



CONTACT: Phil Martin
615-254-6785

TENNESSEE CENTER FOR PATIENT SAFETY LAUNCHED

NASHVILLE, TN, July 26, 2007--The Tennessee Hospital Association (THA) launched the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety (TCPS) today to support and accelerate hospital patient safety and quality improvement efforts.

The primary purpose of the center will be to channel education, resources and support services to help hospitals in the state focus on implementing evidence-based practices to improve patient safety and performance on national quality measures.

"The two main principles the THA board has endorsed are that hospitals should create a culture of safety and look to system approaches for solutions versus the old finger-pointing blame game. We believe the center's first two statewide initiatives will provide important information that can be utilized to improve patient outcomes," explained Craig A. Becker, THA president. "These two initiatives, operating under the banner of "Safe Patients. Healthy Patients," will be a hospital collaborative on reducing healthcare-acquired infections, and a nursing collaborative to integrate nurse staffing, work environment and patient safety. We expect these projects to have a broad impact on the quality and reliability of care delivered to patients across Tennessee in the future."

Initial grant funding for the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety will be provided by the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation, Becker said.

"The establishment of the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety is a watershed moment in our state's health history," said Vicky Gregg, president and CEO of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee. "It will be an important step towards improving the reliability, safety and quality of care received by patients in Tennessee hospitals. I'm honored that the BlueCross Health Foundation can be a part of the effort to make it possible."

The center plans to reduce healthcare-acquired infections through the implementation of evidence-based strategies targeting central line bloodstream infections, surgical site infections and surgical complications. The collaborative will build on hospitals' prior work through the quality improvement organization (QIO) and other

projects, such as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) "5 Million Lives" campaign initiatives to prevent harm. THA plans to engage national faculty to lead the collaborative and provide education, as well as develop a state mentor network to share best practices.

The project's priorities include the following:

- Reduction of central line infections at Tennessee hospitals as reported by hospitals to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) NHSN system.
- Improved performance on Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) measures as reported to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Reduction in the incidence of pulmonary embolism/deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
- Reduction in the incidence of ventilator-associated postoperative pneumonia at Tennessee hospitals.
- Reduction in surgical site infections at Tennessee hospitals.
- Participation levels among Tennessee hospitals.
- Reduction in nurse turnover at Tennessee hospitals as reported by the *Joint Annual Report of Hospitals* and other pertinent THA data.

The nursing partners collaborative, led by THA and the Tennessee Organization of Nursing Executives (TONE), will focus on the linkages between nursing workforce, work environment and patient outcomes. The project will share strategies and best practices to build a culture of safety and teamwork.

"Tennessee can clearly demonstrate the priority it places on patient safety by highlighting accomplishments like a decrease in post-operative complications in the state's short-stay hospitals, improved reporting by licensed healthcare facilities statewide and the establishment of the Hospital-Acquired Infection Task Force, but we also recognize we still have much work to do in this state," said Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. "With the launch of the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety, the Department of Health has a strong partner in accelerating our progress in ensuring patients seeking treatment in a hospital, clinic or at a health department are provided a safe, expert level of care."

To demonstrate the degree of impact that implementation of the two initiatives by the center can have on institutions, THA has estimated the number of additional hospital patient days required to treat central line infections, deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism, and sepsis could be reduced by as much as 13,198 days.

THA, founded in 1938, serves as an advocate for hospitals, health systems, home health agencies and other healthcare organizations and the patients they serve. The association offers products and services through THA Solutions Group, Inc. and the Tennessee Hospital Education and Research Foundation, Inc., its nonprofit education program.

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