Five Things Providers Can Do **to Improve Hospital Quality**

In hospitals across the nation, teams of doctors, nurses, other frontline staff, and administrators are working with patients and other stakeholders to improve the quality of hospital care.

- **Prioritize highly coordinated care.** There are countless reasons for readmissions, but experts agree that many are often preventable. Primary care providers, hospital administrators, and other stakeholders are developing processes to improve coordination between hospital and ambulatory providers to better ensure seamless care. Models like accountable care organizations and patient-centered medical homes, among others, are designed to elevate care coordination efforts.
- Improve patient flow throughout the hospital. The most common and documented cause of emergency department overcrowding is the inability to move admitted patients to an available hospital bed. Research shows that the most effective way to address this is to improve workflow throughout the entire hospital. Efforts like *Aligning Forces for Quality* are testing real-world solutions to find, develop, and measure strategies to improve patient flow and reduce emergency department overcrowding.
- Speak the patient's language. More than 25 million Americans speak little or no English, and federal law requires hospitals to make language services available to them. Many hospitals are collecting data on their patients' language preferences and using that information to explain and deliver the care they need in a language they understand—and so patients can communicate their preferences and share valuable information with providers.
- **Ensure that patients understand discharge orders.** To help patients follow discharge orders, they should be communicated as clearly as possible, and patients should have the opportunity to ask questions of a doctor or nurse until they feel comfortable. Likewise, doctors and nurses need to listen to patients, who can share insights into how the discharge instructions might work in actual practice.
- **Get involved.** Hospitals across the country are joining forces with community health organizations and other stakeholders to improve quality of care, reduce readmissions, better coordinate care, and provide needed language services. Learn what quality improvement activities are underway in your area and ask how you can contribute.