

# TRACKING TRENDS

## AHRQ Report

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released the 2016 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report (QDR). The annual report is mandated by Congress to provide a comprehensive overview of the quality of healthcare received by the general U.S. population and disparities in care experienced by different racial and socioeconomic groups. The report assesses the performance of our healthcare system and identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses, as well as disparities, for access to healthcare and quality of healthcare. Rhode Island performed well in the report, earning one of the nation's highest overall quality scores. However, there is opportunity to address health equity in Rhode Island.

## Rhode Island's Quality and Disparity Performance

State-level data show that healthcare quality and disparities vary widely depending on state and region. Rhode Island was in the top quartile for overall healthcare quality, however data representing the state's overall performance in racial and ethnic disparities indicated opportunity for improvement in addressing health equity in the state.

The QDR examines quality and disparities based on the six priority areas – patient safety, person-centered care, healthy living, effective treatment, care coordination, and affordable care. It also measures access to care. According to the report, the overall quality of the nation's healthcare has improved, but the pace of improvement varies by priority area.

HARI has pinpointed patient safety, person-centered care, and care coordination as the association's three priority areas for quality improvement. These focus areas correlate with HARI-supported initiatives including:

- The **High Reliability Organizations (HRO)** initiative helps hospitals learn, share and apply nationally-recognized evidence-based practices to achieve the highest standards of quality and safety. High reliability is a science involving specific safety behaviors and tools.
- The **Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN)** is a national initiative aimed at reducing preventable hospital-acquired conditions and readmissions.
- **States Targeting Reduction in Infections via Engagement (STRIVE)**, an initiative aimed at improving the implementation of infection prevention and control efforts in acute care hospitals and long-term acute care hospitals across the U.S.



## Rhode Island's Response

Last year, HARI led a statewide Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in partnership with its member hospitals. Through a coordinated statewide effort, HARI and its hospital members worked with the Rhode Island Department of Health and local community partners to collect health data, gather feedback on regional and local health needs, and develop coordinated plans to address priority health needs across the state. The report identified three priority areas for Rhode Island to focus on improving over the next three years – maternal and child health, chronic disease, and behavioral health.

HARI's on-going commitment to quality improvement and care coordination is reflected in the association's involvement with the Hospital Improvement Innovation Network, an initiative that provides peer-to-peer learning activities to Rhode Island healthcare providers. HARI's work with HIIN has brought focus on reducing preventable hospital-acquired conditions and readmissions. Efforts to address health equity for Medicare beneficiaries has been central to the efforts.

HARI has partnered with Healthcentric Advisors to provide four free educational programs this year to encourage hospitals to enhance patient and family engagement (PFE) activities to support quality improvement efforts. This spring, the HIIN PFE learning series, in partnership with the Jefferson College of Population Health, focused on strategies to mitigate the social determinants of health and revisit the collection of REAL data to promote health equity.

According to the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET), by encouraging hospitals to enhance patient and family engagement activities, hospitals are able to create opportunities for patient and family partnerships through patient and family advisory councils, multidisciplinary bedside rounding, change-of-shift bedside reports and shared decision-making.

Hospitals and health systems in Rhode Island are working hard to ensure that every Rhode Islander receives high-quality, equitable and safe care. In a joint-response to the CHNA and a National Call to Action to Eliminate Health Care Disparities, HARI committed to the American Hospital Association's #123forEquity Campaign. By signing this pledge, HARI has committed to:

- Increase the collection and use of race, ethnicity, language preference and other socio-demographic data.
- Increase cultural competency training
- Increase diversity in leadership and governance



*Last fall, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives co-hosted an event to commemorate the launch of the American Hospital Association's #123forEquity Campaign in Rhode Island. A representative from the AHA's Institute for Diversity presented the keynote address. A panel with representatives from Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, Lifespan, South County Health, Rhode Island Department of Health, Westerly Hospital, and Central Falls School District discussed the state's current needs for health equity.*