

### Clinical Quality

Thomas Group helps organizations build the business case for clinical quality in a hospital's performance improvement projects by focusing on improving cost efficiencies throughout the system. The strategic imperative is to institute continuous quality improvement in managing a hospital's business. Clinical quality improvement – oriented toward improving the process of patient care – seeks to identify and eliminate bad processes instead of individual errors. It includes improving critical path protocols, defining potentially adverse clinical situations, establishing guidelines, monitoring clinical case studies, and improving long-term care management.

Quality improvement is imperative because high quality care is invariably the most cost efficient as well. In fact, the need for quality improvement is as much an issue of economic survival, as a well-run organization is much less costly to operate. But the hospital's financial goals can only be achieved with the cooperation and active participation of the medical staff – and this is often a challenge.

Not only can improved quality help a healthcare organization increase revenues, it also reduces costs by eliminating functions that add little or no value, for example, reducing delays, effectively using personnel, supplies, and equipment, and minimizing the amount of rework required. It also minimizes inappropriate treatments and practices and the number of malpractice claims as a result.

#### How Thomas Group Can Help

Thomas Group works with clients to develop and direct effective implementation of a comprehensive hospital-wide performance improvement/patient safety program. We facilitate voluntary quality improvement processes with which physicians modify practice patterns and maximize the hospital's quality and financial performances.

Key performance improvement/patient safety program components include:

- Clinical process improvement and team management
- Occurrence reporting and event management
- Data/information management and benchmarking
- Medical staff peer review
- JACHO and other regulatory compliance for quality of care
- Organizational leadership and education

Successful implementation requires the ability to track patient outcomes over time and across facilities which allows the study

of patient treatments and certain outpatient visits and inpatient stays to be grouped together as related to one illness (e.g., leukemia, chronic renal disease, AIDS) for further long-term study.

Quality of service and patient and customer satisfaction levels will play increasingly important roles in this competitive environment. Competition within the healthcare industry will cause the market to gravitate toward those

providers with reputations as high-quality – in other words, high-value – providers. Clearly, improving the quality of service an organization provides may generate the greatest financial return. ■■■

