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NEWS RELEASE

AHRQ Awards HRET Contract to Expand Implementation of Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program Across All 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

CHICAGO—October 23, 2009—The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) announced that it awarded the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) nearly \$7 million to support projects aimed at preventing health care-associated infections (HAIs), such as central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSIs) and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs).

The projects will include a national expansion of the Michigan Health & Hospital Association Keystone Center Project, which within 18 months successfully reduced the rate of central-line blood stream infections in more than 100 Michigan intensive care units and saved 1,500 lives and \$200 million. As a result of support from AHRQ and a private foundation, hospitals from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, have the opportunity to participate in a Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program, known as CUSP, to help prevent infections related to the use of central line catheters. This national initiative should reduce rates of CLABSI and improve organizational safety and culture.

In addition to expanding the geographic reach of the original project, AHRQ is including all hospitals that wish to participate and is funding the expansion to units beyond the ICU within at least 10 hospitals in 10 states.

The project, “On the CUSP: Stop BSI,” is led by HRET in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University Quality & Safety Research Group (QSRG) and the Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) Keystone Center for Patient Safety & Quality. HRET is an affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA).

The funds also will be used to reduce the most frequent of HAIs, catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI). AHRQ will be considering candidate states for this initiative, called “On the CUSP: Stop CAUTI,” within the next two months.

“Hospitals are committed to reducing health care acquired infections and this partnership with AHRQ will promote practices that have been shown to lessen their incidence dramatically,” said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association.

“AHRQ is investing significantly in these national efforts and we thank them for the opportunity to bring this resource to the AHA’s over 4,000 member hospitals,” said Maulik Joshi, Dr.P.H, president of HRET.

“Translating evidence into clinical practice is often prevented by attitudes, behaviors, and by the organization of our work units,” said John Combes, MD, senior fellow at HRET and principal investigator of the AHRQ-funded project. “The CUSP model has successfully overcome those barriers by providing a template for unit based cultural transformation in the way we accomplish our daily work.”

“We are embarking on this national program to reduce CLABSI and improve safety culture. By preventing annually 30,000-62,000 CLABSI deaths, this will be the Polio Campaign of the 21st Century,” said Peter J. Pronovost, MD, PhD. “We will do this by using standardized practice including checklists and other tools, improving culture, and employing robust measurement of infections rates. CUSP is a powerful patient safety methodology that can tackle the many other preventable ills that plague our health system.”

“The lessons learned through Michigan hospitals’ voluntary and sustained patient safety efforts are replicable nationwide,” said Spencer Johnson, president of the MHA. “Hospitals across the country participating in these types of programs continue to exemplify extraordinary commitment to improving patient safety and lowering health care costs.”

This new funding is part of a larger effort that AHRQ is supporting to prevent other HAIs, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium difficile*, and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* Carbapenemase. This new funding is the latest effort to further the Department of Health and Human Services’ *Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections*, which was released in January and calls for significant reductions in HAIs nationwide within 5 years. It establishes national goals, benchmarks and an integrated information system strategy to monitor HAIs and prioritizes recommended clinical practices for fighting HAIs.

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About the Health Research & Educational Trust

Founded in 1944, the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) is a private, not-for-profit organization involved in research, education, and demonstration programs addressing health management and policy issues. An affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA), HRET collaborates with health care, government, academic, business, and community organizations across the United States to conduct research and disseminate findings that shape the future of health care. For more information about HRET, visit www.hret.org.

About the Johns Hopkins University Quality and Safety Research Group

The Quality and Safety Research Group is a multi-disciplinary team of individuals committed to improving quality and safety in health care, without borders or limits in making health care better for patients. Each person shares their skills and experience to form a team of experts in research and clinical investigation, financial and statistical design and analysis, social and behavioral psychology, administration, management, writing, editing and web programming. Its mission is to serve the healthcare community by applying science that enhances knowledge and ultimately improves patient outcomes. It applies health services research to develop tools, educate stakeholders, engage providers, execute interventions, share knowledge, and perform rigorous measurement. Its strength lies in its ability to balance scientific measurement with real world practicality.

About the MHA Keystone Center for Patient Safety & Quality

Created by Michigan hospitals in March 2003, the MHA Keystone Center for Patient Safety & Quality brings together hospitals, state and national patient safety experts, and evidence-based best practices to improve patient safety and reduce costs by enhancing the quality of care delivered at the bedside. The MHA Keystone Center is unique in its ability to bring large numbers of hospitals together in a single

improvement initiative, allowing unprecedented collaboration and expedited results. It is through these interactions that Michigan hospitals are creating and sustaining a statewide culture of patient safety. The MHA Keystone Center is a nonprofit organization and has, to date, been funded by MHA-member hospitals, the AHRQ, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Michigan Department of Community Health. The MHA Keystone Center is based at the headquarters of the MHA in Lansing, Michigan. Visit www.MHAKeystoneCenter.org for more information.

About the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

AHRQ's mission is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. The research sponsored, conducted, and disseminated by AHRQ provides information that helps people make better decisions about health care.