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## **Preparing For Evidence-Based Practice: The Jefferson Health System Toolbox**

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## Preparing For Evidence-Based Practice: The Jefferson Health System Toolbox

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Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is getting a lot of press as the newest, and truest, way to improve quality—scientifically. EBM can be viewed as the combination of the application of [knowledge of] “best evidence” with the time-honored tenets of sound medical practice, toward the systematic improvement of health care quality. In November 1998, the Jefferson Health System (JHS) Quality Council, under the direction of Chief Medical Officer, Stanton N. Smullens, MD, initiated a System-wide educational effort, “Preparing for Evidence-Based Practice: The JHS Toolbox.” This program aims to familiarize the JHS clinical leaders with the principles and tools of EBM and to facilitate the System’s move toward ongoing improvement and clinical integration.

“Integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence is what EBM is really all about,” says David Nash, Director and Associate Dean, Health Policy, and “why it represents such an exciting turning point in caring for our patients.” (see January 1999 *Health Policy Newsletter* Editorial.) “Toolbox” is the first in a series of step-wise courses focused on the application of EBM. The program’s objectives are: 1) to develop an evidence-based approach to the delivery of care; 2) to link an evidence-based approach with data available within the health care system; 3) to link an evidence-based approach to delivery of health care with system-wide performance measures; 4) to identify system-wide clinical and administrative data bases for performance measurement; 5) to identify individuals with appropriate expertise for performance measurement on an institutional level; and 6) to discuss the limitations in performance measurement within an integrated health care system.

Clinical faculty facilitating the course were also among its creators: Dr. Smullens; Thomas Nasca, MD, Associate Dean and Vice Chairman, Education and Research, JHS and JMC; Jeffrey Lenow, MD, JD, Medical Director, JeffCare; and David B. Nash, MD, MBA and Robert R. Corrato, MD, Director and Deputy Director, respectively, of OHP, and Barbara Bozarth, MEd, also of OHP.

The course takes a hands-on approach, quickly advancing to the practicalities of applying newly learned tools. The first session provides an overview of the forces impacting the health care marketplace today, with an emphasis on Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley. The philosophical principles underpinning EBM are explored, and inpatient and outpatient case studies are examined as a way to build measurement into practice. Participants are then asked to compare and contrast hypothetical performance measurement projects and to share proposed strategies for presenting physician data. At the end of the first session, they are given a homework assignment to profile an aspect of their practice. The homework results are shared at the followup session. Participants are then challenged to develop their own report cards. Incorporated throughout the course are review sessions and a round table discussion focused on meeting and overcoming challenges.

“Preparing for Evidence-Based Practice: The JHS Toolbox,” continues to extend the messages of quality improvement, guidelines, and outcomes measurement to the medical and administrative staff of the members and alliance members of JHS. As an extension of the pilot program, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Frankford Health Care System, Christiana Care Physician Organization, and Bryn Mawr Hospital have

requested on-site, customized mini-sessions of the concepts presented in "Toolbox I." Based on the success of "Toolbox I," the Quality Council is launching "Toolbox II: Benchmarking Clinical Activity," this fall/early winter 1999.

If you are interested in scheduling "Preparing for Evidence-Based Practice: The JHS Toolbox," or "Toolbox II: Benchmarking Clinical Activity" at your institution, please contact Barbara Bozarth at 215-955-2822.

### **About the Author**

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