

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**GERBER MEMORIAL HEALTH SERVICES  
ELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN  
NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE**

*Nurses from Gerber Memorial Health Services  
will develop innovations to improve quality of care*

*Program is part of effort to align local forces for improved health care quality*

West Michigan – *Aligning Forces for Quality* in West Michigan announced today that Gerber Memorial Health Services has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in a new effort to improve the quality of care in hospitals. The program, called *Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB)*, will help nurses and other frontline staff identify, test and implement changes that will improve the quality and safety of patient care in their medical and surgical units.

The program is part of RWJF's *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) initiative, a cornerstone of the Foundation's \$300 million commitment to improving quality in specific regions across the United States. The Alliance for Health was designated to coordinate and lead local *AF4Q* efforts in West Michigan. West Michigan was selected last year as one of 14 *AF4Q* communities nationwide.

The new nurse-led program is based on successful pilot efforts by the RWJF to transform care at the bedside, by making hospital staff who spend the most time directly caring for patients the key drivers of quality improvement. Hospitals that have already participated in the program report a cultural shift on their medical-surgical units that has produced better clinical outcomes, more time spent with patients by staff, and lower turnover of nursing jobs.

"We know that the quality of health care can be improved in every community in the nation, and we are delighted that Gerber Memorial Health Services was chosen to participate in this important project," said Lody Zwarenstejn, President of the Alliance for Health.

"Having Gerber Memorial Health Services involved in these efforts is an important part of our strategy to improve quality of care," said Mary Johnson, RN, Nurse Manager of the Gerber Memorial Health Services Medical/Surgical Unit, the area the Project will be implemented "Not only will we learn new ways to improve care in our community, but we will be sharing what works with other hospitals around the nation that need our insights.

Experts say the effort to transform care at the bedside is unusual in its focus on engaging nurses and other frontline staff to develop and lead the quality improvement efforts. Ideas for improving care come not from the hospital's executives, but from the nurses who treat patients every day. Nurse-led teams identify where change is needed on their unit, suggest and test potential solutions, and decide whether and how those innovations should be implemented.

"While quality care is always our priority, this program will help us develop a new roadmap for providing care that is safe, reliable, and patient-centered," said Sue Nieboer, VP of Clinical Operations at Gerber

Memorial Health Services. “We’re delighted to be learning from others and sharing what we know nationwide.

Led by RWJF, the TCAB Collaborative will be overseen by The Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University Medical Center School of Public Health and Health Services, which serves as the national program office for the Aligning Forces for Quality initiative. Technical assistance will be provided by the American Organization of Nurse Executives. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement will convene training workshops for participants. The first cohort will kick-off this month and the second cohort launches fall of 2009.

In every region involved in the AF4Q initiative including West Michigan, broad-based teams of people who get care, give care, and pay for care are working together to improve health care quality. By aligning people from across the community in different AF4Q initiatives, the Alliance for Health hopes to help achieve community-wide transformation of health care in West Michigan.

For more information, visit [www.afh.org](http://www.afh.org) or [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

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*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).*

Gerber Memorial Health Services (known officially as the Newaygo County General Hospital Association) is a 77-bed, acute care hospital and health care organization which serves the entire community of Newaygo County. Recognized as one of the 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work for in West Michigan, and the Outstanding National Rural Healthcare Organization of 2008, GMHS also received the 2007 Governor’s Award for Excellence for improving the quality of care and patient safety in the hospital setting, HealthGrades recognition for Outstanding Patient Satisfaction, and HealthGrades 5-Star Awards for Total Hip Replacement and Pulmonary Care. Services include a 24-hour Emergency Department, Women’s Health Center, Cancer Center, modern Surgical Suites and accompanying ICU Unit, Birth Center, Tamarac - The Center for Health and Well-Being, New Focus, The Center for Mental Health and Continu-Care Home Health Services. Gerber Memorial Health Services is located in Fremont, Michigan, 45 miles NW of Grand Rapids. For more information go to [www.gerberhospital.org](http://www.gerberhospital.org).