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**Connecticut Hospitals Address Prevention and Control of
Multiple Drug-Resistant Organisms
Through Symposium, Collaborative, and Pledge to Reduce Infections**

Wallingford, Connecticut, January 30 - The Connecticut Hospital Association is embarking on a multi-tiered effort to address prevention and control of multiple drug-resistant organisms (MDROs) in healthcare facilities. Included in the series of activities announced today are an educational symposium, hospital and long-term care facility working group, and an infection prevention pledge.

Multiple drug-resistant organisms, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), have a potentially significant impact on hospital patients and the community at large. While hospitals have been battling antibiotic-resistant infections for more than fifty years, a seeming increase in the incidence of MRSA and other infections has been of alarm to many. Prevention and control of these organisms has thus taken on increasing importance for hospitals.

On Friday, February 1, at a symposium sponsored by the Connecticut Hospital Association, nationally recognized infection prevention experts will address an audience of more than 150 hospital professionals on combating MDROs. Topics including understanding the scope of the problem, effective hospital initiatives, methods of infection prevention and reduction, and putting the risk in perspective for the public will be highlighted at the daylong meeting. Among the speakers will be Richard Garibaldi, MD, Epidemiologist, University of Connecticut Health Center; Michael Parry, MD, Chair of Infectious Diseases, Stamford Hospital; and Louise-Marie Dembry, MD, Director, Epidemiologist Laboratory, Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Concurrent with the symposium, CHA and Qualidigm will launch an ongoing MDRO Collaborative. This collaborative brings together a working group of 30 acute care and long-term care hospitals to address quality improvements in infection prevention. Members of the collaborative agree to share all relevant information on infection prevention in their facilities as a means of achieving quality improvement across the board. Through a web site, listserv, regular conference calls, and coaching, collaborative participants can rapidly collect information and implement the latest patient safety improvements, with the intended result of decreasing infection rates.

Finally, The Connecticut Hospital Association today has released the following infection prevention pledge, outlining steps to be taken by hospitals in the state as a means of reducing MRSA and other MDROs:

Connecticut Hospital Infection Prevention Pledge

As leaders of Connecticut's hospital community, we are very concerned about the serious problem of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and other multiple drug-resistant organisms (MDROs). We recognize the significant impact these infections have on the health and quality of life of patients, families, and people throughout our communities and we are committed to winning the battle against healthcare-associated infections. While this issue cuts across all sectors of healthcare and the community, hospitals have a significant role to play. For more than fifty years, hospitals have been on the front lines in efforts to prevent and treat antibiotic-resistant infections. The increased incidence of MRSA and other MDROs has made our job more complex, but has also served to strengthen our resolve to implement methods that will achieve significant declines in hospital-associated infections. Patients at our hospitals deserve nothing less. **We therefore set forth the following *Connecticut Hospital Infection Prevention Pledge*:**

- 1. *Connecticut hospitals will partner with one another and with patients, families, other healthcare providers across the continuum of care, and the public to share information about infection prevention strategies and initiatives.***
- 2. *Connecticut hospitals will drive toward zero tolerance for noncompliance with scientifically proven infection prevention methods. We will create a non-negotiable expectation of compliance and accountability among staff and physicians, including the expectation that staff remind any provider failing to demonstrate compliance with hospital infection prevention measures. Hospitals will join forces to identify, adopt, and effectively implement methods to achieve consistent compliance with the following:***
 - a. *Appropriate hand hygiene***

Proper hand washing remains the single most important method of limiting or eliminating transmission of organisms. Hospitals will ensure that clinical staff, including new hires and trainees, understand key elements of hand hygiene and the appropriate technique. We will also provide alcohol-based hand rub and gloves at the point of care. We will enlist the help of patients and families in reminding staff to adhere to proper hand hygiene and in reporting non-compliance.
 - b. *Decontamination of the hospital environment and equipment***

Hospitals will educate staff on the importance of cleaning and proper methods, including providing a check list for each cleaning documenting that all areas were cleaned. Staff competence in cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be verified and immediate feedback mechanisms will be established to reinforce proper technique and compliance. Dedicated

equipment will be provided for patients for whom isolation or contact precautions are in place.

- c. ***Exercising of precautions for contact with patients with MDROs***
Staff training will reinforce the importance of adhering to precautions and proper barrier techniques when coming into contact with patients who have an MDRO. Adequate supplies, including gloves, masks and gowns, will be available and stored at the point of care for easy access. Families of patients with MDROs will be educated about precautions and patients will be instructed about hand hygiene and other precautions they can take to inhibit spread of organisms. Patients and families will be expected to adhere to infection prevention instructions. Staff will be expected to address noncompliance with infection prevention techniques, and patients and families will be asked for their help in reporting noncompliance if they observe it. Also, patients with MDROs will receive the same standard of care afforded all patients to prevent adverse events and ensure proper communication between the patient, family, and provider.
 - d. ***Implementation of specific care processes***
Many hospitals have reduced or eliminated device-related infections through the implementation of specific care processes that, when done together as a group, are scientifically proven to be especially effective in reducing transmission of organisms/infection. Specifically, Connecticut hospitals will commit to using groups of care processes that prevent ventilator-associated pneumonia and catheter-related bloodstream infections.
 - e. ***Careful antibiotic use***
Overuse of antibiotics, or using the wrong antibiotics, contributes to the creation and development of drug-resistant organisms that cause dangerous infections. The control of MDROs must include the judicious use of antibiotics to prevent the development of new MDROs. Hospitals will avoid unnecessary courses of antibiotics and help educate the public about the risks of demanding antibiotics when they are not indicated, use narrow spectrum antibiotics whenever possible, and limit the course of antibiotics to the shortest possible duration.
3. ***Connecticut hospitals will work collectively through the Connecticut Hospital Association to monitor, measure, and report on their progress in reducing MRSA/MDRO infections.***

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The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's Hospitals since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's not-for-profit hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality

and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, public health, and hospital reimbursement.