



ELIMINATING HARM: Preventing Complications and Saving Lives

Reducing Surgical Complications: The Florida Surgical Care Initiative (FSCI)

Goal

Save lives, reduce suffering and lower costs related to complications of surgery.

About

Developed in association with the American College of Surgeons, the two-year surgical care initiative involved 67 Florida hospitals, making it the largest statewide surgical quality collaborative in the nation. Florida Blue provided valuable financial support, and the initiative received endorsements from the National Patient Safety Foundation, the Florida Health Care Coalition, Mayo Clinic and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

FSCI encouraged broad participation and focused on high-impact areas:

- Surgical outcomes for elderly patients, a critical measure in a state with the nation's largest percentage of elderly patients who undergo a high percentage of operations performed.
- Colorectal surgical outcomes, important because of the relatively higher complication rate of these procedures and the fact that the majority of hospitals perform them.
- Surgical site infections and urinary tract infections, vital to improving quality because their high incidence provides an excellent opportunity for faster, less complicated healing.



Florida Surgical Care Initiative

89 lives saved

165 complications prevented

14.5 percent fewer complications

\$6.67 million saved in 15 months

During the initiative's initial two-year pilot, participating hospitals collected information on the patient's condition prior to their operation, and how patients fared 30 days after undergoing a surgical procedure. Tracking outcomes after 30 days was important because half of all surgical complications have been shown to occur after patients leave the hospital.

To collect the information, the hospitals reviewed patient charts (not billing data that other quality programs use) and followed up directly with patients. Making calls required an investment in staff, but the payoff was richer information about post-surgical complications than could have been gleaned from claims or administrative data. An unintended benefit: patients expressed surprise and delight at the follow-up call from their hospital.

Results

- 89 lives saved
- 165 complications did not occur
- 14.5 percent decrease in total post-operative complications
- 15.8 percent fewer surgical site infections
- 35.7 percent lower risk of death

Hospitals saved more than \$6.67 million in just 15 months by preventing these complications. That means, fewer health care dollars were needed to cover the costs of complications, helping contribute to lower costs.

What's next?

The success of the two-year pilot led the American College of Surgeons to extend the initiative for at least three more years beginning in 2013. FHA has expanded the program to encourage all hospitals interested in improving surgical care to join, allowing a broader range of data collection options.