


# Celebrating the 2020 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award Winners



2020  
JOHN M. EISENBERG  
PATIENT  
SAFETY &  
QUALITY  
AWARDS

Presented by  
The Joint Commission &  
National Quality Forum

July 20, 2021

The **2020 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Awards** recognize those who have made significant and long-lasting contributions to improving patient safety and health care quality. Established in 2002 by The Joint Commission and National Quality Forum (NQF), this annual awards program is named after former Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Administrator  
Dr. John M. Eisenberg.



“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.”

**Chris Queram, interim president and chief executive officer,  
National Quality Forum**



## The winners of the 2020 Eisenberg Awards are:

**David M. Gaba, MD** —  
Individual Achievement

**Veterans Health Administration** —  
Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality  
at the National Level

**Northwestern Medicine** —  
Innovation in Patient Safety and  
Quality at the Local Level

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“The John M. Eisenberg Awards — which were created to honor the enduring legacy of Dr. Eisenberg — showcase how innovation and dedication to process improvement can lead to sustainable solutions to some of health care’s greatest challenges. And, particularly during these challenging times of a once-in-a-generation global pandemic, the winners of this year’s Eisenberg Awards are an inspiration and further the mission of improving patient safety and quality of care. Congratulations to Dr. David M. Gaba, Northwestern Medicine, and the Veterans Health Administration for being the winners of the 2020 Eisenberg Awards.”

**David Baker, MD, MPH, FACP, executive vice president, Division of Health Care Quality Evaluation, The Joint Commission**



## Dr. Eisenberg's legacy

An impassioned advocate for health care quality improvement, John M. Eisenberg, MD, MBA, was a founding member of NQF's board of directors and the former AHRQ administrator (1997-2002). Dr. Eisenberg was a leader in health care quality, and he dedicated his life to ensuring care was based on a strong foundation of research and that it considered the patient's needs and perspectives.

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“John Eisenberg's excitement and passion for achieving safe care everywhere inspired countless clinicians, leaders and researchers to follow in his footsteps through hard work. This year's submissions clearly demonstrate that this spirit of dedication is alive and well.”

**Carolyn Clancy, MD, MACP, Department of Veterans Affairs, Eisenberg Award Panel Chair**



## **David M. Gaba, MD**

VA Palo Alto Health Care System  
and Stanford School of Medicine



David M. Gaba, MD, has made seminal contributions in patient safety research, innovation and dissemination. His work and experience include safety experimentation, developing and advancing theory, teaching, editing, and being a scholar and institutional leader. His prolific bibliography has more than 125 peer-reviewed publications in organizational safety theory, human factors and safety culture.

Dr. Gaba's contributions are innovative and lead the field in three areas:

- Invention, use and commercialization of modern mannequin-based simulation. His mannequin-based simulators first evolved from work undertaken by his group. While originating in anesthesiology, such simulators are now used in intensive care, emergency medicine, trauma, neonatology, cardiac arrest or rapid response teams and surgery.
- Adaptation of crew resource management (CRM) from aviation to use within anesthesiology. This was adapted by Dr. Gaba's group in the late 1980s as part of simulation-based training. The first such courses were conducted in 1990 for residents and for board-certified anesthesiologists. Since then, CRM-based approaches have spread directly and indirectly from this work.
- Creation and promulgation of multi-event cognitive aids for real-time use in time-critical, life-threatening situations. Dr. Gaba and his colleagues published this pioneering content as a textbook in the 1990s (with a second edition being released in the 2010s).

An Eisenberg Award panelist noted Dr. Gaba's work is "an extremely important set of contributions, spanning both simulation and CRM. This is truly foundational work. Dr. Gaba's contributions span decades, with demonstrated impact on a very broad scale."

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“ I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Eisenberg early in my patient safety career. With this award, I’m humbled and grateful to be recognized along with him and others who I regard as giants in quality and patient safety.

“ My mentors recognized that safety was not just the byproduct of clinicians doing a good job, but rather was itself something to be pursued diligently against all odds. It is a battle that is never-ending in health care just as for all hazardous enterprises — medical or otherwise. No patient, regardless of how desperate their medical condition, signs up for suboptimal care or preventable error. In arenas of care that are intrinsically hazardous, like my own of anesthesiology, safety can be maximized only by continuous efforts to improve and sustain organizational safety culture, continuous training and honing of skills, and attending to skills of decision-making and teamwork as much as to the technical aspects of patient care.

“ These efforts have been my own life’s work. We have come a long way in making simulation-based training, system probing, safety-research, and other innovations a regular part of health care. Yet, we have a long way to go to achieve the vision — to paraphrase from the motto of the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation — that ‘no one shall be harmed by patient care.’ It is my hope that this award will be symbolic of the resolve of colleagues around the world who similarly strive to improve the quality and safety of health care for all people, everywhere.”

**David M. Gaba, MD, 2020 Eisenberg Award winner for Individual Achievement**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Veterans Health Administration

Menlo Park, California

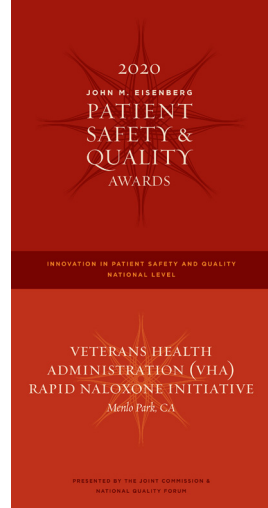
Elizabeth M. Oliva, PhD; Pamela Bellino, MA,  
OTR/L, CPPS; and John Richardson

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) was selected as the winner at the National Level for its VHA Rapid Naloxone Initiative that reduced opioid overdose deaths by increasing the rapid availability of naloxone.

The initiative included these elements:

- Opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) to VHA patients at-risk for opioid overdose. The team used education to highlight the true risks of opioids to both prescribers and patients so both understood the risks to taking opioids (even if they were prescribed) and for providers to consider prescribing an antidote, naloxone, just in case a patient accidentally overdosed. Overdose prevention education for patients also explained how mixing opioids with alcohol or benzodiazepines could possibly lead to an accidental overdose.
- Equipping Veterans Administration police with naloxone and stocking automated external defibrillator (AED) cabinets with naloxone. By doing so, the VA showed its commitment to ensuring that no one would die of an opioid overdose on their watch. Naloxone has FDA-approved layperson routes of administration and VHA made it rapidly available while also training responders how to use it.

The VHA Rapid Naloxone Initiative equipped more than 255,000 veterans with naloxone, and 82% of VA medical centers equipped 2,785 of their police officers with naloxone. Additionally, 92 facilities deployed naloxone in 693 AED cabinets. As a result of these efforts, the OEND program reported more than 1,500 overdose reversals with naloxone, while VA Police reported more than 132 overdose reversals. There also were six reported overdose reversals with AED cabinet naloxone.



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“ Perhaps the greatest learning is how much impact our system can have when everyone works together toward a common goal of preventing overdose among veterans. I have been humbled by the tremendous support from program offices across the Veterans Health Administration and the many community partners who have helped us along the way. We are standing on the shoulders of giants and are grateful for the remarkable work they continue to do every day to increase access to naloxone in the community. We are all in this together and need everyone working together to ensure rapid availability of naloxone to prevent opioid overdose deaths. Moreover, we have been underscoring the need to couple lifesaving naloxone (intervention) with lifesaving and life-transforming medications for opioid use disorder (treatment).”

**Elizabeth M. Oliva, PhD, Veterans Health Administration  
2020 Eisenberg Award winner for Innovation in Patient Safety  
at the National Level**



## Northwestern Medicine

Chicago, Illinois

Northwestern Medicine was selected as the winner at the Local Level for the development of the Northwestern Medicine Academy for Quality and Safety Improvement (AQSI) to prepare individuals across multiple departments and professions to lead quality improvement (QI). The seven-month program consists of classwork and team-based project work. Training sessions address core quality topics and the performance improvement method (Six Sigma and DMAIC). Class sessions are interactive and emphasize exercises and discussion to help teams apply lessons to their projects. The participant teams complete a project during the program, but the program's key goal is to prepare participants to engage in QI efforts and lead QI projects after completion of the program.

While undertaking the QI project, each team receives guidance from a performance improvement coach and an executive sponsor. Additionally, AQSI teams may use a dedicated analytics consultant to run database queries and have direct access to a manager of clinical informatics to facilitate electronic health record (EHR) interventions. Teams present project updates twice during the program to the health system's Improvement Council.

The AQSI team-based QI training program shows measurable improvements in care and has resulted in a high participant subsequent QI involvement. Over the past eight 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 QI efforts and many (43%) have led other QI projects and (41%) provided QI mentorship.



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“ One of the greatest lessons is that there are many health care professionals willing to dedicate time and effort to learn new skills to help their patients. The AQSI program requires professionals to dedicate a significant amount of time and effort, outside of their full-time positions, to participate in the program and work on projects to improve care. We consistently have very high levels of interest throughout the health system and the dedication of these professionals is a huge inspiration to other colleagues and the leaders of the AQSI program.

“ As more professionals have received AQSI training, we can see that the level of quality improvement knowledge and skill is higher among professionals throughout the organization. This higher level of function is evident in the discussions during quality- and safety-related committee meetings and the work of initiatives to improve quality and patient safety. Moreover, frontline health care professionals more routinely identify opportunities to further improve care in their clinical settings and take action to take advantage of those opportunities.”

**Kevin J. O’Leary, MD, MS, Northwestern Medicine  
2020 Eisenberg Award winner for Innovation in Patient Safety at the  
Local Level**

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## The 2020 Eisenberg Award Panel

Carolyn Clancy, MD, MACP, Department of Veterans Affairs

Brent C. James, MD, MStat, Clinical Excellence Research Center, Stanford University School of Medicine

Lisa C. Patton, PhD, JBS International, Inc.

David M. Shahian, MD, Harvard Medical School

Andrew M. Wiesenthal, MD, SM, Deloitte Consulting, LLP

Laurie Zephyrin, MD, MBA, MPH, The Commonwealth Fund

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“Because the panel process showcases ongoing innovation aimed at improving quality and safety from across the country, it’s truly a privilege reviewing the best of the best. The panel members score independently and then convene to discuss the selections. Since the members bring different perspectives to the process, the National Quality Forum and The Joint Commission can have confidence that all submissions have been thoughtfully reviewed, and the best submissions identified.”

**Carolyn Clancy, MD, MACP, Department of Veterans Affairs, Eisenberg Award Panel Chair**



## **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 21,000 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 at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).

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## **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).

**2019**

Gordon D. Schiff, MD  
HCA Healthcare  
WellSpan Health

**2018**

Brent C. James, MD  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
BJC HealthCare

**2017**

Thomas H. Gallagher, MD  
Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety  
LifePoint Health's National Quality Forum

**2016**

Carolyn M. Clancy, MD  
I-PASS Study Group  
Christiana Care Health System

**2015**

Pascale Carayon, PhD  
Premier, Inc.  
Mayo Clinic-Rochester

**2014**

Mark L. Graber, MD, FACP  
American College of Surgeons  
Northshore-LIJ Health System

**2013**

Gail L. Warden  
Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement  
Minnesota Hospital Association  
Stratis Health  
Anthem Blue Cross  
National Health Foundation  
Hospital Association of Southern California  
Hospital Association of San Diego & Imperial Counties  
Hospital Council of Northern & Central California  
Vidant Health

**2012**

Saul N. Weingart, MD, PhD  
Kaiser Permanente  
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System

**2011**

Kenneth I. Shine, MD  
Jerod M. Loeb, PhD  
Henry Ford Health System  
New York Presbyterian Hospital  
The Society of Hospital Medicine

**2010**

John H. Eichhorn, MD  
James L. Reinertsen, MD  
The Children's Hospital at Providence Newborn Intensive Care Unit  
Washington State Hospital Association

**2009**

Gary S. Kaplan, MD  
Virginia Mason Medical Center  
Tejal Gandhi, MD  
Dr. Noreen Zafar, MD  
Mercy Hospital Anderson  
Michigan Health & Hospital Association Keystone Center for Patient Safety & Quality

**2008**

Michael S. Cohen, RPh, MS, ScD  
Institute for Safe Medication Practices Research  
Dennis O'Leary, MD, president emeritus of The Joint Commission  
The RAND Corporation and University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine  
National Coordinating Council for Medication Error Reporting and Prevention  
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia  
New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation

**2007**

Flaura Koplin Winston, MD, PhD  
Darrell A. Campbell, Jr., MD  
Eric J. Thomas, MD, MPH  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center  
Harvard Medical School  
Evanston Northwestern Healthcare

**2006**

Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, KBE  
Jerry H. Gurwitz, MD  
Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety  
Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority  
Wichita Citywide Heart Care Collaborative

**2005**

Audrey L. Nelson, PhD, RN  
Maryland Patient Safety Center  
Meridian Health  
Sentara Healthcare

**2004**

Lucian L. Leape, MD  
Peter J. Pronovost, MD, PhD  
Major Danny Jaghab, MS, RD  
Kaveh G. Sojania, MD and Robert M. Wachter, MD  
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

**2003**

Jeffrey Cooper, PhD  
The Leapfrog Group  
Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network  
Abington Memorial Hospital

**2002**

Julianne Morath, RN, MS  
David W. Bates, MD, MSc  
Veterans Affairs Medical Center  
Concord Hospital  
Veterans Affairs National Center for Patient Safety

