



News Release

Canadians to benefit from *Safer Healthcare Now!*

June 28, 2005, Calgary – Over 80 healthcare organizations, including hospitals and health regions, have enrolled in a Canadian campaign to improve the safety of their patients. *Safer Healthcare Now!* is a grassroots initiative aimed at reducing the number of injuries and deaths related to adverse events such as infections and medication incidents. It is comprised of six evidence-based strategies to improve patient safety. The goal of the campaign is to help a large number of patient care teams across Canada implement one or more of the targeted strategies.

Dr. Ross Baker, University of Toronto, and Dr. Peter Norton, University of Calgary, were among the Canadian healthcare leaders that called for the establishment of the campaign. Their report, “The Canadian Adverse Events Study” (2004), estimated that 9,000 to 24,000 Canadian patients die annually following an adverse event in hospital. In Canada, 7.5% of patients admitted to acute care settings experience adverse events. By comparison, the rate of adverse events in various other countries ranges from 2.9-16.6%.

“Our report quantified a long-suspected problem in the Canadian healthcare system, and clearly indicates that steps must be taken now to address it,” said Dr. Norton. “It is time to improve the safety of the care we provide to patients.”

“We believe that this initiative is a national prescription for safer healthcare,” said Phil Hassen, Chair, *Safer Healthcare Now!* National Steering Committee, and CEO, Canadian Patient Safety Institute. “Through learning, sharing and implementing leading practices that are evidence-based, we will create the world’s safest healthcare system.”

The targeted strategies will improve care for a wide variety of patients. They include people who have experienced a heart attack or undergo surgery as well as those in an intensive care unit who breathe with the help of a ventilator.

While the current six strategies are initially focused on the acute care sector, over time the scope of the campaign will be expanded. “There is already a lot of excellent work on improving patient safety occurring across Canada. Our mission is to build on that and to improve the health services delivered to Canadians,” said Hassen.

Participating organizations are forming teams of healthcare providers to implement one or more of the targeted strategies. Some of the participants have teams in place to tackle all six interventions. To date, over 200 teams are committed and enrollment in the campaign is still growing. All participating organizations will share in learning opportunities, measure their outcomes, and track their own success.

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“Participant organizations will be provided with the tools to track their own progress on the six strategies,” said Dr. Baker. “At the national level, we will be aggregating the results of all participating organizations across Canada to determine the collective impact of the campaign.”

Two organizations have been key collaborators in the development of the *Safer Healthcare Now!* The *100K Lives* campaign of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in the U.S. is the inspiration for the Canadian campaign. IHI’s CEO Don Berwick and his staff have provided invaluable advice to the national steering committee. For the past two years, The Canadian Collaborative to Improve Patient Care and Safety in ICU, under the leadership of Dr. Dean Sandham, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, has been leading the development and implementation in Canada of three of the campaign’s six strategies. The SHN National Steering Committee is pleased to be working in partnership with the ICU Collaborative, as well as the Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada, who are also providing clinical support to the campaign.

“The success of the *Safer Healthcare Now!* campaign and the ICU Collaborative hinges on the participation of healthcare professionals committed to improving the quality of care,” said Dr. Sandham. “These individuals across the country volunteer their time to implement new strategies solely in the interest of improved patient care.”

The national nursing, pharmacists and medical organizations are being consulted, and are enthusiastic about the campaign. Many have already enrolled as partners. Partner organizations will be involved in promoting the campaign, sponsoring educational events for participants, and spreading campaign information through their membership or stakeholders. A current list of organizations enrolled as partners and participants is available on the campaign website at www.saferhealthcarenow.ca or www.soinsplussursmaintenant.ca

Safer Healthcare Now! is being spearheaded by impassioned Canadian health leaders committed to taking action on the frontlines in order to successfully improve patient safety. All Canadians stand to benefit from safer healthcare.

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Backgrounder attached.

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(additional contacts included in the backgrounder)



Backgrounder

Safer Healthcare Now!

In response to growing concerns among healthcare workers and the public over patient safety, a National Steering Committee was established and the *Safer Healthcare Now!* campaign was developed. Phil Hassen, CEO, Canadian Patient Safety Institute, is Chair of the committee. A list of Steering Committee members is available at www.saferhealthcarenow.ca or www.soinsplussursmaintenant.ca

. A national information call on April 12, 2005 introduced the campaign to healthcare workers, administrators and other interested parties. The campaign builds on other patient safety work occurring in hospitals across Canada, and the recognition that there is room for improvement.

Each of the six interventions (or strategies) promoted through *Safer Healthcare Now!* has an evidence base indicating that appropriate implementation and practice can lead to reduced mortality and adverse events. However, evidence also clearly indicates there is significant opportunity for improvement in the consistent implementation of these strategies. For example, a review of post-Acute Myocardial Infarction care in four Canadian provinces revealed that “although utilization rates for beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors and statins increased over the study period, the rates were still far below optimal levels” (Pilote, Beck et al., 2004). Similar results have been found in Saskatchewan (Chan, Brossart et al., 2004).

The six strategies are:

1. At the first sign of patient decline outside the intensive care unit: **Deploy Rapid Response Teams.**
2. To prevent avoidable deaths from heart attack: **Consistently Deliver Reliable, Evidence-Based Care for Acute Myocardial Infarction.**
3. **Prevent Adverse Drug Events (ADEs):** Implement medication reconciliation.
4. **Prevent Central Line Infections:** Implement a series of interdependent, scientifically grounded steps called the “Central Line Bundle.”
5. **Prevent Surgical Site Infections:** Reliably deliver the correct perioperative antibiotics at the proper time.
6. **Prevent Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia:** Implement a series of interdependent, scientifically grounded steps called the “Ventilator Bundle.”

Teams of healthcare professionals will work together within organizations to implement the campaign strategies. All participating organizations have committed to implementing one or more of the strategies. The organizations enrolled represent more than 200 teams. Teams will be directly supported through geographic “nodes”. There are currently three established: Western Canada, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada. In addition, three national working groups have been established to advise and facilitate the campaign in the areas of communications, measurement and education/resources. The Canadian Patient Safety Institute provides financial and secretariat support to the NSC and to the campaign across Canada.

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The *Safer Healthcare Now!* campaign was modeled after the *100,000 Lives* initiative of the U.S. Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), and adapted from a Canadian perspective to better align with our healthcare system and existing data collection processes. IHI's CEO Don Berwick and his staff have provided invaluable advice to the SHN national steering committee. For more information on IHI and its campaign, visit www.ihl.org.

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