

For Immediate Release

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**New Pilot Program Brings Primary Care Boards
and Societies Together to Improve Healthcare Quality**

EVANSTON, IL – May 9, 2006 – Several leading physician organizations have joined in a first-ever partnership to help physicians improve the care they deliver to patients, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS®) Research and Education Foundation announced today. The partnership, which includes the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Board of Family Medicine, the American Board of Internal Medicine, and the American Board of Pediatrics, is launching *Improving Performance in Practice* (IPIP), a pilot program giving doctors the tools, systems and support they need to provide consistently high quality care and improve patient health. The IPIP program is funded by two grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

IPIP will focus on closing the gap between the care patients receive and recommended care. The RAND Corporation has reported that patients receive only 55 percent of recommended care, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or income.

Physicians participating in IPIP will use performance measures to determine whether patients with conditions such as diabetes and asthma are actually getting the recommended care they need. Initially, 100 physicians in Colorado and North Carolina will pilot IPIP, and lessons learned will be shared across practices to increase knowledge and more rapidly spread effective changes.

“This is the first time all of these physician-led organizations have come together to pool resources and knowledge to assist practices in improving efficiency and care,” states Sheldon Horowitz, MD, Executive Director of the ABMS Research and Education Foundation and principal investigator for IPIP. “IPIP creates a collaborative structure for specialty societies, boards, and other state and national organizations to work together, learn from one another, avoid duplication of effort, and better support primary care physicians in delivering high quality care. It will provide a way to tie together important improvement activities being done by all of these organizations and bring them right to the practicing physicians and the patients they serve.”

The IPIP National Center for Design, Development and Evaluation at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Center for Health Care Quality, will provide support for the two pilot states to implement IPIP and orchestrate ongoing learning. Participating practices will receive free consultation services for practice redesign and technology, access to numerous educational resources, networking with other providers, continuing medical education credit, credit for maintenance of board certification and

preparation for pay-for-performance programs. Over the next several years, the goal is to spread IPIP more widely across the United States.

The Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative (CCGC) – a consortium of over 50 healthcare stakeholders including physicians, payers, employers, hospitals, and others – will lead IPIP in Colorado. “We are very excited about the number of organizations working together in this effort. IPIP will be an excellent vehicle to evaluate the problems in our system and provide support to healthcare teams on the front line trying to solve these problems,” says Marjie Harbrecht, MD, CCGC Medical Director. Five of Colorado’s major health plans have agreed to use one set of performance measures and share data across plans, which will reduce confusion in reporting and promote links between IPIP and pay-for-performance programs.

In North Carolina, IPIP has also assembled a broad coalition, led by the primary care specialties, and including public health and quality improvement organizations. The foundation of the North Carolina IPIP program will be collaboration between North Carolina AHEC, one of the leading Area Health Education Centers in the country, and Community Care of North Carolina, an innovative provider-driven statewide community based network with 4500 physicians and 750,000 patients. “We all understand that there is a major need to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of medical care,” comments Warren Newton, MD, MPH, Chair of the North Carolina IPIP Steering Committee. “North Carolina has been home to many efforts to improve primary care and the care in communities. IPIP allows us to bring many of these efforts together, while keeping physicians and patients at the center of the process.”

"Ensuring that all Americans, especially those with chronic conditions, receive high quality care is central to the mission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation," said Rosemary Gibson, RWJF senior program officer. "We believe that helping physicians improve performance in their practices is an important step toward improving care for patients."

According to Greg Pawlson, MD, MPH, Executive Vice President of the National Committee for Quality Assurance and a leader in physician performance measurement, IPIP is a “critically important pilot program that moves us from thinking about quality improvement to trying to make it a vital aspect of the everyday practice of medicine. If successful, this approach could go a long way towards closing the ‘quality gap.’ ”

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