



Fast Five with Omar Hasan, MBBS, MPH, FACP

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Welcome to Fast Five—our monthly feature that spotlights an individual connected with the MaineHealth ACO. This month we had a chance to catch up with Omar Hasan for five quick questions.

What do you see as critical to helping primary care practices sustain quality of care?

Some of the critical elements include developing practical solutions to problems care teams are facing at the front lines. This means approaching quality with the patient, care team and practice setting in mind. Flattening hierarchy so that everyone's voice can be heard. Streamlining processes by creating checklists that are intuitive and easy to follow. Supporting a culture of incremental improvement by providing a standard approach and toolkit to help with making changes.

When I was working for the American Medical Association, the team I was a part of worked with primary care practices to improve care for patients with hypertension. One of our biggest challenges was getting everyone to measure blood pressure the same way. During this initiative, I came to understand that the most valuable input came from medical assistants and, surprisingly, patients themselves. The AMA developed a simple poster showing proper positioning and the key steps involved in taking an accurate blood pressure reading based on interviews and observations with medical assistants. We worked with practices to hang the poster in exam rooms because patients wanted to point to it in case things weren't going as expected.

What is your favorite way to support cross-discipline collaboration to reach common goals?

I understand cross-disciplinary to mean across different fields in healthcare as well as fields outside of healthcare, such as social services or aging-at-home programs for the elderly. Beyond the obvious, such as setting up appropriate administrative structures like committees and workgroups, I think it is paramount to set the right tone. Collaboration is heavily dependent on the culture of an organization or community. Getting to a level of trust where people can agree on shared goals and make compromises in their preferred way of doing things in order to attain shared goals can be the key to success.

All this requires getting to a point where shared interests and potential shared goals can be brought to light and debated in a friendly and collaborative environment. I try my best to bring the patient's perspective to every meeting in which collaboration is a factor; I try and get people to see things from the patient's perspective. In truth, our patients and their families are largely unaware of the silos that exist in healthcare. We owe it to them to collaborate even more closely so they have one less thing to worry about during times of illness and family crisis.

What's your top work priority right now?

I try to think of my 'Top 5' or 'Top 10' as it is difficult for me to think of just one or two top priorities. Here's my current top 5, in no particular order:

- working with care teams to develop and disseminate a shared model and standard set of tools to drive improvement work; working on dissemination now,
- supporting our leaders in assessing hospital quality and patient safety across MaineHealth in a way that is meaningful and drives good decision making,
- helping quality and safety leads at MaineHealth hospitals set up the right structure and processes to foster collaboration on shared quality and safety goals,
- completing recruiting and onboarding for new members of my team,
- preparing materials for upcoming presentations and teaching assignments.

Considering your busy schedule, how do you stay physically active?

I like to spend time with my two sons which usually gets me the required minutes of physical activity every week.

Outside of work, what are you reading or listening to?

I like listening to NPR, especially the Moth storytelling hour, and following the news on television. Other than professional journals and research publications, I like non-fiction such as "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander and "American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America" by Colin Woodard.