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SAINT FRANCIS CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL STUDY

*One of 11 hospitals selected by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
for pressure ulcer study*

Hartford, CT (Aug. 13, 2015) - Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has been chosen by the *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)* to participate in a multi-level, two-year national study for improving quality of care in the prevention of pressure ulcers.

Each year more than 2.5 million people in the United States develop pressure ulcers. These skin lesions bring pain, associated risk for serious infection, and increased health services utilization. The aim of the study is to assist hospital staff in implementing effective pressure ulcer prevention practices through an interdisciplinary approach.

Pressure sores, also known as pressure ulcers or bed sores, are caused by application of extra pressure over patches of skin. Pressure sores are commonly seen among the very young or in the elderly who are immobile for prolonged periods of time.

“Our selection for this study is a sign of our Hospital’s rigorous dedication and disciplined stewardship for promoting better outcomes for our patients,” said Denise M. Peterson, RN, MSHCA, NEA-BC, FACHE, Vice President, Professional Nursing Practice and Quality, Chief Nursing Officer at Saint Francis. “Our goal is to improve patient care using best practices

that may be transferable across the healthcare industry.”

“Saint Francis is committed to eliminating preventable harm. We are doing so by using multi-disciplinary teams, leading-edge patient safety techniques, and improving overall quality of care,” said Surendra Khera, M.D., Vice President Medical Affairs, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Quality Officer at Saint Francis. “We believe that continuous self-assessment and improvement are the hallmarks of a hospital that is a leader in patient care.”

During the study, a multidisciplinary team at Saint Francis will develop proactive strategies and evidence-based protocols to prevent the occurrence of pressure ulcers. Two hospital units have been identified so far to participate in the project.

Saint Francis will utilize a toolkit developed by AHRQ to highlight specific clinical areas. AHRQ’s [toolkit](#) will enable Saint Francis to make the data used for those measures clinically consistent with other participating hospitals

The toolkit was created in 2011 by a core team with expertise in pressure ulcers and organizational change at the Boston University School of Public Health, Excelsior College School of Nursing, and Montana State University-Bozeman. An expert advisory panel and quality improvement teams at six participating medical centers provided input and testing, which at the time was not supported by a specific large-scale implementation program as part of its development.

The toolkit’s content draws on literature on best practices in pressure ulcer prevention and includes both validated and newly developed tools.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) no longer provides additional reimbursement to hospitals to care for a patient who has acquired a pressure ulcer while under a hospital’s care. A number of best practices have been shown to be effective in reducing the occurrence of pressure ulcers, but these practices are not used systematically in all hospitals.

AHRQ’s mission is to produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable and affordable, and to work within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and with other partners to make sure that the evidence is understood and used.

About Saint Francis Care

Saint Francis Care is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis Care include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis HealthCare Partners. Johnson Memorial Medical Center, parent organization of Johnson Memorial Hospital and Home and Community Health Services is also a Saint Francis Care Partner. Saint Francis Care's services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit www.stfrancisCare.com.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/systems/hospital/pressureulcertoolkit/index.html>

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