



Contact: Fiona Phelan  
Media Relations Manager  
860-714-1076/ 860-712-8517  
[fphelan@stfranciscare.org](mailto:fphelan@stfranciscare.org)

### **CARDINAL HEALTH FOUNDATION GRANTS \$75,000 TO SAINT FRANCIS QUALITY INITIATIVE**

(Hartford, CT – January 15, 2015) - Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center today announced that it has received \$75,000 in grant funding from the Cardinal Health Foundation’s E3 Grant Program, which promotes effectiveness, efficiency and excellence in healthcare, to support the work of the *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* founded by Scott Ellner, D.O., MPH, FACS, of Saint Francis.

Dr. Ellner also currently serves as President of Saint Francis Medical Group, Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery, and Director of Surgical Quality at Saint Francis.

Dr. Ellner founded the *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* last year, a unique coalition of 22 hospitals and 3 medical societies that will eventually expand to include all 28 hospitals in the state, to pioneer new safety protocols for operating room procedures statewide.

The primary goal of the *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* is to create a culture that increases patient safety in all surgical procedures in every participating hospital. Human error is the main cause of unintended patient outcomes following surgery and it results in over \$13B per year on a national level due to post-surgery patient complications, hospital re-admissions, and patient deaths.

A second goal is for all members of the *Collaborative* to share data on specific surgical procedures; the effects of new technology in surgical suites; and 30-day, post-operative patient outcome data at each of the participating hospital sites. This includes sharing trends in positive patient outcomes as well as openly sharing information and data on unintended post-operative complications that were the result of errors during surgery. Strategies are designed to prevent such incidents in the future.

The third goal of the *Collaborative* is to have perioperative teams at all participating hospitals trained in patient safety protocols and effective teamwork/communication skills, and to implement these protocols and skills in every surgical procedure in every hospital. The *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* serves as a model coalition that can be replicated by any other state in the U.S.

Before the *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* was formed, Connecticut hospitals did not routinely share the quality of their surgical care, incidents of post-surgical, or unintended outcomes. Hospitals have historically been reluctant to share information on surgical procedures and patient outcome data for a number of reasons: fear of litigation; market share

concerns; privacy issues; and the existence of inconsistent quality and safety protocols among some hospital departments of surgery.

Human error is inevitable in any work environment, especially in high-stakes, high-pressure environments such as operating rooms. Unfortunately, in surgical procedures, errors can result in life-changing conditions for the patient and for the perioperative team. Unintended outcomes can also result in significant healthcare costs and, at times, litigation.

Fortunately, there are new patient safety protocols, technologies, and training programs for surgical teams that can dramatically impact the risk of human errors during surgery.

The *Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative* is the first coalition in the history of healthcare in Connecticut that convenes the best surgeons and perioperative teams in the state to share patient safety protocols that have provided effective, evidence-based surgical procedures, as well as innovations in teamwork and communication, with the express purpose of eliminating errors during the perioperative process. This includes eliminating errors before surgery, during surgery, and during the transfer of patients to other multidisciplinary teams.

To support the *Collaborative*, Dr. Ellner and Saint Francis have taken the lead in securing grants to help fund and coordinate the training of surgical teams at the participating hospitals. Training includes education on best practices in the perioperative process; on evidence-based safety protocols; and on effective intra-team and inter-team communication. Coalition hospitals share training results and develop strategies to overcome challenges to implementing changes. The grant from Cardinal Health Foundation will help support the expansion of training in the coalition hospitals.

Grant funding is also being secured for the creation of an interoperative, electronic *Connecticut Surgical Quality Network* that can be updated on a weekly basis and accessed by all members of the *Collaborative*. The *Surgical Quality Network* will include a forum/blog where surgeons can discuss the successful use of new technology and innovative procedures, challenges to implementing innovations, and the effects and outcomes of the *Collaborative's* training of perioperative teams.

“This is the second such grant from Cardinal Health, and we are grateful to have their dedicated support of this program and the Hospital,” stated Lynn B. Rossini, Chief Development Officer, Saint Francis Foundation.

### **About Saint Francis Care**

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis HealthCare Partners. Johnson Memorial Medical Center, parent organization of Johnson Memorial Hospital, Evergreen Health Care Center, and Home and Community Health Services are also Saint Francis *Care* Partners. Saint Francis *Care's* services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit [www.stfranciscare.com](http://www.stfranciscare.com).