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BLUE CROSS WILL INVEST ALMOST \$3 MILLION IN PATIENT SAFETY

NASHVILLE, TN, August 2, 2010—The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation today announced it will make a \$2,991,660 grant to help fund the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety (TCPS) over the next three years, furthering hospital patient safety and quality improvement efforts across Tennessee.

TCPS was launched in 2007 with a \$1 million grant from the BCBS Tennessee Health Foundation. The center's activities over the past three years led to a decrease of 860 cases of hospital-acquired infections or other complications, avoiding more than 6,200 patient days and approximately \$12.3 million in healthcare costs, according to Craig A. Becker, president and CEO of the Tennessee Hospital Association, which operates TCPS.

The center's accomplishments and BCBS Health Foundation's support has drawn national attention for its impact. Peter J. Pronovost, MD, director of the Johns Hopkins Quality and Safety Research Group in Baltimore, said Tennessee is a leader in engaging its hospitals, physicians and other stakeholders in the process of quality improvement.

"Without reservation, the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety is among the best at engaging its members and taking action to achieve continuous learning and improvement, and that is a direct result of the commitment of partner hospitals, healthcare professionals and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee," Pronovost said.

Becker said 119 Tennessee hospitals are participating in programs instituted by TCPS and those hospitals serve more than 90 percent of all patients admitted to hospitals in the state. "This is a significant commitment on the part of BlueCross and participating hospitals. While we still have a significant opportunity to further increase patient safety in our hospitals, we are off to an excellent start," he continued.

Vicky Gregg, president and CEO of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, made the announcement during the THA summer conference. "Creation of the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety three years ago was an important step toward improving the reliability, safety and quality of care received by patients in Tennessee hospitals," Gregg said. "The exceptional results produced by the center in its first three years form a good foundation for accelerated progress in the years ahead. We are proud to be a part of this effort."

Among other specific achievements of TCPS during its first three years are:

- 40 percent decrease in central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) among adult patients from 2007 to 2008. This reduction equates to 35 lives saved, 4,973 hospital days avoided and \$7.5 million avoided costs.

- 21 percent decrease in the number of pulmonary embolisms or deep vein thrombosis from 2007 to 2008. This reduction equates to 33 lives saved and \$3.3 million in avoided costs.
- Reduction by 234 of hospital-onset Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infections between 2008 and 2009 among 50 hospitals, equating to 11 lives saved, 1.263 hospital days avoided and \$1.5 million in avoided costs.
- Improvement in average number of central line days between CLABSI cases by hospital from 751 in 2008 to 924 in 2009 in non-neonatal intensive care units (ICUs).
- 50 percent reduction in CLABSIs in 21 neonatal ICUs that partnered with the center.
- The 37 hospitals working with TCPS on surgical care improvement projects (SCIP) showed improvement on all nine process measures, with five of the nine measures showing a statistically significant improvement over a 12-month period.

The new BCBS Tennessee Health Foundation grant will allow TCPS to increase the scope of its services and expand direct support to Tennessee hospitals to improve the state's performance in continuing to reduce preventable harm. The center will align with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' five-year action plan, placing emphasis on leadership strategies, direct support and consultation with teams, building organizational capacity for quality improvement and safety efforts, Becker said.

THA, founded in 1938, serves as an advocate for hospitals, health systems, home health agencies and other healthcare organizations and the patients they serve. In addition to operating the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety and Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development, the association offers products and services through THA Solutions Group, Inc., and the Tennessee Hospital Education and Research Foundation, Inc., its nonprofit education program.

For more information about the Tennessee Center for Patient Safety, visit www.tnpatientsafety.com.

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