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**THE THEDACARE CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE VALUE AND THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
FISHER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS PARTNER TO RESEARCH LEAN PRACTICES**  
*Partnership creates the Center for Lean Healthcare Research*

**Appleton, Wis. / Columbus, Ohio** — As healthcare organizations continue to seek ways to improve patient care quality and reduce costs, the ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value and The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business are partnering to build the body of research on the emerging trend of process improvement in healthcare.

The organizations have announced the creation of the Center for Lean Healthcare Research, to be housed at Fisher. This collaboration will focus on studying and documenting how the lean methodology is producing lasting change in hospitals around the nation. Sharon Schweikhart, associate professor and director of the Master's in Health Administration program at Ohio State, has been appointed director of the center.

“This research center will strengthen the connection between Fisher College of Business and the College of Public Health,” Schweikhart said. “We are excited about fostering and promoting research that will advance process improvement across the healthcare industry.”

Lean has its roots in the Toyota Production System, which revolutionized the automaker's manufacturing and supply chain processes in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This methodology, which focuses on reducing process waste and generating customer value, has emerged as an innovative approach to continuous improvement in a wide range of industries, including healthcare.

The ultimate goal of the Center for Lean Healthcare Research is to create a peer-reviewed body of research that elevates the profile of these lean healthcare practices and better equips hospitals and other organizations to deploy them.

“We know lean works in healthcare because of the exhaustive anecdotal evidence that exists among our member organizations and others,” said John Toussaint, MD, founder and CEO of the ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value. “The Center for Lean Healthcare Research's goal is to generate a wealth of evidence-based guidance for other organizations through peer-reviewed research.”

The center will begin assembling a project manager and research team in the second half of 2013 with a primary grant from UL (Underwriters Laboratories), a global leader in safety science with a worldwide network of lean practitioners. UL, along with two dozen other hospitals, universities, and healthcare organizations, has committed to supporting the activities of the newly-formed center as it seeks additional grant funding and identifies research opportunities.

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“UL’s involvement in this work aims to support healthcare leaders, administrators and clinicians as they gather evidence-based guidance on transforming patient care using lean principles,” said Scot Webster, senior vice president, Continuous Improvement Solutions, at UL. “This aligns well with our longstanding mission of creating safer living and work environments.”

Peter Ward, chair of the Department of Management Sciences at the Fisher College of Business, said the center will be a catalyst for a new wave of innovative practices in the industry.

“We’re proud to find it a home at Fisher,” Ward said.

***Fisher College of Business***

*Fisher College of Business prepares leaders through top-ranked programs, distinguished faculty and a vast network of partnerships that reaches from the surrounding business community to multinationals, nonprofits and start-ups across the globe. Our students are uniquely prepared and highly sought, leveraging Fisher’s rigorous, experiential learning environment with the resources of Ohio State, a premiere research university.*

***ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value***

*The ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value is transforming the healthcare industry to deliver higher value through experiments, collaboration and education that integrate three interdependent components: delivery, transparency and payment. In these areas, the Center spreads learning and accelerates improvement. Learn more at [createvalue.org](http://createvalue.org)*