



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 8, 2021

## **2020 Eisenberg Award recipients announced by The Joint Commission, National Quality Forum**

*Prestigious quality and safety award recognizes national naloxone availability initiative, hospital's quality and safety improvement academy, an anesthesiologist's extensive patient safety innovations*

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Illinois, and WASHINGTON, DC, June 8, 2021) – The Joint Commission and National Quality Forum (NQF), two of the nation's leading organizations in health care quality and patient safety, today announced the recipients of the 2020 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Awards.

The 2020 award recipients include a national initiative that has saved more than 1,500 lives by expanding the availability of naloxone, an Illinois hospital's Academy for Quality and Safety Improvement, and an anesthesiologist who has made seminal contributions in patient safety research, innovation and dissemination.

This year, The Joint Commission and NQF recognize and honor groundbreaking initiatives in three categories:

- **Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality at the National Level** – Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Rapid Naloxone Initiative, Washington, DC
- **Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality at the Local Level** – Northwestern Medicine Academy for Quality and Safety Improvement, Chicago, Illinois
- **Individual Achievement** – David M. Gaba, MD, staff anesthesiologist and director of the Patient Simulation Center of Innovation, VA Palo Alto Health Care System, California, and professor, Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine, and associate dean for Immersive and Simulation-based Learning, Stanford University School of Medicine, California

“Improving the safety and quality of health care delivery through the rigorous application of measurement science has been a priority for NQF since its very inception. The Eisenberg Awards serve as an annual celebration of Dr. John Eisenberg's legacy by inspiring others in the health care ecosystem to continue making significant and lasting contributions in pursuit of this goal. I'm delighted to congratulate this year's award recipients on their tireless efforts to ensure

every person in our country experiences care that is safe, high quality, and high value,” said Chris Queram, interim president and chief executive officer, National Quality Forum.

**The VHA Rapid Naloxone Initiative** has reduced overdose deaths by increasing the rapid availability of naloxone. The initiative includes three elements:

- Providing Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) to VHA patients at risk for opioid overdose.
- Providing naloxone to Veterans Administration (VA) Police.
- Including naloxone in select Automated External Defibrillator (AED) cabinets.

As a result of these efforts, the OEND program reported over 1,500 overdose reversals with naloxone. The VA Police also reported 132 overdose reversals, and there were 6 reported overdose reversals with AED cabinet naloxone.

**The Northwestern Medicine Academy for Quality and Safety Improvement** was developed to prepare individuals, across multiple departments and professions in their health system, to lead quality improvement. The 7-month program teaches quality improvement methods and asks participants to complete a quality improvement project during the program. It also prepares participants to engage in quality improvement efforts and lead quality improvement projects after completion of the program. Over the past 8 years, the program achieved the following results:

- 80 teams consisting of 441 individuals have participated, representing a range of specialties, settings and professional backgrounds.
- Overall, 66% of teams have improved performance across a wide range of problems.
- Surveys of participants 18 months post-program completion show that a majority (73%) have engaged in subsequent quality improvement efforts and many (43%) have led other quality improvement projects and (41%) provided quality improvement mentorship.

**Dr. Gaba** is honored for his expansive career as an educator, researcher, scholar, physician and institutional leader. Dr. Gaba’s contributions are innovative and lead the field in three areas:

- Invention, use and commercialization of modern mannequin-based simulation.
- Adaptation of Crew Resource Management (CRM) from aviation to use within anesthesiology was adapted by Dr. Gaba’s group in the late 1980s as part of simulation-based training.
- Creation and promulgation of multi-event “cognitive aids” for real-time use in time-critical life-threatening situations.

“This year’s Eisenberg Award recipients represent the best of the best in health care quality and safety improvement,” said David W. Baker, MD, MPH, FACP, executive vice president, Division of Health Care Quality Evaluation, The Joint Commission. “Their visionary thinking, dedication, and bold initiatives have significantly improved patient care and saved lives.”

The patient safety awards program, launched in 2002, honors the late John M. Eisenberg, MD, MBA, former administrator of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), an impassioned advocate for health care quality improvement.

The achievements of each honoree will be featured in a special issue of [\*The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety\*](#) later this summer. The recipients will also be recognized in a virtual awards presentation during the NQF Annual Conference on July 20, 2021 at 1-2 p.m. ET. Interested parties may register for the public ceremony only at no cost during [registration](#).

Please note that [Carolyn M. Clancy, MD](#), Acting Deputy Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs, and 2020 Eisenberg Awards jury panel chair, recused herself from evaluating nominations related to the VA/VHA and did not vote on the Individual or National Awards during the jury panel's deliberations.

For more information on the Eisenberg Awards, please visit [The Joint Commission](#) and [NQF](#) websites, and expect the next Eisenberg Awards submission period to open in early August 2021.

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#### **About The Joint Commission**

Founded in 1951, [The Joint Commission](#) seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 22,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, nonprofit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).

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#### **About National Quality Forum**

The National Quality Forum (NQF) works with members of the healthcare community to drive measurable health improvements together. NQF is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization that gives all healthcare stakeholders a voice in advancing quality measures and improvement strategies that lead to better outcomes and greater value. Learn more at [www.qualityforum.org](http://www.qualityforum.org).

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