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***Smart Moves* Conference Kicks Off State-wide Campaign**

Wallingford, CT, February 23, 2007 – More than 100 participants gathered at the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) on Wednesday to learn about more ergonomically-appropriate techniques for moving patients. The educational event marked the kick-off of *Smart Moves: Connecticut's Campaign for Safe Patient Handling*.

According to the conference presenters – experts in the field of patient safety and ergonomics – workplace-related injuries occurring in the healthcare environment are significant, but there are means available to reduce their occurrence.

According to Guy Fragala, PhD, Senior Advisor for Ergonomics, Patient Safety Center of Inquiry, traditional training in injury prevention has not been demonstrated to be effective, since it requires behavior modification, direct monitoring, and is not always directly applicable to real-life situations. “The single most important means of reducing injuries in both workers and patients is to eliminate the lift,” he said.

Presenters from MidState Medical Center, Middlesex Hospital Home Care, John Dempsey Hospital and Genesis Health Care Corporation highlighted the successes and challenges of implementing safe patient handling initiatives within their facilities. These represented just a few examples of the many initiatives in place across Connecticut, and in a variety of healthcare settings.

Smart Moves, a new statewide initiative on safe patient handling, aims to improve the health and safety of nurses and other healthcare workers, increase patient safety, and reduce healthcare costs. The campaign, developed by a coalition of healthcare associations, will focus on increasing awareness and education regarding safe patient handling; promoting the use of evidence-based curricula; encouraging implementation of safe patient handling programs; and increasing the use of assistive equipment and patient handling devices.

The members of the *Smart Moves* campaign coalition are: the Connecticut Hospital Association, the Connecticut Nurses' Association, the Connecticut Association of Not-for-Profit Providers for the Aging, the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, and the Connecticut Association for Home Care.

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