

FOREWORD

The future of healthcare in the United States is being profoundly impacted by innovation. Care delivery models, policies, scopes of practice, and leveraged technology are some of the aspects of healthcare where new knowledge and innovation are resulting in improvements in the quality of patient care. As innovators, all nursing professionals act as agents of change.

The recently updated American Nurses Association scope and standards of practice document calls for all RNs to “contribute to nursing knowledge by conducting or synthesizing research and other evidence that discovers, examines, and evaluates current practice, knowledge, theories, criteria, and creative approaches to improve healthcare outcomes” (ANA, 2015).

Innovative efforts in the healthcare system are often focused on furthering what is described as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement Triple Aim: improving the health of populations, enhancing the experience of care for individuals, and reducing the per capita cost of healthcare (Berwick, Nolan, & Whittington, 2008). In addition, some organizations have added a fourth aim: focusing on improving the experience of the healthcare provider. Or, more simply stated, helping healthcare workers attain joy at work.

In a keynote address at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s (IHI’s) 24th Annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Healthcare, then IHI president and CEO Maureen Bisognano, MS, RN, presented a checklist for spreading innovations and evidence-based practices in healthcare. The checklist included five main points:

1. Set a vision to build will.
2. Find or create the best ideas.
3. Create the infrastructure to scale up.
4. Move beyond the walls of healthcare institutions.
5. Leverage teamwork to effect change.

This book tells the story of how the principles of this checklist inspired healthcare innovation and change in a small rural Vermont community.

INSPIREd Healthcare: A Value-Based Care Coordination Model is a fascinating look into how one transformational nurse leader and a team of heroic clinical nurse specialists embarked on a successful journey to create a new model of nursing care delivery. This new model, an Accountable Community of Health, came to fruition as a result of the successful application of the checklist for spreading innovations by my esteemed colleague, “Edge Runner” Billie Lynn Allard, MS, RN, FAAN. Allard formulated a vision for change by making the case for innovation based on the evolving landscape of healthcare payment and reward models and the shifting of the locus of patient care from the inpatient setting to outpatient and community care.

This book tells the story of how Allard and her courageous band of change agents found and created new ideas focused on the social determinants of health and transitions in care for improving the health of communities. By embracing community agencies and partners, they created an infrastructure for healthcare sustainability by looking beyond the inpatient world in which they had all spent their careers. They created partnerships and coalitions, sometimes with unlikely stakeholders, and the program thrived from the wisdom and the energy of these multidisciplinary teams. As scientists and innovators, Allard and her team also identified measures of success that could be captured, tracked, and trended in order to demonstrate that the implementation of the innovation actually resulted in significant improvements in healthcare transitions.

In addressing the “Quadruple” Aim of healthcare improvement, this team found great joy and satisfaction in their work. They describe how after long-standing career frustration with the healthcare system, they now feel empowered to influence and change it. Allard and her team present the evidence that their innovative program is teachable and replicable and results in improved outcomes of care for patients with chronic and complex needs.

This book offers a patient- and family-centered approach to the myriad problems surrounding care transitions in healthcare. The authors offer practical suggestions and tools for nursing services as well as recommendations for curriculum adaptation for academia. They have crisscrossed the country presenting this breakthrough work and have been featured in local media, including television and print, to disseminate their innovations. They have presented at the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) and Magnet conferences, and they have been published in *The Journal of Nursing Administration*, *Home Health Care Now*, and *American Nurse Today*.

Their innovations have resulted in an initial 56.1% reduction in inpatient readmissions and 24.9% decrease in emergency department (ED) utilization at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center. The program has now expanded, with sustained results in transitional care nurse visits, reduced readmissions and ED utilization, and reduced hemoglobin A1c levels in diabetic patients. Southwestern Vermont Medical Center received the 2017 Magnet Prize for these nursing innovations, which have significantly improved the lives and health of patients in a small, rural, and economically challenged Vermont community.

I highly commend the authors for this healthcare innovation. I am proud of all of them and personally gratified to have helped them initiate and carry out this transformative change in our approach to transitional nursing care. May the model they have developed flourish and spread across the country—patients and healthcare systems will all benefit from following their lead.

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