



NEWS RELEASE

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Patient safety self-assessment helps shield physician practices against liability exposure

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Oct. 30, 2006 – Three leading research entities today released the Physician Practice Patient Safety Assessment (PPPSA), a unique Web-based tool (www.physiciansafetytool.org) that allows medical practices to evaluate daily processes that affect patient safety. Practices that complete the PPPSA will receive a comprehensive workbook that can help identify problem areas and pathways to improvement. Data analysis and benchmarking information will also be available for a nominal fee to practices that submit their data online. All data submitted are confidential.

The PPPSA tool was created by the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA), the Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET) and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP). The tool's development and a related study of patient safety in medical groups has been supported by a grant from The Commonwealth Fund.

The PPPSA allows practices to evaluate their effectiveness and minimize risk across multiple locations in the following areas:

- Medications – appropriate medication history, prescribing, storage, labeling, purchasing, dispensing of samples and administration of vaccines;
- Handoffs and transitions of patients between clinicians or locations – proper procedures for care coordination to track patients and their clinical information;
- Surgery and invasive procedures – patient safety issues relating to ambulatory surgery, especially sedation and anesthesia;
- Personnel qualifications and competency – appropriately assessing the qualifications of caregivers;
- Patient education and communication – actions that practices can take to help patients understand and carry out their responsibilities; and
- Practice management and culture – administrative procedures to create a culture of safety.

“Many errors are preventable if proper patient safety-centered procedures are used throughout the continuum of care, including in physician practices,” says Terry Hammons, MD, MGMA senior fellow. “The task of improving patient safety is shared by all health care settings, but medical practices must take responsibility for learning from each other and keeping their processes current.”

Through use of the PPPSA, practices can:

- Clarify opportunities for improvement;
- Establish baseline measures of current procedures and evaluate progress over time;
- Compare their data to aggregate national data for practices of similar size, structure or location;
- Facilitate conversation and dialogue about patient safety among all levels of staff;
- Minimize liability exposure; and
- Enable improved care.

The Physician Practice Patient Safety Assessment project is an outgrowth of a previous collaboration between ISMP and HRET on the ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment for Hospitals. A subsequent phase of this project will use findings to structure educational resources and tools that will assist physician practices in improving systems to prevent medical errors and enhance the quality of patient care.

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The Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)

Founded in 1926, the Medical Group Management Association is the nation’s principal voice for medical group practice. MGMA’s 20,000 members manage and lead more than 12,000 organizations in which more than 242,000 physicians practice. MGMA’s core purpose is to improve the effectiveness of medical group practices and the knowledge and skills of the individuals who manage and lead them. MGMA headquarters are in Englewood, Colorado. Visit MGMA’s web site at www.mgma.com.

The Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET)

Founded in 1944, the Health Research and Educational Trust is a private, not-for-profit organization involved in research, education and demonstration programs addressing health management and policy issues. HRET, an American Hospital Association affiliate, collaborates with health care, government, academic, business and community organizations across the United States to conduct research and disseminate findings that shape the future of health care. Visit HRET’s web site at www.hret.org.

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP)

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices is a nonprofit organization recognized worldwide as the premier education resource for understanding and preventing medication errors. ISMP represents more than 30 years of experience in helping keep patients safe, and continues to lead efforts to improve the medication use process. Working with health care practitioners and

institutions, regulatory and accrediting agencies, consumers, professional organizations, the pharmaceutical industry and others, ISMP also provides timely, accurate medication safety information to the health care community, policy makers and the general public. For more information on ISMP or to read more about the *2004 ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment for Hospitals*, visit the Institute's web site at www.ismp.org.

The Commonwealth Fund

The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation that supports independent research on health and social issues and makes grants to improve health care practice and policy. The fund is dedicated to helping people become more informed about their health care, and improving care for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, low-income families, minority Americans and the uninsured. To read or download publications, visit the Fund's Web site at www.cmwf.org.

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