

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD


2013

**Innovation in Interprofessional Collaborative Team Implementation
Award Winner - Queen's Family Health Team**

Getting Better, Together – Innovations in Interprofessional and Collaborative Care at the Queen’s Family Health Team



Knowing you ought to be a team and actually becoming one are very different things; building a bridge between the two was a task the Queen’s Family Health Team undertook in 2008. They began with a series of town hall meetings for staff, bringing everyone together to talk about what was important to them as a team and how to translate that into better care for patients. From those early steps toward improving care, a whole new approach to quality improvement evolved.

Paradoxically, increasing team work usually begins with someone sitting down and doing a close analysis of a job, writing down every detail of its processes. It can be a slow task, but without it, it’s difficult to see what others could or should be doing to help. The Queen’s team has learned it is an essential part of team work to define tasks clearly, determine which team members could participate in an initiative, and then provide them with the training and support they need to own the problem.

What does that look like on the ground? It has meant physicians giving the medical office assistant a directive, so she can call patients with diabetes who are overdue for specific tests, book them in and prepare lab requisitions. It’s having the nurse in the smoking cessation clinic work under medical directives that allow her to dispense and prescribe certain medications. As physicians have become more comfortable sharing tasks, team work keeps expanding and directives and protocols are developed to involve more members of the team in more ways. Any patient who comes through the door is everyone’s patient; it was a big breakthrough when the reception team began talking about “their” patients.

The team is working to spread its knowledge, by sharing the policies and medical directives it has amassed to promote interprofessional work, hosting site visits and meetings with people from other practices and making presentations at numerous conferences.