

## CLINICAL INITIATIVES

Multiple initiatives have been proposed to address: clinical services; the quality of patient care; faculty practice plans, including consideration of joint and/or multi-professional practice plans across schools; and joint department chair appointments to integrate complementary schools and their clinical practices more efficiently. A few of these are described below. Other initiatives will be developed to address these goals during the five-year time period of the strategic plan, responding to the rapidly changing health care environment.

### *Accountable Care Organization*

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), which became law in 2010, provides incentives for health care organizations to become accountable care organizations (ACOs) in the belief that ACOs will decrease health care spending and improve quality of care. ACOs, as defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, are “groups of doctors, hospitals, and other healthcare providers, who come together voluntarily to give coordinated high quality care to their Medicare patients.” The goal is to “ensure that patients, especially the chronically ill, receive appropriate care at the right time, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of services and preventing medical errors.” When an ACO succeeds in delivering high quality care, as well as spending health care dollars more wisely, it shares in the savings it achieves for the Medicare program.

Robert Wood Johnson Partners (RWJP), a new ACO, became operational in January 2014, as a joint effort of Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH), and the Robert Wood Johnson Health System (RWJHS). Its collaborative background, bridging high quality clinical care with robust academic and research resources, helps differentiate RWJP from other ACOs.

Through RWJP, 6,000 Medicare beneficiaries now have access to 70 primary care doctors, advanced practice nurses, and approximately 600 specialists, including members of the faculty practice, the Robert Wood Johnson Medical Group, as well as physicians in private practice. All patients have a yearly care plan, making them part of the multidisciplinary team at the point of service, with the practice serving as a patient-centered medical home. Central to the new ACO's efforts is the coordination of treatment among doctors, other health professionals, and hospitals through more efficient use of electronic health records, as well as restructuring initiatives aimed at improving communication with patients and involving them directly in their care.

Building on the Medicare ACO infrastructure, additional opportunities are being pursued, including the development of New Brunswick Health Partners, which will operate as an ACO under New Jersey's Medicaid program, serving the area's low income population. Similarly, *RBHS clinicians in Newark are working with the Greater Newark Health Care Coalition to develop a Medicaid ACO for that community.*

RWJP is designed to create a seamless patient experience, from an individual's visit with a primary care physician, to care from specialists throughout the group or participating network, as well as inpatient or outpatient care provided by RWJUH or one of the more than 70 hospitals and health facilities/providers that comprise RWJHS. While its initial patient base consists of Medicare beneficiaries, RWJP hopes to extend its services to employees of the health system and Rutgers in the near future. Consideration also will be given to extending services to other state employees. An application to participate in the state Medicaid ACO program is also under development, bringing the benefits of RWJP to more vulnerable populations.

Benefits of RWJP to RBHS extend well beyond promoting advanced clinical care for populations. RWJP will create the potential for extensive data bases for research, extending from the genetic/molecular level to health systems/population levels. Major research universities are discovering

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the benefits of integrated delivery systems to enable translational scientific research, and RWJP will help to foster this at Rutgers, likely playing an important role in a CTSA application.

RWJP will also create training laboratories for interdisciplinary collaborative care among health and health-related professions. Patient-centered medical homes, a foundational part of RWJP, require advanced team-based care, and through RWJP Rutgers will have the ability to train tomorrow's collaborative workforce that new health care systems require.