

## ALIGNING FORCES FOR QUALITY – SOUTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA RECEIVES \$1.3 MILLION TO LIFT THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE IN YORK AND ADAMS COUNTIES

*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selects Aligning Forces for Quality – South Central Pennsylvania to continue participation in national quality improvement initiative*

**York, Pa. (May 5, 2011)** – Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) – South Central Pennsylvania announced today that it has been selected to receive a grant of \$1.3 million over the next two years from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) initiative, a national effort to improve the quality and value of health care in communities across America.

AF4Q – South Central PA is one of 16 organizations across the United States that has been designated as an *Aligning Forces* community, and has been participating in the initiative since 2007.

The *Aligning Forces for Quality* program was originally launched by the foundation in 2006 and remains the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken by a U.S. philanthropy. Through the program, AF4Q – South Central PA works to improve health care in York and Adams counties by engaging patients in their care, publicly reporting on the performance of physicians and hospitals and implementing quality improvement techniques. The foundation hopes to develop national models of reform based on the lessons learned by AF4Q – South Central PA, as well as the other *Aligning Forces* communities.

“We are excited that we are able to continue bringing together community leaders, patients, doctors, nurses, employers and insurers to improve health care in York and Adams counties,” said AF4Q – South Central PA’s Project Director, Christine Amy. “Given today’s complicated health care system, some may see it as impossible to change, but over the past few years we have accomplished great results, and look forward to continuing our efforts. We are eager to continue down this path of inventing new ways to provide better quality care.”

Since 2007, AF4Q – South Central PA has formed many initiatives and collaboratives to focus on quality improvement, consumer engagement, and performance. For example, *Transforming Care at the Bedside*, focuses on nurse and patient interaction; *Health Literacy Learning Collaborative* is implementing “Teach Back” to ensure patients really understand what the doctors are saying to them; and the [Community Checkup](#), shows how well [more than 50] York and Adams counties’ doctor offices are providing diabetes and heart disease care, and how well patients are participating in their care. Through these efforts, as well as many others like the [I Can! Challenge](#), improving care, while working to lower or maintain the current costs of care is, and continues to be AF4Q – South Central PA’s goal.

Over the next two years, AF4Q – South Central PA and the 15 other AF4Q communities will take the tools of measurement, improvement and engagement and use them to demonstrate change outside their markets. The program will work to expand the fundamental, cutting-edge changes already implemented in local communities to meet the goals of a reformed health care system: better value, greater transparency and improved care coordination.

“The *Aligning Forces* communities are models of health care improvement. The community organizations working on this effort have pioneered ground-breaking concepts that are also being explored through federal reform and have attracted bipartisan support, such as physician performance reports, patient-centered medical homes, and of late, payment reform,” said Anne F. Weiss, MPP, team

director and senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “In this next phase, communities will continue to make measurable improvements in quality by placing greater focus on increasing the value of health care delivered.”

“With the additional funding, we will continue to empower patients to take action to improve their health and communicate the importance of measuring and improving quality,” stated Amy.

More specifically, AF4Q – South Central PA will focus its funds on selected areas of care (diabetes, heart failure and vascular diseases), health information technology, data measurement, consumer education and patient engagement, reduction of avoidable hospitalizations and emergency department visits of those with diabetes and heart disease, and payment reform.

“Recently, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute released the 2011 *County Health Rankings* ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)) which proves there are wide disparities in the health care available. We can’t ignore what the data shows us – which is the need to make change. This funding will assist York and Adams counties in making these changes.”

For more information about AF4Q – South Central PA and its work, visit [www.aligning4healthpa.org](http://www.aligning4healthpa.org). For more information about this press release, please contact Megan Kurtz at [Megan@suasion.us](mailto:Megan@suasion.us) or 717-432-2468.

*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).*

**Aligning Forces for Quality – South Central Pennsylvania** (AF4Q – South Central PA) is an initiative of Healthy York County Coalition. Since its establishment in 1994, Healthy York County Coalition (HYCC) has worked to bring together stakeholders from across the community and to unite them in health and wellness efforts. The Aligning Forces for Quality – South Central Pennsylvania initiative created in 2007, works to improve the care that individuals with chronic disease currently receive. It also conducted the I Can! Challenge, a 12-week challenge developed to give people the direction and support for improving their health. For more information on I Can! Challenge, visit [www.ICanChallenge.com](http://www.ICanChallenge.com), and for more details on AF4Q – South Central PA, visit [www.aligning4healthpa.org](http://www.aligning4healthpa.org).