This is a remarkable time for those of us intent on improving health care.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization helping to lead the improvement of health care throughout the world. Founded in 1991 and based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, IHI works to accelerate improvement by building the will for change, cultivating promising concepts for improving patient care, and helping health care systems put those ideas into action.

Employing a staff of approximately 100 people and maintaining partnerships with hundreds of faculty members, IHI offers comprehensive programs that aim to improve the lives of patients, the health of communities, and the joy of the health care workforce.

IHI’s work is funded primarily through our own fee-based programs and services, and also through the generous support of a distinguished group of foundations, companies, and individuals. These sources enable us to provide community benefits such as program scholarships, research and development, work in professional education, and initiatives in developing countries.
We are in the midst of an unprecedented groundswell of excitement and commitment for effective change, with more health care leaders than ever before ready to find alternatives to the status quo.

Health care is a highly complex system, vastly underperforming its potential, and with many broken parts. But for every broken part in our system, there are examples of excellence—organizations that have overcome obstacles and redesigned patient care. The challenge is to make these examples the rule, not the exception, so that all patients reliably receive the best care possible.

To be sure, there is a sizable gap between what health care achieves today and what it could achieve at the same or lower cost. This gap is so large that the Institute of Medicine (IOM) declares it a “Chasm.” Crossing this chasm will require massive change.

This is where IHI comes in.
Improving health care is IHI’s mission, its promise, and its daily work.

We aim to improve the lives of patients, the health of communities, and the joy of the health care workforce by focusing on an ambitious set of goals adapted from the IOM’s six improvement aims for the health care system – care that is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. We call this the “NO NEEDLESS LIST”:

- **No** Needless Deaths
- **No** Needless Pain or Suffering
- **No** Helplessness in Those Served or Serving
- **No** Unwanted Waiting
- **No** Waste
- **No** One Left Out

IHI works with health professionals throughout the world to accelerate the measurable and continual progress of health care systems toward these bold objectives, leading to breakthrough improvements that are truly meaningful in the lives of patients.

**We do this by:**

- **Building the will** for change
- **Cultivating promising improvement ideas**
- **Putting those ideas into action through** effective **execution**
It starts with **will**...

**SINCE 1991**, IHI has been reigniting health care professionals’ passion for their work. Together we challenge the status quo, envision a better future, and gain courage, commitment and companionship for a journey of continuous improvement toward that future.

**Now, there is mounting momentum for change...**

**and there is no turning back.**

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT** is no longer a fringe philosophy in health care. It is now the mainstream approach for ensuring that the best possible care is delivered to every patient every day – and it is rapidly taking its rightful place in the core business strategy for institutions trying to survive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

IHI’s National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care is our most powerful event for building the will for change. This annual conference is renowned as a potent source of inspiration and information that helps organizations begin or renew their commitment to effective and lasting improvement.

*“The improvement of any system requires three elements: will, ideas, and execution.”*

**Thomas Nolan, PhD**

**IHI Senior Fellow**
Add some powerful ideas...

All improvement requires change, but not all change is improvement. Knowing the difference between good changes and ineffective ones requires intellectual discipline and honesty. With a foundation of evidence, facts, and science, IHI cultivates and spreads wise changes that help improve the lives of patients and communities.

A FOUNDATION OF SCIENCE

Best practices in health care, whether they emerge from formal research or from the practical experiences of innovators, often spread far more slowly than they should. IHI aims to get research into practice as quickly as possible to ensure that every patient receives care based on the best possible knowledge base. Examples include:

**Ventilator Bundle** A bundle is a collection of effective care processes reliably combined to improve patient outcomes. The “Ventilator Bundle,” perhaps IHI’s best known example, has stimulated the widespread adoption of scientifically grounded elements of effective ventilator care. In some cases, this has virtually eliminated ventilator-associated pneumonia, according to reports we have collected from dozens of hospitals.

**Applying Operations Research to Health Care** One highly leveraged way to eliminate ambulance diversions and reduce waiting in the emergency department is, believe it or not, to manage variability in elective admissions. Operations research proves it. IHI has used this discipline, under the leadership of Eugene Litvak, PhD, to help hospitals improve patient flow throughout the acute care setting.
DISCIPLINED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

When the old ways stop working — or never really did work — it’s time for new ideas. IHI maintains disciplined R&D processes and prototyping projects to seek out new solutions and groundbreaking ideas. Examples include:

**Transitions Home** A comprehensive, reliable discharge plan, along with post-discharge support, can reduce readmission rates and improve health outcomes. This is an area of extensive prototyping work in Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB), a program of IHI and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that aims to improve care and staff satisfaction dramatically on medical/surgical units.

**Trigger Tool** One way for hospitals to measure patient harm is through retrospective review of patient records using “triggers” (or clues) to identify patients with adverse events. This approach began in IHI’s initiative, “Idealized Design of the Medication System.” IHI researchers and others have broadened the application to support estimation of harm levels across entire systems, and are working to evaluate and improve this tool.

CAREFUL FIELD TESTING

Widespread improvement requires that many people and institutions test changes in local settings, proceeding with both caution and urgency to implement promising changes. IHI helps facilitate these processes of learning, local research, and adaptation. Examples include:

**Rapid Response** Rapid Response Teams can be called upon to intervene quickly when a patient’s condition first begins to deteriorate. IHI learned this idea first from Kenneth Hillman, MD, and his colleagues in Australia. We facilitated further research, adaptation, and adoption.

**Medication Reconciliation** Adverse drug events can be reduced by reconciling medication plans at all transitions in care. This common-sense idea was pioneered at Luther Midelfort in the Mayo Health System, among others. IHI helped refine the design and encouraged broad-scale deployment.
At IHI, we believe these three rules:

1) health care systems can be sustained with modest annual cost increases;
2) there is enough capacity in the systems to provide equitable, high-quality care to all; and
3) solutions to national problems can be found and designed at a regional level.

Maureen Bisognano, IHI President and CEO
Will and ideas will not succeed without a reliable system for execution.

Among IHI’s key contributions is the merger of inspiration and promising change concepts with reliable methods for making sustainable change at the front line of care. With the assistance of our colleagues at Associates in Process Improvement, IHI helps put good ideas into action by applying proven quality improvement tools and assessing progress through systematic measurement.

The power of these elements working together – will, ideas and execution – leads to meaningful, measurable, and lasting improvements in care, and in the lives of both patients and providers.

Here are examples of how innovative ideas have led to powerful results as reported to us by some of the organizations with which we’ve worked:

- No cases of ventilator-associated pneumonia in over five years.  
  *Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, Williamsburg, VA*

- The use of beta blockers among patients at risk for a cardiac event increased from 25% to 100%.  
  *NHS Tayside, Scotland*

- Average time from ED arrival to an inpatient bed is less than three hours.  
  *Bellin Health Services, Green Bay, WI*

- Central line patients infection free for 14 months.  
  *Overlake Hospital, Bellevue, WA*

- Percent of patients with all medications reconciled on admission rose from 47% to 95%.  
  *Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, Martinez, CA*

- Waiting time for an appointment was reduced from 41 days to same day.  
  *Neshobe Family Medicine, Porter Hospital, Middlebury, VT*

- Antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS is reaching >88% of the population estimated to need this therapy.  
  *Areas of South Africa where IHI has been providing support*

- Average number of times per shift that a nurse leaves a patient’s bedside to obtain supplies decreased from three to one.  
  *ThedaCare, Appleton, WI*
Changing health care together

IHI’s programs and activities connect people from around the world in an ever-evolving learning system based on a philosophy of “ALL TEACH, ALL LEARN.”

The diagram on the following page depicts IHI’s strategy for transforming health care. This system enables committed individuals and organizations to collaborate on the hard, rewarding work of improving health care.

INNOVATION

At the center of our work is the creation and testing of new ideas – novel concepts for improving patient care. Here, we work intensely with cutting-edge organizations to test and prototype unique models and new solutions to old problems. This is our research and development function, the innovation engine that fuels all of our work. For example:

• **Triple Aim**
  
  IHI is working with pioneering population-based care organizations to explore innovative designs with the potential to simultaneously improve the health of the population, enhance the patient care experience, and control per capita cost.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Once a promising change concept has been successfully developed, it can be tested and spread to other settings. IHI maintains a variety of strategic relationships and memberships to accomplish this. The most common types of relationships are:

• **Strategic Partnerships**
  
  Through high-level relationships, IHI and closely-aligned partner organizations focus on transforming entire systems of care by concentrating on strategic objectives and system-level improvement.
IHI's Dissemination Strategy

Learning Opportunities

Strategic Relationships

Knowledge for the World

Innovation

1,000,000s

1,000s

100s

10s
• **Collaboratives**

IHI’s most intensive front-line improvement work happens in Collaboratives, based on our ground-breaking Breakthrough Series model. Participating organizations work collaboratively for 9-12 month to achieve sustainable change within a specific topic area.

• **Passport**

Passport is IHI’s easy-access membership program designed to help hospitals implement the best knowledge available on the key process improvements that will lead to exceptional patient care.

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**LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

To broadly spread improvement knowledge, IHI offers a wide variety of opportunities for health care professionals to learn from expert faculty and experienced colleagues around the world. These include:

• **World-Class Conferences and Seminars**

IHI’s annual National Forum is widely viewed as the premier “meeting place” for people committed to the mission of health care improvement. We also present an annual conference on improving the office practice and care in the community, as well as dozens of seminars on quality-related topics.

• **Audio and Web-Based Programs**

Our distance learning programs create opportunities for organizations and individuals to learn and implement best practice ideas without the inconvenience and expense of travel. We also provide a variety of online presentations and teaching modules.
• **Professional Development Programs**
This family of programs is for leaders who seek to gain a particular set of improvement skills, and includes training for Board Members, Patient Safety Officers, Improvement Advisors, and Operations Managers.

**Knowledge for the World**
The final step in the IHI learning system is the broad dissemination of best practice improvement knowledge. We do this primarily through:

- **IHI Improvement Map**
The IHI Improvement Map is an interactive, web-based tool that distills the best clinical and managerial knowledge available on the key processes that lead to exceptional hospital care.

- **IHI Open School for Health Professions**
This interprofessional educational community gives students the skills and knowledge to become change agents in health care improvement via online course, case studies, and campus-based networks.

- **IHI.org**
IHI’s online resource contains a wealth of improvement knowledge and tools – available free of charge to anyone, anywhere whose aim is to improve health care.

- **Fellowship Programs**
Sponsored by the George W. Merck family, the Health Foundation, and the Commonwealth Fund, IHI’s fellowship programs equip leaders with the enthusiasm, knowledge, and skills to transform health care systems around the world.
There is a role for everyone

We invite you to be part of a global community dedicated to improving health care for patients everywhere. To learn more about IHI and our programs and services, visit us online at www.IHI.org or call us at (617) 301-4800.

JOIN US!
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Margaret Mead

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