

Southwestern PA Healthcare Teams Honored for Commitment and Results in Quality and Excellence in Patient Care

By Karen Poirier

Three local teams were recipients of the fifth annual *Fine Awards for Teamwork Excellence in Health Care* at a reception held in downtown Pittsburgh on Thursday, November 8, 2012. Sponsored by The Fine Foundation and the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF), the Fine Awards were established to reinforce the critical role teamwork plays in health care. The theme of this year's awards was "Transitions of Care Partnerships," focusing on improving outcomes for patients who are transitioning in and out of, or between, different types of care settings and providers.

"This year's winners illustrate the dramatic difference that good transitions and integrated care teams can make to patient outcomes," said Milton Fine, president and chairman of The Fine Foundation. "By putting the needs of the patient first, these organizations have come up with creative solutions to break down the silos that have historically separated different care settings and created confusion, delay, and needless suffering."

A distinguished team of regional and national experts comprised the selection committee that selected the winners.

"With the growing awareness of the need for improved outcomes, more healthcare providers are turning to continuous improvement models or Lean methodology as an effective way to design and deliver better care. We were delighted with the caliber and quantity of entries, which proves that the ongoing work of organizations like the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative results in the successful dissemination of these best practices," said Karen Wolk Feinstein, president and CEO of JHF.

The *Gold Award* for Excellence in Transitions of Care was awarded to UPMC Montefiore and the Montefiore Rehabilitation Institute, Transplant Service Line, for Preventing Readmissions through Good Discharge Planning. Prior to the team's project, the readmission rate for patients with complex post-transplant care needs was 43%, with more than 4 out of 10 patients being readmitted to the hospital within 30 days after discharge. After continuous improvement efforts transformed a fragmented discharge process into a streamlined and highly communicative one, readmission rates came down to less than 1 in 10. Team members will share a \$25,000 award. UPMC Montefiore and the Montefiore Rehabilitation Institute will each receive \$5,000 for their support.

The *Silver Award* went to a team from Excelsa Health – Latrobe and Westmoreland Hospitals for Reducing Observation Status Wait Times. Patients coming to the emergency room who qualified for Observation Services, often were admitted to the hospital and stayed for more than 48 hours. This situation resulted in unhappy patients and hospital stays that exceeded reimbursable limits. To address these issues, emergency department and acute care nursing teams collaborated to design new protocols which reduced



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L-R, Sheila Fine, Milton Fine, and Karen Wolk Feinstein

patient wait times in the Emergency Department and also reduced inpatient admissions by 20% and reduced length of stay. Members of the winning teams will share \$15,000. Excelsa Health, Latrobe and Westmoreland Hospitals will each receive \$4,000 as the supporting organizations.

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Children's Community Pediatrics, and Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic of UPMC won the *Bronze Award* for Integrated Behavioral Health Services in the Pediatric Medical Home. Because mental health concerns are among the top five conditions affecting children and youth, this team brought together leaders from pediatrician's offices, psychiatry, and counseling centers to provide earlier access to quality, evidence-based interventions for youth to promote wellness. Their efforts have resulted in improved and simplified access to mental and behavioral healthcare for pediatric patients and families and improved overall quality and integration of care. Compared to the national norms of 50-70% show rates for stand-alone behavioral health clinics, this team sees a 90% show rate. Team members will share a \$10,000 award. Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Children's Community Pediatrics, and Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic of UPMC will divide a \$6,000 award for their support. Short videos about each winning team are available on the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative web site and on Tomorrow's HealthCare™, JHF's web-based quality improvement platform designed to facilitate forward-thinking healthcare organizations' efforts to meet quality, safety, and efficiency targets. More information can be found at www.phri.org or www.jhf.org.

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