

## Establish General Aims

Establishing good goals is essential for maintaining focus and motivating the team.

Eventually your aims should be specific, measurable and time-defined and should specify the population or populations for whom you want to improve care. A “stretch” goal should be established that should be aggressive enough to mandate a change in the design of your current process in order to achieve it. Until you have reliable metrics and a baseline evaluation, however, team-supported general aims or goals can be important for galvanizing action and establishing clarity of purpose.

One important task is to define the scope of your efforts. Do you want to focus on just one ward or service? On just one group of physicians? For a one-month or three-month period? Again, a broad view of the scope of your efforts is encouraged as affecting all inpatients with heart failure, but it may be reasonable to start small and then spread your improvement methods to other areas. On the other hand, even if the scope of your effort includes all patients in your hospital or system, the interventions you choose should be piloted on a small scale when possible. The bottom line is this: think BIG! Initially, don't bite off more than you can chew, but serial testing and learning on a small scale can make even very large projects more manageable.

### Examples of General Aims

1. General Aim 1: Substantially improve heart failure care for hospitalized patients.
2. General Aim 2: Decrease heart failure readmissions.
3. General Aim 3: Improve heart failure core measures.
4. General Aim 4: Increase the knowledge of caregivers about taking care of hospitalized heart failure patients.

As your team develops, your challenge will be to define many of the terms in your general aims, which will entail developing defined metrics and more mature, specific, time-defined aims. For example, what aspects of heart failure care do you want to improve first? What are the factors that lead to readmission? Which of the heart failure core measures needs the most improvement? How do we educate caregivers about heart failure care?

### **TASK: Establish General Aims.**

General Aim 1 \_\_\_\_\_

General Aim 2 \_\_\_\_\_

General Aim 3 \_\_\_\_\_

General Aim 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**Task Assignment:** The Improvement Team

**Due Date:** First team meeting