

## Rhode Island ICU Collaborative is a bridge to patient care excellence

BY EDWARD J. QUINLAN

Here in the Ocean State you're hard pressed to travel more than five miles without crossing a bridge. They're as central to our transportation system as back roads and highways. Whether crossing streams, bays, rivers or roadways, bridges get us to where we want to go.



QUINLAN

In health care, we move in just one direction – toward improved patient outcomes. In Rhode Island, hospitals participate in countless projects that work to accomplish this goal.

The mission of these initiatives include improving health literacy and cultural competency, standardizing surgical protocols, preventing infections, achieving greater transparency, and the list goes on and on. Hospitals commit immeasurable resources to these programs and are dedicated to achieving success.

Perhaps the most accomplished of these examples is the Rhode Island ICU (Intensive Care Unit) Collaborative.

In 2005, intensive care units across Rhode Island embarked on an important journey to improve quality and patient safety. Since then, the Rhode Island ICU

Collaborative has had a profound impact on patient care in our state.

ICUs make use of the greatest advancements in medical science and represent areas with great opportunity to prevent death and reduce costs. During the past four years, ICU teams have implemented evidence-based practice to reduce the rate of catheter-related blood stream infections, ventilator-associated pneumonia, and improve the culture of safety, which ultimately drives clinical performance. Accomplishments have included:

- Decreasing the rate of catheter-related blood stream infections by 45% and achieving a statewide rate below that national average.
- An 18% drop in ventilator-associated pneumonia.
- Improvement in staff's perception of the safety climate in more than half of the ICUs.
- Extending the reach of the project to the emergency department through participation in the Surviving Sepsis Campaign, an initiative developed to improve the management, diagnosis and treatment of sepsis. After just one year of work, Rhode Island's sepsis mortality rate has fallen 14% below the national average.

Work with this Collaborative has positively impacted the care provided to patients in all 263 ICU beds across the

state (Rhode Island is the only state in the nation to achieve 100% participation in such a project). Hospitals in Rhode Island care for more than 16,000 patients each year in the ICU setting.

A conservative estimate of the impact of the ICU Collaborative revealed:

- Nearly \$6 million in avoided costs;
- 45 lives saved; and
- A reduction of 2,076 patient days.

The Rhode Island ICU Collaborative is just one example of Rhode Island's "Bridges to Patient Care Excellence." Each of these programs helps to move our hospitals toward their ultimate goal of improved patient care.

The initiatives provide unique opportunities for collaboration, learning, and resource sharing – all of which help to shape policies, materials and procedures that improve clinical outcomes. This sharing extends well beyond hospital walls. Support is provided by organizations and individuals throughout our state including Quality Partners of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Quality Institute and Rhode Island's health insurers and elected officials.

In fact, the bridges in our state may just be endless – each providing an important pathway to get us to our destination.

*Quinlan is president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island.*

## Rhode Island Collaborative

See the column at right by Ed Quinlan, president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island, about the success of his state's ICU collaborative to improve quality and patient safety in intensive care units.

The results are impressive, but even more impressive is the high degree of collaboration among hospitals that often find themselves competing with each other in a small state. Rhode Island's example of

sharing best practices and solutions that work is emblematic of the kind of progress being made in states and communities across America.