

## Introduction

The Vermont Oxford Network, a nonprofit organization with over 800 member hospitals around the world, is dedicated to improving the quality and safety of medical care for newborn infants and their families through a coordinated program of research, education, and quality improvement. Since 1995, the Network has sponsored a series of intensive quality improvement collaboratives in which multidisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals and families work together under the guidance of expert faculty to identify, test, and implement potentially better practices designed to improve the quality of NICU care.



### BACKGROUND

NICQ 2007 was the fifth in this series of improvement collaboratives. Forty six teams worked together for 2 years. Their improvement work was guided by the six domains identified in *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, the landmark report from the Institute of Medicine.<sup>1</sup> These six domains include: patient and family-centered, safe, effective, timely, efficient, and equitable. The Vermont Oxford Network added a seventh theme, social and environmental responsibility, a domain that we believe must be integrated into our daily work. These seven domains are represented in the graphic above, which was adapted from Battles.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, it positions the patient and family at the center, with the other domains for improvement surrounding this crucial core. We are proud to have engaged parents of NICU patients as working members of our improvement teams and believe that it is a key element of our work's success.

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

The chapters in this book address the seven domains for improvement. Each chapter was written by an expert invited to provide background about the domain and to guide improvement in NICU care. Chapters are illustrated with improvement stories from teams that participated in the NICQ 2007 collaborative, among others. We hope that their stories will guide and inspire other NICU teams to make dramatic improvements for the patients and families they serve.

Chapter 8 addresses a cornerstone of improvement and the linchpin of membership in Vermont Oxford Network: measurement. The use of data is vital to guide change and verify progress toward achieving aims. It is not enough to measure the outcomes at the level of patient and family, although this is the true guiding light for improvement. In addition, it is crucial to apply balanced measures that include process variables and other system indicators. NICQ improvement teams developed and shared tools such as balanced scorecards and value compasses for this kind of guidance, feedback, and learning.

## NICQ 2007: Improvement in Action

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**Jeffrey Horbar**  
**James Handyside**  
**Kathy Leahy**

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