



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 16, 2006

CONTACT: Kat Song - (202) 292-6707
ksong@leapfroggroup.org

**59 HOSPITALS NAMED TO FIRST-EVER
“LEAPFROG TOP HOSPITALS” LIST**

**Use of Practices to Protect Patients from Harm Still Abysmal
Among Many Other Hospitals**

(Washington DC) – Fifty-nine U.S. hospitals have been named to the first Leapfrog Top Hospitals list, based on today’s results from the Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey, a national rating system that offers a broad assessment of a hospital’s quality and safety.

The Survey results from over 1,200 hospitals (56 percent of Americans live within 25 miles of three or more of these hospitals) reveal significant findings about the state of health care quality and safety in the nation’s hospitals. The Survey asks hospitals about their awareness and action on 30 “Safe Practices for Better Healthcare” endorsed by the National Quality Forum. Of all the hospitals responding to the Survey:

- Nine in ten hospitals have implemented procedures to avoid wrong-site surgeries (operating on the wrong part of the body); and,
- Eight in ten hospitals require a pharmacist to review all medication orders before medication is given to patients.

Mark McClellan, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, stated, “Instead of just talking about improving health care quality, The Leapfrog Group has been taking innovative steps to support hospitals in doing it. The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey shows the benefits of better information about quality of care, and is helping Americans get better care and better value.”

However, many hospitals still have significant progress to make. Among responding hospitals:

- More than nine in ten have not implemented computer physician order entry to Leapfrog’s standard;
- Nine in ten fail to meet the standards for performing two high-risk procedures: coronary artery bypass graft surgery (90 percent) and abdominal aortic aneurysm repair (96 percent);
- Seven in ten do not enlist intensivists (ICU specialists) to oversee patient care in the ICU according to Leapfrog’s standard;
- Five in ten do not have an explicit protocol to ensure adequate nursing staff, or a policy to check with patients to make sure they understand the risks of their procedures; and,

- Three in ten lack procedures for preventing malnutrition in patients, and do not vaccinate their health care workers against the flu.

The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey is the only national survey that provides as full an assessment of a hospital's quality and safety. The Leapfrog website displays each hospital's results, which can be viewed by anyone at no charge, and is updated each month with data from additional hospitals. Survey data are collected and analyzed by Thomson Medstat.

"There are other sources of hospital quality information out there, but what consumers want is relevant information that's free and easy to use," said Debra Ness, President, National Partnership for Women and Families.

In the 31 regions where Leapfrog members target hospitals for participation in the voluntary survey, 56 percent of the urban, general acute-care hospitals have responded (representing 60 percent of the hospital beds in these areas). However, for those who have not yet participated, Suzanne Delbanco, CEO, The Leapfrog Group, said, "Every hospital in the country that is not publicly reporting on their quality and safety is behind the times and out of touch with the communities they serve. Americans deserve to be able to make the best decisions about their health care."

The Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey collects data from hospitals on their progress toward implementing practices in four categories:

1. **Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE):** Do physicians enter patient prescriptions and other orders into computers linked to error prevention software?
2. **ICU Physician Staffing (IPS):** Are intensive care units staffed by trained ICU specialists (intensivists)?
3. **Evidence-Based Hospital Referral:** How well do hospitals perform five high-risk procedures and care for two high-risk neonatal conditions?
4. **Leapfrog Safe Practices Score:** How well are hospitals progressing on the other 27 National Quality Forum Safe Practices?

For additional detail on these four "leaps," visit www.leapfroggroup.org.

Of 1,263 responding hospitals, 60 percent have fully implemented the practices in at least one of the four Leapfrog patient safety and quality categories. Thirty percent fully meet the standard for the Leapfrog Safe Practices Score. Only seven percent have fully implemented CPOE (another seven percent plan to implement it by 2007), representing little progress since Leapfrog began tracking implementation in 2002, when the figure was three percent. Of the 1,135 responding hospitals that have one or more ICUs, 26 percent enlist intensive care specialists to manage patients in the ICU, and another seven percent plan to do so by 2007. This is a significant jump since 2002 when just 10 percent met the Leapfrog standard. Leapfrog estimates that more than 20,000 lives are saved annually based on current implementation of the IPS staffing leap.

"The Leapfrog Group has differentiated itself from other organizations by actually getting things done. Since 2002, the Leapfrog hospital survey has served as a proven tool to encourage hospitals to improve quality and safety for patients," commented Rick Norling, CEO, Premier, Inc.

For evidence-based hospital referral, Leapfrog measures six areas (results for coronary artery bypass graft surgery and abdominal aortic aneurysm repair are above). Of those hospitals that perform these high-risk procedures or care for patients with two high-risk neonatal conditions:

- 28 percent have neonatal intensive care units that meet Leapfrog's specifications for certain high-risk deliveries;
- 21 percent meet the standard for pancreatic cancer resection;
- 18 percent meet the standard for percutaneous coronary interventions; and,
- 14 percent meet the standard for esophageal cancer surgery.

If all non-rural hospitals in the U.S. implemented computer physician order entry, ICU physician staffing and evidence-based hospital referral, over 65,000 lives per year could be saved and over 907,000 serious medication errors prevented (John D. Birkmeyer, MD, University of Michigan, 2004). Moreover, the U.S. health care system could save approximately \$41.5 billion annually (Conrad and Gardner, University of Washington, 2005).

In addition to Leapfrog Top Hospitals, Leapfrog operates the Leapfrog Hospital Rewards Program and Leapfrog Hospital Insights, the measures on which the Rewards Program is based, to spur additional reporting and improvement (learn more at <https://leapfrog.medstat.com/hrp/index.asp>).

About The Leapfrog Group

On behalf of the millions of Americans for whom many of the nation's largest corporations and public agencies buy health benefits, The Leapfrog Group aims to use its members' collective leverage to initiate breakthrough improvements in the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for Americans. It is a voluntary program aimed at mobilizing employer purchasing power to alert America's health industry that big leaps in health care safety, quality and customer value will be recognized and rewarded. The Leapfrog Group was founded in November 2000 by the Business Roundtable and has support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, as well as its members and other funders. For more information, visit www.leapfroggroup.org.

About Thomson Medstat

Thomson Medstat provides data collection, analysis, and support services to The Leapfrog Group. Medstat (www.medstat.com) is a Thomson healthcare business that provides market intelligence and benchmark databases, decision support solutions, and research services for managing the cost and quality of healthcare. Thomson Medstat applies these capabilities to improve policy and management decision making for employers, government agencies, health plans, hospitals and provider networks, and pharmaceutical companies.

###