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Nationwide Deployment of Physicians Inspired to Improve the Quality and Safety of Healthcare

Healthcare has evolved over the ages, and it is now common for multiple specialists to see a single patient. However, because hospitals are a conglomerate of individual specialists, few institutions have tried to improve healthcare quality on an organizational level. Amidst this background, Nagoya University Hospital has emerged as a leading force in improving the quality of medical care and ensuring patient safety in Japan. The Department of Quality and Patient Safety established in 2006 at our hospital is the medical base at the center of these initiatives. We hope to spread this movement throughout the country, and to this end, there is a need to train doctors who will form the core group. "ASUIISHI Physician Training Program: Leaders to Improve Tomorrow's Healthcare" *1 was launched to meet this need.

The features and key strengths of this program lie in giving doctors a chance to receive our highly-rated patient safety training together with Toyota Motor Corporation's world-renowned total quality management philosophy and improvement techniques – all the while maintaining a heightened awareness of the various stakeholders in healthcare. With their emphasis on objectivity and sustainability, Toyota's techniques are indispensable to reframing daily clinical activities within the academic context of improvement science, a commonplace concept in patient safety overseas. While much can be learned from English-language resources, this program utilizes its unique geographic advantages to collaborate with Toyota in building a curriculum that allows these neighbors to learn directly from each other.

Moreover, this educational program does not end here. A talented-physician hub has been set up as a resource to provide continuing support to graduates of this program. When doctors return to their own hospitals, they will no doubt face various



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obstacles as they strive to put patient safety and quality management measures into practice. To smooth the way, the program has established a base where trained doctors can freely consult with others, maintain connections with fellow participants, and continue to exchange information through data sharing, etc.

Making ASUIISHI a Household Word and a Shared Social Asset

The first term in the ASUIISHI program started in October of 2015, and brought together highly-motivated, well-experienced doctors from all over Japan. In the main program, each physician met with Toyota quality management experts to discuss issues of interest to both groups, such as ways to prevent patient misidentification or ways to reduce infection rates. These discussions culminated in a presentation of their problem-solving process. ASUIISHI involves an extensive educational program spanning about 140 hours, including e-learning sessions, and it has been highly rated by participants. Of course, the curriculum must continue to be improved, and we should verify any ripple effects that it has on society as a whole and how it changes awareness of these issues within each hospital. We are currently investigating the best methods to evaluate success.

ASUIISHI is currently a Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine project, but we hope to see it grow into a shared asset that will benefit society in the future. Consider, for example, the evidence-based medicine that we now take for granted. This, too, had its start with a small group of people who espoused a new way of thinking. In light of this, it is no idle dream to imagine that "ASUIISHI" will one day gain common currency as basic training to ensure the quality and safety of healthcare. However, for this to happen, patient participation as a stakeholder will be essential to the popularization of the ASUIISHI concept. It is incumbent upon medical institutions to provide patients with accurate information that is based on scientific data so meet the needs of these shareholders. Much remains to be done, but will strive together with the other members towards this goal with a renewed awareness of the fact that we are entrusted with the irreplaceable lives of our patients.

Nagoya University Hospital and Toyota Join Hands for "KAIZEN (Continuous Improvement)" of Healthcare



*1/ASUIISHI

A project adopted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as a "Problem-Solving Oriented Training Program for Advanced Medical Personnel." Consists of the main program, offered in cooperation with the Toyota Group, and two specialized programs

that are focused on either patient safety or infection control. In March 2016, a ceremony was held for the participants who completed the first program. They will continue to participate in talented-physician hub projects.