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The Role of Teamwork in Improving Value in Rural Health

As health care financing shifts to incent and reward a more comprehensive approach to patient and community health, teamwork will play an increasingly critical role in the transformation to value. The ability of multidisciplinary professionals, both clinical and non-clinical, to work together efficiently and effectively has never been more important. To create increased value in a rural health care environment, teamwork is essential not only within specific settings of care, but also when multiple organizations, such as hospitals, primary care, skilled nursing facilities, home care, public health, and social and human service organizations, work together.

TeamSTEPPS is an evidence-based teamwork system designed to optimize patient outcomes by improving communication and teamwork skills among health care professionals. TeamSTEPPS was developed and is maintained by AHRQ, the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. All supporting resources and tools are available at no cost.

Rural health leaders on the road to value may want to:

- Take a brief 12-question assessment that helps answer the question, “Is your organization ready for TeamSTEPPS?” Based on your results, review the Tips and Suggestions for Enhancing Organizational Readiness.
<http://teamstepps.ahrq.gov/readiness/>
- Review rural relevant AHRQ TeamSTEPPS webinars and resources, including:
 - Webinar #5 *TeamSTEPPS & Critical Access Hospitals*, an overview of TeamSTEPPS in rural health care facilities and critical access hospitals, focusing on teamwork as an essential component of a culture of safety in a project with 27 critical access hospitals
 - Webinar #14 *TeamSTEPPS and Physician Engagement*, an overview of approaches for engaging physicians in TeamSTEPPS
<http://teamstepps.ahrq.gov/webinars/>
 - Critical Access Hospital focused scenarios for use in training and discussion
http://www.unmc.edu/patient-safety/docs/CAH_Coaching_Scenarios_Revised.pdf



- Order the Core TeamSTEPPS Training Curriculum Materials to help build teamwork skills in your organization. TeamSTEPPS is presented in a multimedia format, with tools to help your health care organization plan, conduct, and evaluate its own team training program. All materials are available online and in printed copies. The core curriculum includes:
 - An Instructor Guide that explains how to conduct a pre-training assessment of an organization's training needs, how to present the information effectively, and how to manage organizational change. The guide also provides an evidence base for each lesson.
 - Nine video vignettes about how failures in teamwork and communication can place patients in jeopardy and how successful teams can work to improve patient outcomes.
 - A Pocket Guide that summarizes TeamSTEPPS principles in a portable, easy-to-use format.
 - PowerPoint® presentations that convey basic TeamSTEPPS principles.

All of the materials above can be ordered as a toolkit (including the CD, DVD, and printed materials in a three-inch loose-leaf binder) from the AHRQ Clearinghouse, on a single-copy basis, at cost. A 17 x 22-inch poster that tells your staff you are adopting TeamSTEPPS is also available from the AHRQ Clearinghouse.

<http://teamstepps.ahrq.gov/abouttoolsmaterials.htm>

- Consider making the focus on teamwork a community-wide endeavor, inviting local partners in care delivery to participate together with you, which is a unique opportunity in a rural health care context. TeamSTEPPS versions for hospitals, long-term care, and primary care are available.
- Consider sending a team from your community to one of the TeamSTEPPS national master trainer courses or to the national conference. AHRQ sponsors these opportunities and there is no registration cost. Your local QIO (Quality Improvement Organization) or HEN (Hospital Engagement Network) may also be available to provide support and assistance.

<http://teamstepps.ahrq.gov/trainingEligibility.htm>

For more information about Rural Health Value, contact:

Rural Health Value
University of Iowa | College of Public Health
Department of Health Management and Policy
Web: <http://www.RuralHealthValue.org>
E-mail: cph-rupri-inquiries@uiowa.edu
Phone: (319) 384-3831

Tell Rural Health Value about your rural health care delivery or financing innovation.
Go to <http://www.RuralHealthValue.org> and click on “Share Your Innovation.”