

# AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

## Why not the best?

*How Ohio's children's hospitals are taking the lead in health-care reform*

Kathleen Sebelius, the secretary of health and human services, has the task to ensure the new health-care law lives up to billing. Among the expectations of reform is that patients, in the words of her department, will be able to receive "the right care, at the right time, in the right setting, every time." Sebelius unveiled the initial steps to that end in Columbus on Monday.

The flaws long in the system call for a plan to ensure that health care is safe and of consistent high quality across the country. Years of studies show excess costs and uneven outcomes, a fragmented system encouraging duplication and overuse of many services, high rates of medical errors and increasing paperwork. In putting together the National Strategy for Quality Improvement, the Obama White House is taking the catalyst's role, spurring hospitals and care centers to collaborate on and adopt proven practices to improve efficiency and quality.

The Sebelius stop in Columbus was calculated, in that regard. A partnership of 25 hospitals, including Ohio's children's hospitals, is a functioning model of the essential collaboration on best practices the National Quality Strategy is aiming to achieve. Launched in 2009, the project, Solutions for Patient Safety, is reducing markedly in the children's hospitals the number of adverse reactions to drugs, infections acquired in surgery and other hospital settings, plus other problems in care delivery that compromise outcomes and increase costs.

Sebelius observed that it takes roughly 17 years for a best practice or strategy to become the norm in the health-care system. The national strategy signals clearly the glacial pace is no longer acceptable.

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Ohio Children's Hospital Association  
Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives



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## Ohio's Children's Hospitals:

National leaders...working together to save lives  
and bend the health care cost curve



## OUR VISION: To Make Ohio the Safest Place In the Nation for Children's Health Care

Ohio's children's hospitals are the national leader in quality of care for our youngest patients, and demonstrate this through a first-of-its-kind statewide collaborative to save children's lives and save dollars by improving quality in a meaningful, measurable way. Importantly, because one in three Ohio children – and half of the patients in Ohio's children's hospitals – are dependent on Medicaid for health care coverage, these savings are value-added for taxpayers.

Ohio children's hospitals have demonstrated a successful track record of achieving substantial, life-saving results to improve outcomes and avert costs through collaborative projects, which are spearheaded by leadership at the CEO-level and supported by a talented quality and patient safety leaders group.

Overall, these efforts have accomplished:

- Saving **\$11.7 million dollars and 7,758 children from unnecessary harm** by reducing overall adverse drug events and surgical site infections in designated cardiac, neurosurgical and orthopedic procedures through the Ohio Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety Collaborative (OCHSPS) since August 2009.
- Prevention of more than **8,000 late preterm and near term births** – reducing Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) admissions and infant deaths by approximately 250 and **saving \$10 million in annual Ohio health care costs** – through the Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative (OPQC).
- A **20 percent reduction in NICU hospital-associated infections** among preterm infants, **saving \$10 million in annual health care costs**, through OPQC.
- A **46 percent reduction in life-threatening preventable cardiac and pulmonary arrests**, or "codes," outside of the Intensive Care Units through a protocol called a Rapid Response Team.
- Development of specific **Pediatric Quality Measures for Public Reporting**.

*Ohio Governor John Kasich visiting with hospital leaders and clinicians. Also pictured: Greg Moody, Director, Office of Health Transformation; John McCarthy, Director, Ohio Medicaid; Ted Wymyslo, MD, Director, Ohio Department of Health.*



*It's not a promise or a pilot – it's a proven track record.*

**M**arch 2011: U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius visits Ohio to recognize the state's children's hospitals for working collaboratively and leading the nation in efforts to improve patient safety.

*“Over the last two years, I've visited neighborhoods that are improving health by serving healthier school lunches, met with employers who are bringing down health costs with onsite health clinics, and toured hospitals that are showing that it's possible to improve patient outcomes. That's why I came to Columbus: to recognize Solutions for Patient Safety for their success, to learn how they've done it, and to help their best ideas spread.”*

*Kathleen Sebelius,  
U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services*

**December 2011:** Secretary Sebelius announces a \$4.3 million, two-year contract (with the options to extend an additional year for \$1.6 million) to provide the funds to spread Ohio children's hospitals' learnings and processes through a national network to reduce serious harm across all children's hospitals in the United States.

**Ohio Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety**  
Every patient. Every day.

*Secretary Sebelius with George Barrett, CEO of Cardinal Health, whose foundation has provided the initial funding for OCHSPS efforts.*

**N**ot only will Ohio's children's hospitals be leading nationwide patient safety efforts, but they will also be working together through the Ohio Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety learning network to eliminate all serious harm in Ohio's children's hospitals.

Initial efforts will focus on eliminating Serious Safety Events (SSEs) in Ohio children's hospitals and developing a patient harm index to capture all elements of harm occurring at children's hospitals across the state. SSEs are deviations from standard care resulting in severe harm. The Cardinal Health Foundation has provided \$2.5 million to-date in support of these efforts, and the public-private partnership is supported by several leading businesses. A complete list of funders is available on our website – [www.solutionsforpatientsafety.org](http://www.solutionsforpatientsafety.org).

**This groundbreaking work is the first of its kind in the country.**

*“By eliminating avoidable errors, we not only improve the quality of care, we can reduce costs and save money for individuals, taxpayers and employers. It is a win-win for everyone involved.”*

*Greg Moody, Director,  
Ohio Office of Health Transformation*

