

The Maryland Cardiac Surgery Quality Initiative **Statement of Purpose: Collaborating to Improve Performance**

The Maryland cardiac surgical community endorses the spirit and intent of MHCC's legislative charge to improve oversight, maintain high performance standards, and favorably impact patient outcomes. Here is a statement of purpose on how we expect to fulfill critical aspects of MHCC's legislative charge.

Goals and Objectives. The goal of the Maryland Cardiac Surgery Quality Initiative (MCSQI) will be to improve clinical quality in the state's cardiac surgery programs through outcomes analysis and process improvement. MCSQI will serve as a peer-to-peer value exchange, working to impact health policy, ensure fair and accurate reporting, and promote the adoption of evidence-based best practices. A focus on quality in cardiac surgical care will help contain costs. Reducing the incidence of post-operative complications in itself can dramatically impact cost and resource use.

Objective One, Improve quality and control costs. MCSQI will encourage participants to identify and adopt relevant best practices and to document systems changes. MCSQI will focus on data integrity to bolster accurate reporting.

Objective Two, Enhance communications. MCSQI can serve as a reliable source of information, well-positioned for education, timely monitoring, and accurate interpretation of cardiac surgery performance reports.

Objective Three, Inform MHCC policy. MCSQI aspires to establish a voice within the state health policy community by informing committees and staff on ways to improve quality through collaborative efforts.

Model. MCSQI's operational components will resemble those in a typical business unit. Development and coordination will be more challenging since multiple parties are setting up a non-traditional structure and defining new accountabilities. Collaborating on quality is an intertwining of effective communications with solid evidence translated into process-of-care changes.

Communications, Meetings, and Outreach. A quality improvement collaborative is a network for transmitting knowledge that can affect organizational change. Communications is the dynamic that informs, motivates, builds trust, and increases transparency. MCSQI will foster statewide communications for surgeons, data managers, and clinical teams implementing priority initiatives.

Benchmarking and Reporting. MCSQI recognizes that a well-managed benchmarking function is a core element for collaboration. Attention will focus on selecting quality indicators, establishing baseline data, designing scorecards, addressing privacy and confidentiality, and using providers' commentary as context to better understand trends and variations.

Quality Improvement Agenda. MCSQI will focus on improving outcomes through process of care changes. Drafting a Quality Prospectus, identifying, and replicating best practices will drive program content. Pilots or other 'proof-of-concept' steps may be used to gain buy-in. Engaging data managers will be critical to ensuring comparable, defensible metrics.

Evaluating Impact. An evaluation model will help MCSQI adjust its efforts to improve participants' chances for success. Progress will be communicated to key audiences in state government, the cardiac surgical community, and eventually among other external organizations.

Information System. MCSQI will develop a database linking clinical factors with financials to monitor and drive quality improvements. Participants' clinical data from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) Adult Cardiac Surgery database will be submitted quarterly into a secure web-based system. Cardiac surgical data will be mapped with financial data from standardized hospital files. An annual report, online report library, NQF reporting, and internal rankings will be used to compare performance. Procedure volume, demographics, risk factors, complications, operative deaths, resources used, costs, and data quality checks will be among the system's reporting features.

Public/Private Partnership. MCSQI can serve as MHCC's partner in fulfilling its legislative charge. MCSQI can be the non-profit, legal entity dedicated to quality improvement that is referenced in a Maryland statute. A Plan of Operation will be drafted detailing MCSQI's accountabilities to MHCC:

- Monitoring and reporting state-mandated performance standards (e.g., the STS star rating);
- Ensuring providers STS Adult Cardiac Surgery Database participation and data integrity;
- Documenting quality improvement activities and processes;
- Helping to determine adverse performance (e.g., setting triggers for intervention);
- Offering input as MCHH considers new indicators, public reporting, or penalties.

Participation will be open, voluntary, and equitable. A means for setting priorities, synchronizing efforts, and managing data will be established. Best practices and evidence-based guidelines will be researched and justified before adoption. A communications program for internal and external stakeholders, a governance structure, and transparent decision-making will meet MHCC's oversight expectations.

Effective Governance. Participants' interests will be represented in an open and focused manner. An initial steering group will develop a governance structure, set dues, and adopt bylaws. MHCC will encourage broad participation among its member provider organizations and surgical practices.

Operational Capacity. A work plan, time line, milestones, and funding will set MCSQI's course in Year One operations. A Coordinator will facilitate development, set agendas, encourage participation, focus discussion on key issues, help the group reach consensus, and solve problems.

Summary and Conclusion. MCSQI aspires to be a trusted, credible leader as a culture of continuous quality improvement is enhanced in the state's cardiac surgical community. Take-up and accountability will vary, yet benefits may include lowered costs of care, enhanced clinical effectiveness, reduced regional variations, stronger therapeutic alliances, and improved patient satisfaction. We anticipate and welcome constructive working relations with MHCC for the benefit of better patient care in Maryland.