

## **OPEN DOOR FAMILY MEDICAL CENTERS SELECTED TO TEST NEW TOOL TO BRIDGE COMMUNICATION BARRIERS**

(Ossining, NY)– Open Door Family Medical Centers has been selected by the Ethical Force Program at the American Medical Association as **one of only eight physician practices nationwide** to field test a new toolkit designed to help improve communications between patients and medical staff.

With patient populations becoming increasingly diverse, effective health care communication is critical to ensure positive health care outcomes. Language barriers, low health literacy levels and cultural differences can all affect the quality of care that patients receive. The new toolkit will help efforts to alleviate the communication barriers that contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in health care.

The practices selected will evaluate how organizational culture, policies and practices help physicians and other health care professionals communicate with patients. The self-assessment toolkit includes surveys to assess leadership awareness, patient and staff perceptions and organizational policies and procedures. Also included are guides for conducting focus groups and interviews with patients and staff members.

More than 50 physician practices and hospitals from across the county applied to take part in the field testing. The eight practices, chosen by a national panel of health care experts, are:

• Open Door Family Medical Centers, Westchester County, New York
• Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital, Cleveland, OH
• Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA
• Hennepin Faculty Associates, Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN
• Community Health Center, Middletown, CT
• Louisville Oncology, Louisville, KY
• Family HealthCare Network, Visalia, CA
• Golden Valley Health Centers, Merced, CA

“To ensure that all patients receive the highest quality of care, health care organizations must regularly evaluate their communication strategies,” said Paul Schyve, M.D., chair of the Oversight Body for the Ethical Force Program and senior vice president of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO).

“This toolkit will give hospitals and practices a practical way to conduct a self-evaluation and identify ways to help doctors better meet the communication needs of their patients,” said Ardis Hoven, M.D., an AMA Trustee and member of the Oversight Body for the Ethical Force Program.

The Ethical Force Program is a collaborative program working to help health care organizations assess and strengthen their commitment to ethical issues in medical care. Toolkit development and field testing is being conducted by the Ethical Force in collaboration with the American Hospital Association’s Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET), and is funded in part by the California Endowment.

For more information contact Desta Lakew, Director of Development, at 914-502-1416.