

# Media Release

## **REAL LIFE STORIES AT HEART OF CELEBRATIONS** *Improved Patient Safety Campaign Marks Anniversary of Launch*

**June 28, 2006, Winnipeg, Manitoba** – Today, healthcare teams from Manitoba are joining others from across the country to celebrate one year of progress for an initiative that has become the largest patient safety campaign in Canada. Since its inception a year ago today, *Safer Healthcare Now!* (SHN), has grown into a network of 150 healthcare organizations and 440 clinical teams all dedicated to ensuring more patients survive and thrive during and after their experience in an acute care setting.

The goal of the campaign is to improve patient safety by supporting patient care teams across Canada implement one or more of the following six evidence-based strategies.

1. Improved care for Acute Myocardial Infarction
2. Prevention of Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections
3. Prevention of Adverse Drug Reactions through Medication Reconciliation
4. Rapid Response Teams
5. Prevention of Surgical Site Infections
6. Prevention of Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia.

At its the launch, a handful of Western healthcare organizations were interested in the six interventions. Today, over 207 interdisciplinary teams representing over 30 hospitals and health regions are participating in this initiative to improve patient safety.

While official results of the campaign will be released in the spring of 2007, Western Canadian healthcare teams and patients are able to report its success from first hand knowledge.

In Manitoba, close to 30 teams in nine regional health authorities and other healthcare organizations are involved. Manitoba examples include:

- Medical emergency teams, also known as rapid response teams, are a group of doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists that bring critical care expertise to the patients' bedside. Since being introduced at St Boniface General Hospital there has been a 24% decrease in the number of cardiac arrests and a 40% decrease in ward mortality from cardiac arrest

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- Surgical site infections are the most common types of adverse events that can occur in hospitalized patients. At Salvation Army Grace Hospital colorectal surgeries are performed under the new *Safer Healthcare Now!* measures. Among the many procedural changes, patients are told at their preadmission clinic not to shave themselves. Instead, surgical clippers will be used prior to the procedure because clinical trials have proven that shaved sites are susceptible to infection.
- Medication Reconciliation teams at Brandon Regional Health Authority and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority work to prevent adverse drug events. The program implements practices that help patients and people involved in their health care find ways to keep better track of an individual's medication, helps improve information flow about an individual's medication across a big healthcare system, and will heighten awareness for how important it is for every person to keep an accurate list or accounting of all the medications they are taking.

While healthcare organizations have been making changes that improve care and reduce patient harm, this campaign is harnessing those efforts. “*Through Safer Healthcare Now!* we have a national infrastructure in place that assists participating teams by providing expertise, clinical support and knowledge,” explains Dr. Peter Norton, medical professor at the University of Calgary and one of the Canadian healthcare leaders that called for the establishment of the campaign. “It is when you hear about a life saved or a patient going home earlier and in better health that you realize the impact *Safer Healthcare Now!* is having on patients in acute care settings across Canada.”

The campaign’s long-range objectives include the development of other interventions, to be applied in a greater variety of healthcare settings, thereby broadening the campaign’s reach and impact. Through its ongoing commitment to transformation and improvement, more Canadians will have better outcomes in the healthcare system and avoidable adverse events will be reduced

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