

June 7, 2010

How much do adverse events cost?

'focused research to determine the economics of patient safety in Canada'

Edmonton, Canada – In an effort to understand the true financial costs of adverse events, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) is supporting research to explore the “economic implications” associated with patient safety. CPSI is pleased to announce that Dr. Edward Etchells, Associate Director of the University of Toronto Centre for Patient Safety, and co-Principal Investigator Dr. Nicole Mittmann of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre will lead this important research.

The research is being supported through unrestricted grants from 3M Health Care and Baxter Corporation.

“The essence of this work is to gain an evidence-informed sense of the cost borne by the health system in Canada arising from adverse events,” says Dr. Etchells. “We will also examine the economic value of programs which enhance the use of best practices and reduce unsafe practices.” Etchells’ project is entitled *The Economic Burden of Patient Safety* and his research will be completed by June 2011.

“This information will assist the Canadian Patient Safety Institute in providing health organizations with an estimate and magnitude of the economic costs they bear as a result of current patient safety practices/adverse events,” says Hugh MacLeod, CEO, CPSI.

Until recently, relatively little attention has been directed toward the economic impact of such events. Few studies have attempted to estimate the additional costs of adverse events in hospital care, and fewer still the costs in healthcare settings outside of hospitals.

“It is essential that we understand the benefits and costs of patient safety efforts. We know little about the economic impact of patient safety,” says Dr. Peter Pronovost, MD, PhD, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Medical Director - Center for Innovations in Quality Patient Care and Director - Quality and Safety Research Group. “Yet we know we need to stop thinking about care as safe and unsafe. Rather we must think of safety in degrees and understand how much each additional layer of safety costs. This type of research will provide this needed information.”

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Canadian Patient Safety Institute;
Cecilia Bloxom, Director of Communications, (780) 700-8642 CBloxom@cpsi-icsp.ca