New campaign aims to save 100,000 lives in 18 months

Saving 100,000 lives of hospital patients over the next 18 months—and every year thereafter—is the goal of a project launched in December by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), Boston.

The campaign aims to sign up 1,500 to 2,000 hospitals. About 500 had signed up as of Jan 18. Participants will commit to implement specific steps in at least 1 of 6 areas:

- Deploy rapid response teams at the first sign of patient decline.
- Deliver reliable, evidence-based care for acute myocardial infarction.
- Prevent adverse drug events by implementing medication reconciliation.
- Prevent central line infections by implementing a series of interdependent, evidence-based measures.
- Prevent surgical site infection (SSI) by delivering prophylactic antibiotics correctly as well as taking certain other steps.
- Prevent ventilator-associated pneumonia by employing evidence-based strategies.

“These are all changes that we have learned work. This is a collection of scientifically grounded measures that can avoid needless deaths,” IHI leader Don Berwick, MD, said in an informational phone call Jan 18.

IHI says it launched the campaign because, though organizations are working to make care safer, the pace of change “remains slow and fragmented.”

The campaign plans to focus on what IHI says are tested “life-saving methods” that should be widely practiced.

Dr Berwick said IHI is working with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and others to develop consistent indicators for each recommendation. JCAHO and CMS are partners in the campaign.

“We want to make things easier, not harder, by aligning with others’ evidence-based measures,” he said.

No cost to join

Hospitals can sign up on IHI’s web site. There is no cost to join.

Those who join will be able to participate in informational calls and have access to web-based tools such as e-mail lists and discussion boards. There will be conferences, such as IHI’s 1st Annual International Summit on Redesigning Hospital Care June 8 to 10 in San Diego.

By signing up, IHI says hospitals will agree to implement 1 or more of the 6 key steps and submit mortality data, which will be made public only in the aggregate.

Surgical infection prevention

On preventing surgical infection, IHI is encouraging hospitals to implement a set of interventions for all surgical patients. The 3 components are:

- guideline-based use of prophylactic antibiotics
- appropriate hair removal
- perioperative glucose control.

For antibiotics and hair removal, IHI refers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guideline for Prevention of Surgical Site Infection, 1999 (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/SSI/SSI_guideline.htm).

Links to other tools are on the IHI web, including success stories on improving the antibiotic process and resources from the CMS Surgical Infection Prevention Collaborative, conducted in 2003.

CMS, JCAHO, and the Leapfrog Group are pushing hospitals to do better on giving prophylactic antibiotics.

The IHI campaign is supported in part by Blue Cross and Kaiser Permanente.

Partnering with IHI in addition to CMS and JCAHO are the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the American Medical Association, the National Patient Safety Foundation, Premier Inc, and VHA Inc, among others.

IHI is a nonprofit organization founded by Dr Berwick to promote health care improvement.

For more on the campaign, go to the IHI web site at: www.ihi.org/IHI/Programs/Campaign/Campaign.htm. Or call 866/787-0831.