

News Release

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NMMRA Named as Contractor in Statewide UNM HSC MRSA Project

Albuquerque, NM – The New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), the New Mexico Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), has been named as contractor in a University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNM HSC) \$50,000 Patient Safety Grant. The grant was recently awarded by the Cardinal Health Foundation to form a statewide collaborative project to reduce health care-associated bacteremias caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in participating hospitals.

“NMMRA’s work in such quality improvement projects as the Surgical Care Improvement Project, the New Mexico Influenza Vaccine Consortium, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) 5 Million Lives Campaign, which includes efforts to reduce MRSA infections, contributed to this success,” explained Carlene Brown, MPH, CPHQ, NMMRA project manager. “Our role as contractor in this project will be to carry out the administrative functions of the collaborative, organize and facilitate workshops, provide educational materials, arrange site visits, and collect data.”

The MRSA collaborative will operate under the guidance of an expert steering committee with representatives from NMMRA, the New Mexico Department of Health, the Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology-New Mexico, the Infectious Diseases Society of New Mexico, the New Mexico Medical Society and the New Mexico Hospital Association.

According to UNM HSC, because New Mexico’s health care system includes many small rural facilities and urban tertiary referral centers, adapting recommendations for control of MRSA across a spectrum of settings is one of the challenges the project hopes to address. The collaborative project will combine rural and urban health care efforts to establish baseline rates of MRSA bacteremias, and then reduce them by 40

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New Mexico Medical Review Association



percent. The project also aims to create community standards regarding infection control, communication, and educational guidelines for patients and health care providers.

“We intend to use this grant to harness the energy and interest surrounding the MRSA problem to create solutions from within our own health care community appropriate to our unique setting and diverse populations,” offers Susan Kellie, M.D., MPH, UNM Hospital epidemiologist and administrator of the grant.

The Cardinal Health Patient Safety Grant Program is designed to provide funding for programs that propose imaginative strategies to address challenges to quality health care. The goal is to promote creative thinking, therefore advancing innovation and improvement to patient care in general.

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NMMRA is an Albuquerque-based, non-profit, physician-sponsored organization. Serving as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries, NMMRA seeks to fulfill its mission to facilitate demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care and achieve its vision to be a premier and innovative leader in improving health care. NMMRA has served continuously as the state's only federally contracted Medicare QIO since 1984. NMMRA also serves as the state's Medicaid External Quality Review Organization.

For more information about UNM HSC, visit hsc.unm.edu.

Information about this and other Cardinal Health Foundation Patient Safety Grant Awards is available at www.cardinal.com/%5Ccontent%5Cnews%5C4102008_13124.asp.

This material was prepared by NMMRA, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 8SOW-NM-HOSP-08-28