

## Virginia Program Proves a Good P4P Case Study

*By John E. Brush, M.D., F.A.C.C. and C. Michael Valentine, M.D., F.A.C.C.*

For the last three years, the ACC and its Virginia chapter (VCACC) have teamed with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in a first-of-its-kind program that offers participating Virginia hospitals financial incentives linked to specific performance objectives for cardiovascular disease.

Through the Quality Insights: Hospital Incentive Program (Q-HIP), the ACC and VCACC have worked with Anthem to create working definitions of quality cardiac care and provide technical expertise regarding data collection and performance measurement of cardiac procedures. In addition, they helped develop a statewide “Quality Leadership Council” made up of cardiologists from across Virginia.

“In order to improve, hospitals needed an accurate measure of performance,” says Dr. Brush, who leads the VCACC involvement in the project. “The ACC provided — and continues to provide — the tools needed to do just that, drawing on its widely recognized clinical practice guidelines, as well as the powerful and confidential ACC National Cardiovascular Data Registry (ACC-NCDR®).”

To date, Q-HIP has been so successful that it has far exceeded its initial target of five hospitals and totals 47 hospitals participating in the program. These hospitals have improved patient safety, patient satisfaction and health outcomes by raising awareness about effective strategies to improve cardiac care, says Dr. Valentine.

Moving forward, both Brush and Valentine say the lessons learned from the program should be considered when it comes to the development of national performance programs. They suggest that the program should —

- choose indicators that are clinically relevant
- choose targets for performance that are fair, based on real-world data
- use valid statistical models
- make rewards real, rather than simply shifting funds from one group to another

In addition, rewards should engage the entire hospital staff from ancillary employees to physicians.

“With the volume and complexity of medical care growing rapidly, it is clear that quality of medical care demands our urgent attention,” says Valentine. “Through this unique collaboration, we have had an extraordinary opportunity to achieve breakthrough levels of quality for patients in Virginia and hopefully across the country.”

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