

Healthcare Quality Training Center Opens in Pittsburgh

December 14, 2012

Thanks to a joint project of the **Jewish Healthcare Foundation** (JHF) and the **Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative** and **Health Careers Futures**, the QIT Center opened in Pittsburgh, PA, last week. JHF matched funds granted by the Allegheny County Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund to establish the center. It is a physical and virtual space dedicated to training the frontline healthcare workforce in quality improvement (QI) using information technology (IT) for providing safe and efficient care.

In an era of rapidly advancing technology, increasing complexity in medicine and escalating costs, the practical application of IT will drive QI. And the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act have accelerated the need for new skills in the healthcare workforce.

Karen Wolk Feinstein, president and CEO of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and of the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, said, "Care is more complex and service providers must meet new requirements for safety and quality of care. Current and future healthcare workers at all levels of the system need new skills to use IT for QI effectively to accomplish those goals. So we built the QIT Center -Where QI meets IT - to serve that need in our region."

A variety of programs and curricula will be offered through QIT for healthcare executives, managers, administrators, service providers, frontline workers, students in health professions, as well as data analysts, health informaticists and technology professionals who are passionate about quality improvement in health care.

Besides serving Southwestern Pennsylvania, the QIT Center aims for regional, national and global reach. Experts and thought leaders from service environments, academia, research and public health communities will come together in the physical space and in virtual communities for discussion, research, and training. The opening program on Dec. 5 highlighted the QIT Center's national and global reach by including featured guest speakers speaking remotely from Israel and Washington, DC, in addition to regional leaders, commenting on the theme, "The Impact and Influence of Information Technology on Quality Improvement."

A flagship program of the center, the QIT Health Innovators Fellowship, was announced at the event. The fellowship will satisfy a widespread interest in inventing "IT Solutions" to advance healthcare quality improvement among graduate students in the health professions. An intensive, 10-week program, the fellowship will consist of five bi-weekly sessions beginning in February 2013. In the final session, teams will demonstrate their proposed solution to a judging panel which will award a prize to the winning team.

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