



**Aligning Forces
for Quality** | Improving Health & Health Care in
Communities Across Humboldt County

An initiative of the California Center for Rural Policy and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Aligning Forces Humboldt Receives \$1 Million to Improve Quality, Value of Health Care in Humboldt County

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selects local nonprofit to continue in national effort

Arcata, Calif. (May 14, 2013) – Aligning Forces Humboldt, a project led by the California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University, announced today that it has been awarded a grant of \$1 million over the next two years for the final phase of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s [Aligning Forces for Quality \(AF4Q\) initiative](#), a national effort to lift the quality and value of health care in communities across America.

Aligning Forces Humboldt (AFH) is an alliance led by the California Center for Rural Policy, in partnership with the Humboldt Del Norte Independent Practice Association and St. Joseph Health – Humboldt County. Together, this alliance is one of 16 organizations across the country designated as an AF4Q community, and has been participating in the initiative since 2008.

The *Aligning Forces for Quality* program was originally launched by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2006 and remains the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken by a U.S. philanthropy. Through the program, AFH works to improve health care in Humboldt County by engaging patients in their care, publicly reporting on the quality of care provided by local physicians and hospitals, implementing quality improvement programs in doctors’ offices and hospitals, and exploring new payment methods to promote high-quality care.

“This grant allows us to continue to collaborate with community leaders, patients, doctors, nurses, employers, and insurers so everyone in Humboldt County can receive the right care at the right time.” said Melissa Jones, AFH Project Director. “We are committed to finding new ways to improve our health care system so we can have a healthier community.”

In the fourth and final phase of AF4Q, AFH, in partnership with the Humboldt Del Norte Independent Practice Association and St. Joseph Health – Humboldt County, will accelerate its work, leveraging

progress in these focus areas and striving for sustainable progress in meeting the goals of a reformed health care system: better value, greater transparency, and improved care coordination.

In the next two years, AFH will expand on the cutting-edge changes already underway to achieve sustainable improvements in the quality of health care local hospitals and doctors deliver, while continuing to focus on developing and testing models of paying for health care that encourage high-quality care and use dollars more wisely.

“The final phase of this program is not so much an end as a beginning,” said Anne F. Weiss, MPP, team director and senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Our goal is not just lasting change in these 16 communities, but also to provide models of reform for the rest of the country to follow.”

AFH aims to improve care coordination among different systems of care, through the Care Transitions Program at St. Joseph Hospital and the Priority Care Program at the Humboldt Del Norte Independent Practice Association. The alliance will track outcomes around reduced readmissions rates and decreased ED visits for regular care. AFH will also focus on patient engagement, striving to help patients become better advocates for their own care and improving the health care delivery system.

AF4Q is designed to drive quality improvement by aligning key players in communities, and brings an unprecedented commitment of resources, expertise, and training to turn proven practices into real results. AFH’s continued participation brings direct financial support and technical assistance and training from national experts, coordinated by the Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University, the national AF4Q program office.

Additional grant recipients include:

- Albuquerque Coalition for Healthcare Quality – Albuquerque, N.M.
- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Better Health *Greater* Cleveland – Cleveland
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- Maine Aligning Forces for Quality – Augusta, Maine
- Massachusetts Health Quality Partners – Boston
- Minnesota Community Measurement – Minneapolis
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation – Portland, Ore.
- Puget Sound Health Alliance – Seattle
- P² Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

For more information about AFH and its work, visit www.AligningForcesHumboldt.org.

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