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LEAPFROG OFFERS CONSUMERS EXPANDED QUALITY AND SAFETY INFORMATION
27 Recognized Safety Practices Consolidated for Consumer-Friendly Access
More Opportunity for Hospitals to Showcase Quality Efforts

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)—The Leapfrog Group is the **first** to give consumers access to data that consolidates and simplifies 30 nationally recognized patient safety practices endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF), a leading authority on patient safety and health care quality. Since 2001, The Leapfrog Group, a business-driven initiative, has surveyed urban hospitals on their quality and safety efforts in three areas that are also endorsed by the NQF as Safe Practices, and made reports available to consumers. The addition of the 27 remaining NQF-endorsed Safe Practices to the Leapfrog survey will offer consumers more information than ever before to use in making health care choices.

The inclusion of the NQF-endorsed Safe Practices on Leapfrog's survey also means greater opportunity for hospitals because it will measure a range of quality and safety improvements hospitals may choose to focus on. This marks the first time since Leapfrog's inception that a new set of measures has been added to its hospital quality and safety survey, which has focused on three principal advances - computer physician order entry, ICU physician staffing and evidence-based hospital referral. Also for the first time, rural hospitals are invited to respond.

Leapfrog refers to the areas it measures as "leaps" to make the point that each can bring an enormous gain in patient safety and quality. The new leap is based on the voluntary consensus standards from the National Quality Forum's *Safe Practices for Better Healthcare: A Consensus Report*, released in May 2003. In that report, the NQF endorsed 30 high-priority practices that should be universally used in applicable clinical care settings to reduce the risk of harm to patients. For the new measure Leapfrog will assess hospitals' progress on the remaining 27 safe practices, which will be combined into a single score.

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Each hospital's ranking relative to other hospitals' will be displayed on the Leapfrog Web site (www.leapfroggroup.org) along with their results for the initial three Leapfrog leaps. The design of this new leap was created by Leapfrog and The Texas Medical Institute of Technology, a not for profit performance improvement research organization chaired by Charles R. Denham, M.D.

Leapfrog is also updating its criteria for the original three practices to improve its ability to recognize and reward hospital quality and safety activities. These changes reflect input from the hospital and physician communities as well as the latest research. For example, Leapfrog will now recognize both the physical presence of intensivists in the ICU as well tele-intensivists, who monitor patients via electronic methods.

According to Suzanne Delbanco, Ph.D, executive director of The Leapfrog Group, "Leapfrog is working to trigger giant leaps forward in the safety, quality and affordability of health care. By working with the NQF and providing a way of measuring the implementation of their Safe Practices, we can give consumers even more vital health care quality information than ever before, while providing hospitals the opportunity to showcase the work they have been doing to improve quality more broadly. As Leapfrog recognizes a more expansive set of health care quality activities, we hope to develop more rewards and incentives for the delivery of high quality care."

Leapfrog also is expanding the regions it surveys. Hospitals in Reno, N.V. and Raleigh-Durham/Chapel Hill, N.C. will be invited to join 22 other regions in responding to the survey. The addition of these regions is a direct result of the strong participation gained from Leapfrog efforts to date. In fact, the results of the most recent survey (Version 2) show a continued trend for greater hospital involvement and increased adoption of Leapfrog quality and safety practices.

Delbanco added, "The fact that over 1,160 hospitals submitted survey responses to our latest survey demonstrates the growing influence of this health care purchaser-driven effort."

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D, M.P.H, president and CEO, National Quality Forum, adds, "These Safe Practices provide a roadmap for patient safety. By adopting the remaining 27 NQF-endorsed Safe Practices in its next leap, The Leapfrog Group will be taking a big step forward toward advancing safer health care. We are delighted to work with Leapfrog to expand the amount and quality of information available to consumers to improve health care quality."

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About The Leapfrog Group

The Leapfrog Group was founded in November 2000 by the Business Roundtable and has support from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. More than 150 Fortune 500 corporations and other large private and public sector health benefits purchasers have joined The Leapfrog Group, representing more than 34 million enrollees.

The Leapfrog Group's effort was launched the same year an Institute of Medicine report revealed that tens of thousands of Americans die each year from preventable medical mistakes made in hospitals. In addition, nearly one million medication errors occur in hospitals each year. Research conducted by John D. Birkmeyer, M.D., University of Michigan, indicates that the three recommended Leapfrog practices could save over 65,000 lives per year, and prevent up to 907,000 serious medication errors if all non-rural hospitals in the United States implemented them. In addition, the U.S. health care system could save approximately \$9.7 billion annually.

The Leapfrog Group began surveying hospitals in 2001. The survey collects data on a hospital's progress towards implementing four categories of proven safety practices:

- **Computer Physician Order Entry:** Hospital staff enter patient prescriptions and other orders into computers linked to error prevention software.
- **ICU Physician Staffing:** Staffing ICUs with trained ICU specialists (intensivists).
- **Evidence-Based Hospital Referral:** The survey queries hospitals about how many times a year they perform five high-risk surgeries and asked those with neonatal intensive care units (NICU) about how many infants they typically care for in the NICU each day. In addition, for some of the evidence-based hospital referral categories, hospitals are now able to report their adherence to patient care processes correlated with high-quality, as well as risk-adjusted outcome information.
- **NQF Safe Practices:** Hospitals will be able to submit their progress on the remaining 27 NQF-endorsed Safe Practices which have been approved in a formal consensus development process.

Hospital quality data can be found at www.leapfroggroup.org. In addition to The Leapfrog Group's Web site, Leapfrog member corporations and organizations are making survey information available to employees through corporate Web sites and employee health care benefits materials. In addition, many health plans and the following Web-based vendors also will be disseminating the data: Subimo; Select Quality Care; and Health Grades, Inc.

The 24 survey regions are: Atlanta, Ga.; California; Central Florida; Colorado; Dallas-Forth Worth, Texas; Hampton Roads, Va.; Illinois; Kansas City, Mo.; Maine; Massachusetts; Memphis, Tenn.; Metro New York, N.Y.; Michigan; Minnesota; East Tennessee; New Jersey; Raleigh-Durham/Chapel Hill, N. C.; Reno, Nev.; Rochester, N.Y.; Savannah, Ga.; Seattle, Wash.; St. Louis, Mo.; Wisconsin; and Wichita, Kan. Hospitals nationwide are also welcome to participate.

Partnering in this effort are The MEDSTAT Group and HealthGrades. The MEDSTAT Group (www.medstat.com) is providing data collection, analysis and support services for this effort. This includes designing and developing the online hospital survey, fielding the survey via the Web and reporting the results to The Leapfrog Group. HealthGrades is Leapfrog's technology partner, providing data analysis and a consumer ratings system of the results. HealthGrades also will display the data on its own Web site (www.healthgrades.com).