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**EIGHTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF US HOSPITALS DO NOT
TAKE RECOMMENDED STEPS TO PREVENT AVOIDABLE INFECTIONS**

WASHINGTON, DC – Eighty-seven percent of U.S. hospitals surveyed by the Leapfrog Group do not have all of the recommended policies in place to prevent many of the most common hospital-acquired infections, according to findings issued today. The results are from an analysis of 1,256 hospitals that participate in the Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey, an annual rating system that provides an up-to-the-minute assessment of a hospital's quality and safety practices.

Each year two million people – one out of every 20 who obtain care at an American hospital – contract an infection during their care; 90,000 of them die. On average, so-called hospital acquired infections (HAI) add over \$15,000 to a patient's hospital bill, amounting to over \$30 billion a year wasted on avoidable costs.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced on August 18, 2007 that the Medicare program will no longer provide reimbursement for the additional costs incurred when beneficiaries experience certain hospital-acquired conditions, such as certain infections.

The Leapfrog Survey asks hospitals about their practices related to the prevention of four common infections: aspiration and ventilator associated pneumonia; central venous catheter related bloodstream infection; surgical site infection; and influenza (staff vaccination against the flu). The Survey also asks about hand washing hygiene, which can impact the rates of several different kinds of hospital acquired infection. For each of these areas, the Survey inquires about a hospital's efforts on infection surveillance (tracking the frequency and severity of the infection in question), whether management is held accountable for preventing the infection, the hospital's level of investment in improving its ability to reduce the preventable infection, and whether it is taking further action to detect and prevent the infection.

The Leapfrog Group, representing major corporations and public agencies that buy health benefits, finds an alarmingly low level of full compliance with any of its recommended standards for preventing certain avoidable infections.

<u>Infection Type or Preventive Practice</u>	<u>% Hospitals with Full Compliance</u>
Aspiration and Ventilator Associated Pneumonia	38.5%
Central Venous Catheter Related Bloodstream Infection	35.4%
Surgical Site Infection	32.3%

Influenza	30.7%
Hand Hygiene	35.6%

Herb Kuhn, Deputy Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, stated, “A continued focus on hospital acquired infections provides critical information as both public and private purchasers implement payment policies to provide incentives for improvement in this area.”

Jill Berger, Chair of The Leapfrog Group and Vice President, Health & Welfare for Marriott International, Inc., stated, “There are protocols that every hospital should have in place to prevent infections. Unfortunately, many hospitals are missing the mark and that spells trouble for everyone: the patient, the hospital and the health care system.”

“Leapfrog’s hospital survey helps identify significant shortcomings in hospitals’ practices to reduce preventable infections. The health care system needs now to agree to standardized measures to assess the frequency and impact of preventable infections. Without such measures, it will be difficult to identify the best ways to put an end to hospital-acquired infections,” stated Suzanne Delbanco, CEO, The Leapfrog Group.

A full analysis of the data gathered from this year’s Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey will be released on September 18.

The Leapfrog Group (www.leapfroggroup.org). On behalf of the millions of Americans for whom many of the nation’s largest corporations and public agencies buy health benefits, The Leapfrog Group aims to use its members’ collective leverage to initiate breakthrough improvements in the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for Americans. The Leapfrog Group was founded in November 2000 by the Business Roundtable and is supported by its members, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and other sources.

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