



# COMMUNIQUE FROM THE 1<sup>st</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR QUALITY IN HEALTHCARE IN NIGERIA

.....sharing healthcare best practices

## Opening Remarks by Prof. Ade Elebute, Chairman of the Society

When I was a student in Medical School in Dublin, Ireland, we had a teacher of surgery who, instead of teaching surgery all the time, devoted at least on third of his time to drawing our attention to various aphorisms related to healthcare. I must confess that half a century later, I do not remember much of the surgery but I can clearly recollect the aphorisms. One of them is the 6-D's aphorism which states that the objectives of healthcare are to reduce the levels of Death, Disease, Disability, Discomfort, Distress and Dissatisfaction. This statement clearly points to the quality of care that should be delivered by healthcare providers. Yes, we all know the quality of care that we should deliver as healthcare providers or that we should receive as patients. However, it is only in the last few decades that much attention has been directed at how to attain this quality level.

About a decade ago the Institute of Medicine in U.S. published the report which showed that up to 98,000 deaths occur each year from preventable medical errors. This and other equally startling reports have directed attention to the quality standards that must be reached in the delivery of care and the IOM has publicised six attributes of quality that all who engage in healthcare must keep in view namely, Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Equitable and Patient-Centred. This reduces to the acronym S-T-E-E-E-P indicating how difficult it is to climb to this lofty goal.

We all agree that it is very difficult to attain the change required in our practice of healthcare professions to move from our old business-as-usual mode to the delivery of care which will always increase rather than decrease the health outcomes required by individuals and communities whom we serve.

Let us follow the prescription of John Kotter in his book on "The Heart of Change". The change process must start with our seeing clearly a problem or a goal. What we see must then generate a feeling in us, a feeling which ignites in us a passion for the change required. It is feeling which propels us into action to effect change.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we can all see clearly the poverty of healthcare quality in our nation and we all appreciate the need to accelerate its improvement. As the famous French writer, Victor Hugo stated, there is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come. The time has arrived to change the quality of healthcare in Nigeria. The Society for Quality in Healthcare in Nigeria is to help us see clearly the problems, feel passionately the desire for healthcare quality and be driven to change accordingly our practices, habits and attitudes.