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1st Annual IHI Open School Chapter Congress

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, health administrators, and public health professionals enter the healing professions to make a difference in the lives of their patients and populations. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) established the IHI Open School for Health Professions in September 2008 to create an outlet for students in these disciplines to engage in conversations about the quality and safety of our healthcare systems.

IHI established the Open School because quality and safety are not typically offered as part of the curriculum, even as electives. Built on the "aims for improvement" set forth in C*rossing the Quality Chasm, A New Health System for the 21st Century*,[1] the IHI seeks to engage students in quality and safety while they are in training. Despite the notable and highly publicized efforts of the IHI to improve the quality of healthcare[2, 3], that work will only be sustainable if the healthcare leaders of tomorrow are sufficiently prepared and ready to take appropriate action.

On January 10, 2009 representatives from the IHI Open School Chapters converged on Cambridge, MA for the first Chapter Congress. For many, this was the first opportunity to meet face to face and build a network of contacts. Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, FRCP, President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and Lucian Leape, MD, Adjunct Professor of Health Policy at Harvard School of Public Health, were in attendance and commented on the importance of student involvement in quality and patient safety. Presentations and exercises demonstrated the importance of teamwork and communication among an interdisciplinary group of healthcare professionals. Brainstorming sessions were held throughout the day. The IHI Open School is growing rapidly, reflecting the organization's and the students' commitment to building their chapters. ■

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