Health Sciences South Carolina adopts new strategic plan
Statewide collaborative will strengthen IT and research support to help state's hospitals and research institutions improve patient care

Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC) has updated its blueprint for transforming health care and health research in South Carolina.

HSSC—a collaborative that includes six of South Carolina's largest hospital systems and its three largest research-intensive universities—announced today that it has established a new strategic plan. The plan fine-tunes the organization's purposes and goals while continuing the many activities that HSSC has launched during its eight-year existence to improve patient care and population health. This new strategic plan will help steer the organization during the next five years and beyond.

HSSC's members are Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina, the University of South Carolina, Greenville Hospital System, Palmetto Health, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, AnMed Health, McLeod Health, and Self Regional Healthcare. HSSC is the only statewide biomedical research collaborative in the nation.

Since its beginning in 2004, HSSC has developed the concepts, infrastructure, and technology that are helping its member organizations raise the level of health care research, education, and delivery in South Carolina. HSSC also helps its members collaborate more effectively on research projects and health initiatives.

"We will not be stagnant at HSSC—we want to be sure that our priorities are those activities that are most relevant to our members' current needs as they relate to advancing health research and care delivery," says HSSC President and CEO Jay Moskowitz. "This strategic plan will help ensure that our efforts have a direct impact on patients in the real world by helping our members move more quickly and more efficiently to improve care."

With its new strategic plan, HSSC will prioritize several of its existing efforts that help support its members' research and clinical activities. Some of these priorities revolve around the use of health information technology, such as aggregating clinical data and developing information management tools to make research more efficient. These priorities tie into the statewide health IT infrastructure that HSSC has been developing over the last several years to support research and improve patient care. The centerpiece of this IT infrastructure is a clinical data warehouse that collects data (such as records of patient diagnoses and treatments) from its member institutions. Through this warehouse, HSSC can provide rapid access to the aggregated data (with all patient identifiers removed) to health researchers and providers; such a large quantity of data could help researchers make new discoveries and allow providers to make better and faster decisions related to the care of their patients.

Other priorities called for in the strategic plan include connecting multiple institutions for the purpose of collaborative research projects, providing support for members' grant-seeking activities, and helping members reduce costs so that resources can be used for care improvement.

"Developing this strategic plan has really re-energized our organization," said Moskowitz. We're very excited to move forward."

Developing the new strategic plan was a several month process. It began in September 2011 and has involved the HSSC board, senior leadership, member organizations, and related statewide health organizations.

To view HSSC's new strategic plan, click here
http://www.healthsciencessc.org/upload/index_9_1830648586.pdf or visit www.healthsciencessc.org.