

## "Breakthrough Quality: What the Board Must Do"

*Trustee (06/08) Caldwell, Chip; Butler, Greg; Grah, John*

Hospital leaders have a tough road ahead as they attempt to transform their facilities into top quality centers for healthcare, and experts argue that these leaders must take to heart lessons learned by other industries to achieve quality and productivity gains. For instance, some hospitals are implementing Lean Six Sigma to increase transparency regarding quality and costs, which provides consumers with further information about their healthcare options. In addition to adopting new strategies, board members, trustees and executives must re-examine their roles and take a more proactive approach to healthcare reform by setting a quality improvement agenda, monitoring its progress and ensuring effective health systems are implemented. Quality is the main concern of many healthcare professionals, particularly as Medicare discontinues payments for infections, pressure ulcers and other medical error-related ailments patients sustain while under hospital care that can result from inefficient and poor quality processes. **Greater collaboration among executives, board members and top medical managers will be essential to foster quality improvement.** A framework that follows the procedures in place for financial planning and budgeting can be used for quality improvement initiatives to ensure principles are adopted and disseminated throughout the hospital hierarchy, strategies within core departments are measured and directed in line with quality principles and strategic approaches include achievable annual goals followed by periodic progress assessments. A board member should be selected to participate in all progress discussions, which can be held monthly or quarterly, to keep the hospital on track.