

## Getting It Right: Collecting REL Data

### Background:

- Hospitals across the country collect patient data on race, ethnicity and preferred language (REL), yet the data is not collected systematically or routinely. The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Directive 15 determined federal standards for the reporting of racial and ethnic statistics; however, no standard exists for collecting detailed REL data. In addition, there are often many holes in data collection processes.

### Idea:

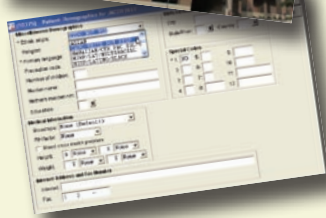
*Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) in West Michigan collaborated with three hospitals—Blogett and Butterworth Hospitals of Spectrum Health and Mercy Health Partners, a member of the Trinity Health system—to collect REL data for their patients. Although the hospitals have different systems and infrastructures, their common goal was to create a universal standard for collecting this information. The hospitals agreed to use Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET) standards for collecting the data and to collect the data via direct self-reporting.

### Action:

Operating within a timeline of nine months, the effort entailed:

1. Identifying the issues associated with REL data collection with the three hospitals,
2. Determining which standards and procedures would ensure reliable data and be consistent with future national standards,
3. Comparing HRET standards to the hospitals' needs,
4. Redesigning the hospital registration training,
5. Building community buy-in for REL data collection through education, and
6. Collecting data.

Following data collection, the hospitals will stratify measures by REL. If the data identify disparities, the team will implement quality improvement programs aimed at eliminating racial, ethnic and language disparities. Performance data will eventually be publicly reported by REL.





### Resources Needed:

- Significant staff resources at the hospitals (teams comprising registration, nursing leadership, quality improvement and IT staff, as well as a point person at each hospital)
- Stipends for hospitals
- One AF4Q staff person to manage the process
- HRET toolkit: [www.hretdisparities.org](http://www.hretdisparities.org)

### Preliminary Results:

- The three hospitals have committed to improving their REL data and data collection has begun.

### Advice:

- Collaborate: Make sure that all hospital systems participate in the data collection process. Show why this process is important for the community and that a joint effort—rather than competition—will be critical.
- Engage the front-line: Invite the staff who will actually collect the data to the table.
- Get leadership endorsement: Corporate office support was essential to ensuring that the process ran smoothly.

