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New Mexico Shows Fewer Central Line-associated Bloodstream Infections than U.S.
Dept. of Health Release Latest Report on Healthcare-Associated Infections

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health announced today that the New Mexico Healthcare-associated Infections Initiative is helping to reduce serious infections statewide and enabling a growing number of New Mexico healthcare facilities to collaborate on surveillance and prevention projects.

The Department of Health released the New Mexico Healthcare-associated Infections 2011 Report on the status of prevention and surveillance in the state this week.

“Healthcare-associated infections contribute to an estimated 99,000 deaths each year in the United States and many New Mexico hospitals have actively worked to reduce bloodstream infections,” said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres. “I appreciate the collaboration of our partners and am pleased to share this annual report with the public.”

Based on data submitted from May 2010 through April 2011 by 15 New Mexico hospitals, 61 percent fewer central line-associated bloodstream infections were observed than predicted from national reference data. A central blood line is a flexible tube that is inserted into one of the large blood vessels that goes into or near the heart and can be used for monitoring purposes, or to give fluids, medical treatments or liquid nutrition. If a central line is inserted incorrectly or not cared for properly, it can cause dangerous bloodstream infections.

The report compares findings from each of eleven hospitals that have been voluntarily reporting intensive care unit central line-associated bloodstream infections for more than one year with national data. Every one of the hospitals had outcomes better than or no different than the national reference data. During the 2010-2011 influenza season about 60 percent of healthcare personnel were vaccinated among 24 New Mexico healthcare facilities voluntarily submitting data. This rate is similar to national influenza vaccination coverage of healthcare personnel.

A new collaborative endeavor has begun to measure and prevent *Clostridium difficile* infection. These infections are caused by the bacterium called *C. difficile* and symptoms ranging from diarrhea to life-threatening inflammation of the colon. Illness from *C. difficile* most commonly affects older adults in hospitals or in long-term care facilities and typically occurs after use of



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antibiotic medications. In recent years, these infections have become more frequent, more severe and more difficult to treat.

“While it is difficult to reduce healthcare-associated infections to zero, following specific protocols can greatly reduce the risk,” Dr. Torres said. “The New Mexico Healthcare-associated Infections Advisory Committee, led by the New Mexico Department of Health, has guided a collaborative approach to surveillance of these infections and implementation of prevention measures.”

The full New Mexico Healthcare-associated Infections 2011 Report can be found online at <http://www.nmhealth.org/HAI> along with additional background information and consumer information resources.

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