarding mental health issues and resources within Rhode Island

“The findings of the community health needs assessment have provided hospitals with a clearer perspective on the health care needs of our community,” said HARI President Edward J. Quinlan. “Hospitals will now continue their long-standing history of collaboration to address these issues together.”

Hospitals took their commitment to community health one step further by establishing an online portal of health indicators and data. HARI collaborated with member hospitals and the Rhode Island Department of Health to launch a new public health website, Rhode Island Health Care Matters (www.rihealthcarematters.org). Rhode Island is only the fifth state in the nation to offer a statewide community health website. The site highlights hospitals’ commitment to public health by tracking statewide improvement and showcasing hospital best practices.

In accordance with Affordable Care Act, hospitals recently received approval from their boards of trustees on the assessment and implementation plans they created. The final reports have been released and can be viewed at www.rihealthcarematters.org.

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Founded over a half century ago, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island is a statewide trade organization that assists member hospitals in effectively meeting the health care needs of Rhode Island, through advocacy, representation, education and services. HARI members work collaboratively to address issues threatening access to health care including increasing health costs, rising medical liability premiums and decreasing reimbursement. Together we work to ensure that all Rhode Islanders will receive comprehensive, high-quality health care.