

EMBARGOED UNTIL NOVEMBER 16, 6 A.M. EST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2004

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**WITH MOST COMPREHENSIVE HOSPITAL SURVEY TO DATE,
CONSUMERS URGED TO USE LEAPFROG SAFETY AND QUALITY DATA
TO MAKE HOSPITAL CHOICES**

Wide Variation in Use of Practices to Protect Patients from Harm

(Washington DC) – The Leapfrog Group today released the results of the Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey, a national rating system that offers the most complete assessment available of a hospital's quality and safety. This year's survey is the first to include measures that cover all 30 of the safety practices endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF).

The survey results of over 1,000 hospitals reveal significant new findings about the state of health care quality and safety in the nation's hospitals. A considerable portion of the survey asks hospitals about their awareness, accountability, ability and action on 27 of the NQF practices. Many hospitals are taking steps to implement them. For example, of all the hospitals that have responded to date:

- 8 in 10 hospitals have implemented procedures to avoid wrong-site surgeries (operating on the wrong part of the body); and,
- 7 in 10 hospitals require a pharmacist to review all medication orders before medication is given to patients.

However, many hospitals still have significant progress to make. For example, of all that have responded to date:

- Seven in ten report they do not have an explicit protocol to ensure adequate nursing staff, or a policy to check with patients to make sure they understand the risks of their procedures;
- Six in ten lack procedures for preventing malnutrition in patients;
- Five in ten report they do not have procedures in place to prevent bed sores (pressure ulcers); and,
- Four in ten hospitals lack policies requiring workers to wash their hands with disinfectant before and after seeing a patient.

The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey is the only national survey that provides as full an assessment of a hospital's quality and safety. The Leapfrog website, www.leapfroggroup.org, displays each hospital's results and is updated each month with data from additional hospitals; the results can be viewed by anyone at no charge. Survey data is collected and analyzed by Medstat.

“Consumers need to be able to compare hospitals just like they need to compare cars or dishwashers before they decide which one to buy. The Leapfrog hospital survey gives consumers reliable information about a hospital’s quality and safety so that when it comes time to choose a hospital, they can make an informed choice,” said Suzanne Delbanco, CEO of The Leapfrog Group.

The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey collects data on a hospital’s progress toward implementing practices in four categories:

1. **Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE):** Physicians enter patient prescriptions and other orders into computers linked to error prevention software.
2. **ICU Physician Staffing (IPS):** Staffing intensive care units with trained ICU specialists (intensivists).
3. **Evidence-Based Hospital Referral:** The survey asks hospitals how well they perform five high-risk procedures and care for two high-risk neonatal conditions. This information is meant to guide patients to hospitals with a proven track record. For instance, the survey asks how many times a year a hospital performs each of the procedures; it also asks those with neonatal intensive care units how many infants they typically care for each day. For some of the procedures and conditions, hospitals can report their adherence to patient care processes that are correlated with high quality, as well as risk-adjusted outcomes data.
4. **Leapfrog Quality Index:** Leapfrog scores hospitals’ progress on 27 National Quality Forum Safe Practice areas (the three practices above complete the set of 30 NQF Safe Practices). These practices cover such areas as safe medication use and whether a hospital ensures patients understand the risks of their procedures.

Of 1,019 total responding hospitals, 39 percent have fully implemented at least one of the four Leapfrog patient safety practices. Only four percent have fully implemented CPOE, although another 16 percent plan to implement it by 2006. Of 914 hospitals with ICUs, 19 percent have physicians who are intensive care specialists (intensivists) on their ICU staff, and another 13 percent plan to implement it by 2006.

For evidence-based hospital referral, there are six high-risk conditions that Leapfrog measures. The following results are based on those hospitals that perform these high-risk procedures or care for patients with these conditions:

- Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery: 13 percent meet the standard;
- Percutaneous coronary interventions: 12 percent meet the standard;
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm repair: 3 percent meet the standard;
- Pancreatic cancer resection: 17 percent meet the standard;
- Esophageal cancer surgery: 11 percent meet the standard; and,
- Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU): 32 percent have NICUs that meet Leapfrog’s specifications for certain high-risk deliveries.

Twenty-one percent fully meet the standard for the Leapfrog Quality Index.

If all non-rural hospitals in the United States implemented just the first three Leapfrog safety improvements, over 65,000 lives per year could be saved and over 907,000 serious medication errors prevented (John D. Birkmeyer, MD, University of Michigan, 2004). Moreover, the U.S. health care system could save approximately \$9.7 billion annually.

Debra Ness, President of the National Partnership for Women & Families, said, “The Leapfrog hospital survey is a huge step forward for consumers who need this information to safeguard their health. We work closely with organizations like The Leapfrog Group to reach our goal of enabling Americans to choose health care providers based on public reporting of nationally standardized measures of clinical quality.”

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. Leapfrog’s mission 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 health care; and, promoting high-value health care through incentives and rewards. More than 160 Fortune 500 corporations and other large private and public sector health benefits purchasers have joined The Leapfrog Group, representing more than 34 million enrollees. Since matching a health provider’s reimbursement with their performance is a key way to improve the quality of health care, Leapfrog has compiled the first free, online database of programs across the country that offer financial or non-financial rewards and incentives for improved performance. The Leapfrog Incentive and Reward Compendium is available at www.leapfroggroup.org.

About Medstat

Medstat (www.medstat.com) provides data collection, analysis, and support services to The Leapfrog Group for the Hospital Quality and Safety Survey. Medstat is a healthcare information company that provides market intelligence and benchmark databases, decision support solutions, and research services for managing the cost and quality of healthcare. The company applies these capabilities to improve policy and management decision making for many of the nation’s leading employers, government agencies, health plans, hospitals and provider networks, and pharmaceutical companies. Medstat is a business within the Thomson Corporation (www.thomson.com).

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