



For Immediate Release

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SC foundation presents \$3.8 million check to statewide surgical quality initiative

COLUMBIA, SC (January ~~20X~~, 2016) — The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation today presented a \$3.8 million check to Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC) to fund the South Carolina Surgical Quality Collaborative (SQC), a first-in-the-nation multi-organization initiative to improve surgical safety and provide the highest quality surgical care to all South Carolinians.

The project's lead organizations are HSSC, a statewide healthcare research collaborative that employs sophisticated health informatics to facilitate research and accelerate results, and the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA). The SQC also leverages the strengths of the South Carolina Chapter of the American College of Surgeons and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Department of Surgery.

Originally announced in April 2015, the SQC is using the grant award to convene a collaborative of highly engaged health systems, surgical leaders and other statewide organizations to establish measurement and reporting infrastructure as the foundation of a surgery-focused learning health care system. By targeting high-volume and high-risk general surgical procedures, SQC hopes to achieve measurable reductions in post-operative complications and mortality, while lowering general surgical care cost and assuring project sustainability.

The check presentation ceremony in Columbia also celebrated the successful recruitment of eight health systems and their surgical leaders that are spearheading research efforts. They are: Baptist Easley Hospital, Kershaw Health, McLeod Regional Medical Center, MUSC, Regional Medical Center, Self Regional Healthcare, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and Tidelands Health.

In addition to working to improve the outcomes of the 15 most common surgical procedures and identifying and reducing the impact of health disparities, the SQC has two unique elements: (1) the establishment of a patient engagement group to address issues outside of the surgical procedures that may influence patient outcomes; and (2) training the next generation of surgical leaders in quality improvement techniques and data evaluation by incorporating Institute for Healthcare Improvement QI training into resident curricula at South Carolina teaching institutions.

At the conclusion of the three-year project, the SQC is targeting a 3 percent reduction in surgical complications, 5,500 avoided hospital days, 70 avoided deaths, 33 avoided readmissions and \$25 million in savings. The implementation of this model learning health care system is expected to have an impact on more than 76,000 patients.

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Surgical Quality Collaborative

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About the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation

Headquartered in Columbia, the foundation (www.bcbsscfoundation.org) is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Its mission is to promote and support healthier South Carolinians, particularly the economically vulnerable, by supporting solutions to address gaps in health care and serving as an agent of change to support innovation and value-added public-private partnerships.

About Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC)

HSSC is among the nation's first statewide health research collaborations and was established in 2004 with the vision of improving South Carolina's health and economic well-being through research. HSSC includes the state's largest health systems — AnMed Health, Greenville Health System, McLeod Health, MUSC, Palmetto Health, Self Regional Healthcare and Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System — and the state's largest research-intensive universities — Clemson University, MUSC and the University of South Carolina and its Schools of Medicine at Columbia and Greenville.

About the South Carolina Hospital Association

Founded in 1921, the South Carolina Hospital Association is the leadership organization and principal advocate for the state's hospitals and health care systems. Based in Columbia, SCHA works with its members to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness of health care for all South Carolinians. The state's hospitals and health care systems employ more than 80,000 people statewide. Visit www.scha.org.

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