

## Insights

# NICHQ Employee Spotlight: Pat Heinrich

In honor of our [20th anniversary](#), we're sharing insights, memories and goals from the NICHQ team



**Full name and title**

Pat Heinrich, RN, MSN, CLE, NICHQ Executive Project Director

### **Years with NICHQ**

20 years

### **What is your favorite memory from a NICHQ project?**

My favorite memory was from our very first asthma quality improvement (QI) project: Helping Improve Pediatric Practice Outcomes ([HIPPO](#)).

I went to a local inner-city health center and told them that the new National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute guidelines suggested all families be given an “Asthma Management Plan” (AMP). The team insisted their patients would not find them useful, but I told them it was a new job for me and I begged them to test with five patients. They predicted they’d find them in the trash outside the clinic. Two weeks later, at our next meeting, they showed me five food/garbage stained AMPs they dug out of the trash...

It was a perfect example of quality improvement at work. We worked with them and ultimately we designed a tool the families found useful (the [HIPPO AMP](#)).

### **Words from Pat's Colleague**

"Pat is the ultimate team player. She is always willing to jump in and help all team members. No task or job is beneath her if it is for the benefit of the project."

NICHQ Senior Project Manager, Leah Jardine, MA.

### **Please share your biggest lesson-learned when working on a quality improvement project.**

This is hard work. It takes, "will, ideas, and execution," so we need to be patient and include patients and families on our QI teams to help the clinical team know what is really important.

### **What was the funniest thing that ever happened on a NICHQ project?**

Funniest thing that happened was from an event, not a project. The NICHQ Annual Forum back in 2006 was scheduled at a hotel in Florida and, after all the contracts were signed, the hotel informed us that there would also be a convention of "Pure Romance" in the hotel with our group. Our CEO at the time, and one of NICHQ's founders, Charlie Homer, was a very serious leader, so we didn't tell him until he arrived.

### **What are you most proud of from your time with NICHQ?**

The 20 years of effort to improve children's health care and population health. I am really proud of the colleagues I work with – their passion for improving children's health and commitment to our mission are the reason we are able to be successful in transforming care for children and families

### **What are your goals for NICHQ's future?**

- 1) I want, more than anything else, to see NICHQ continue to move the dot to decrease infant mortality and also decrease maternal mortality and related disparities.
- 2) In the National Network of Perinatal Quality Collaborative ([NNPQC](#)), state PQCs work to spread best practices, reduce practice variation, reduce health care inequities, and optimize resources to improve perinatal care and outcomes statewide. The NNPQC gives them a platform to share and learn from each other. During this project, I want to see states transform perinatal care to improve measurable outcomes for maternal and infant health by advancing evidence-informed clinical practices and processes using QI principles.
- 3) I want all health care providers to appreciate how working with patients and family partners improves many aspects of health care performance and accelerates the speed at which the improvements occur. When they truly value this contribution, they will always include family partners on their teams.