



*Patient Safety. Be Involved.
Ask. Talk. Listen.*

NEWS RELEASE

Healthcare Is a Team Effort between Patients and All Caregivers: The Best Decisions Are Made Together

Canadian Patient Safety Week Encourages Practitioners, Patients, and Families to Communicate Better to Decrease the Risk of Errors that Can Lead to Adverse Events or Death

September 24, 2007 Winnipeg, Manitoba – Misinterpreted abbreviations, misunderstood directions, illegible handwriting, fear and embarrassment to ask questions when we don't understand - all of these factors can greatly increase the risk of adverse events or death.

In Canada, 7.5% or 185,000 patients admitted to hospital experience adverse events. More than one-third of these adverse events (70,000) are considered highly preventable. (*Baker & Norton study, Adverse Events in Canadian Hospitals 2004*)

This year's Canadian Patient Safety Week campaign ***Patient Safety: Be Involved – Ask. Talk. Listen.*** emphasizes the importance of encouraging dialogue and open, effective communication in preventing adverse medical events. Information about optimal safety practices, successful initiatives and patient safety champions are included in the campaign.

Low health literacy is a serious threat to patient safety, promoting misunderstandings, miscommunication, healthcare mistakes, increased hospital admissions, longer hospitalizations, poor health outcomes and higher healthcare costs.

Manitoba is a Canadian leader in championing opportunities to encourage more dialogue between patients and healthcare providers through initiatives like the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety's province-wide public awareness campaign, *It's Safe To Ask*.

Launched in January 2007, *It's Safe to Ask* encourages all Manitobans, along with their doctors, nurses and pharmacists, to discuss three simple questions:

1. What is my health problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why do I need to do this?

"That's very important," says Kim Poppel, Chair of the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety's Patient Advisory Committee. "I believe we all know someone who has not fully benefited from their health care experience because they have been afraid or embarrassed to question health care providers when they don't fully understand information about their health care situation."

It's Safe to Ask information is available in 15 languages. Wherever patients see posters and brochures displaying the campaign's simple three-question message they know that they can feel comfortable asking questions and they are in a place where dialog is encouraged. The initiative has spread into over 65 sites including community health programs, medical clinics, hospital units, and nursing stations within eight of Manitoba's eleven Regional Health Authorities.

Patient Safety Week activities will be taking place across Manitoba, and include:

- Workshops on disclosing unanticipated outcomes and medical errors for practitioners at Seven Oaks General Hospital and Victoria General Hospital. Participants have the opportunity to better understand organizational, ethical and risk management aspects of disclosure along with practicing the communication skill needed with patients and families.
- Patient safety educational, awareness and promotional activities across Central Regional Health Authority, including awards for public and practitioner champions of patient safety

Canadian Patient Safety Week is an annual, national campaign launched in 2005 by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute in Edmonton as part of its mandate to build and advance a safer health system for Canadians. Manitoba's campaign is coordinated by the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety with input from individuals and healthcare groups across the province. The Institute was created in 2004 to promote, coordinate and facilitate activities that have a positive impact on patient safety throughout Manitoba.

The newly established Manitoba Patient Advisory Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety. The committee consists of between 10 to 15 members. Its role is to provide:

- a voice for patients and family members who have an interest in patient safety,
- experiences and opinions about provisions of healthcare and safety and the health care system – positive and negative – and,
- an interest in working collaboratively with MIPS to promote patient safety in healthcare settings.

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Editor's Note:

Canadian Patient Safety Week will be launched at 12:15 p.m. on October 5, 2007 at the Brandon Regional Health Centre.

Health professionals in many areas of the province are working to get patient safety messages out in their health care settings in a variety of creative, entertaining and innovative ways. The Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety has posted information made available from health organizations at www.mbips.ca/events and www.patientsafetyweek.ca. More information on activities in your part of the province might also be available through your local healthcare facility.

Supported in Manitoba by:

www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca

 **MANITOBA INSTITUTE
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