



News from The Leapfrog Group

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LEAPFROG ISSUES A CAUTION THAT QUALITY ASSURANCE NECESSARY DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPUTERIZED MEDICATION SYSTEMS

CPOE Evaluation Tool Findings for 2008 Indicate Need for Hospitals to Practice Quality Assurance While Implementing Systems Designed for the Prevention of Serious Medication Errors

Washington, DC - October 13, 2008: The Leapfrog Group issued a caution today on the importance of assuring proper implementation of CPOE systems to prevent serious medication errors. The caution comes on the heels of findings from Leapfrog's first-ever Evaluation of CPOE, offering a strong indication that, "As CPOE systems are implemented at the clinical level in hospitals, we're seeing a broad variance in both the degree of adoption and in the quality of outcomes," stated Leah Binder, CEO of The Leapfrog Group.

"There is no doubt that hospitals investing in CPOE are taking positive steps to address medication safety and a transition period between installation and effective implementation is natural and expected," commented Binder. "2008 Evaluation Tool findings indicate that collectively, U.S. hospitals still have a way to go in addressing the technology, workflow and cultural challenges of CPOE implementation. We all need to recognize that installing a system is really just the beginning."

"CPOE systems are not 'off-the-shelf' or 'plug-in' products," added David C. Stockwell, MD FAAP, Medical Director of Patient Safety, Children's National Medical Center, and participant in Leapfrog's 2008 Hospital Survey and CPOE Evaluation Tool. "They are highly customized to match internal workflow or they become untenable and will not be readily adopted. That customization inevitably introduces variability in the effectiveness of implementations. The Leapfrog CPOE Evaluation Tool provides the standard by which to measure if local implementations are achieving organizational goals," Stockwell continued.

Developed by First Consulting Group (now Computer Sciences Corporation /CSC) and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, Leapfrog's CPOE Evaluation Tool provides hospitals with an assessment of the adequacy of their CPOE system alerts for common, serious prescribing errors. Funding for the Leapfrog CPOE Evaluation Tool resulted from a clearly defined need for hospitals to measure the effectiveness of their CPOE systems in meaningful terms, including the prevention of adverse events. "The commitment of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the California Healthcare Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in seeing the development of this Tool through to its completion will have a beneficial impact on the reduction of medication errors in this country and in the cost and quality of healthcare," noted Binder.

“The biggest value in Leapfrog’s CPOE Evaluation Tool is that it gives hospitals the opportunity to gauge where they are with respect to clinical decision support in their CPOE implementation,” added David W. Bates, MD, MSc, Chief, General Medicine Division, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Leapfrog Advisor. “While we saw considerable variability in how hospitals scored in 2008, the process of participating gave them a clear idea of what they now need to focus on in the absence of industry standards in decision support.”

Individual hospital score results will not be publicly released by Leapfrog for the 2008 survey, opting to recognize organizations for the significant merit of testing their system. “But the results were concerning enough for Leapfrog to issue this caution,” and Binder anticipates that, “In 2009, individual hospital scores will be identified.”

Details on the 2008 findings will be the subject of a subsequent article being written by the CPOE Evaluation Tool developers. “The intent of this effort is to help hospitals understand where they are on the clinical decision support journey, and where there are opportunities for improvement, especially with respect to more decision support,” concluded Bates.

Meanwhile, Children’s National Medical Center has already committed the resources to revisit Leapfrog’s CPOE Evaluation Tool in 2009. “The value to us is in knowing that our CPOE system implementation is working as we think it should be and in keeping our priorities for improvement on course with organizational goals,” offered Stockwell, “Additionally, we are able to compare and contrast our implementation with national experts and peers across the country to raise the bar on best practices and to engage in unprecedented conversations on improvement.”

A range of quality and safety practices are the focus of the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, complemented for the first time this year by the CPOE Evaluation Tool. Endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF), the practices are: CPOE (to encourage clinical decision support that can intercept dangerous orders); evidence-based hospital referral; intensive care unit (ICU) staffing by physicians experienced in critical care medicine; and the Leapfrog Safe Practices Score (safe practices that, if utilized, would reduce the risk of harm in certain processes, systems or environments of care).

In order to fully meet Leapfrog’s CPOE Standard, hospitals must:

- Assure that prescribers enter at least 75% of medication orders via a computer system that includes prescription-error prevention software
- Demonstrate their inpatient system can alert prescribers to at least 50% of common, serious prescribing errors

More than 1,200 hospitals participated in the 2008 Hospital Survey (with results now available at www.theleapfroggroup.org). “It comes as no surprise that Top Hospitals in the 2008 Leapfrog Hospital Survey have been successful in large part by being able to comprehensively address the issues and challenges inherent in effective CPOE implementation,” commented Binder.

As the leading not-for-profit advocate of patient safety and medication management in the hospital setting, The Leapfrog Group and its membership are actively addressing CPOE implementation issues through the formation of a CPOE Executive Consortium consisting initially of system developers and hospital end-users. Best practices in adoption and implementation, scientifically valid research on CPOE effectiveness, and a standardized, core set of decision support rules are part of the agenda for discussion by the Consortium which is expected to hold its first meeting by the end of 2008. Supported by Best Practice Working Groups, Leapfrog intends to involve Consortium members in a strong and well-constructed agenda that can be practically and tactically accomplished, leading to more substantive and sustaining initiatives of benefit over time.



About The Leapfrog Group

<http://www.theleapfroggroup.org>

The mission of the Leapfrog Group is to trigger giant leaps forward in the safety, quality and affordability of health care by supporting informed healthcare decisions by those who use and pay for services. By encouraging providers to publicly report their quality and outcomes using feasible, evidence-based standards that significantly reduce preventable medical mistakes, The Leapfrog Group also works with industry leaders to provide incentives and rewards to promote high-value health care.

The Leapfrog Group's growing consortium of major companies and other large private and public healthcare purchasers provide health benefits to more than 37 million Americans in all 50 states. Leapfrog members and their employees spend tens of billions of dollars on health care annually. Founded in November 2000 by the Business Roundtable, The Leapfrog Group's collective leverage is used to initiate breakthrough improvements in the safety, quality and affordability of health care to support value-based purchasing. Leapfrog members agree to base their purchase of health care on principles that encourage quality improvement among providers and consumer involvement in health care decision-making.