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### **Six Hospitals Volunteer for Healthcare-Associated Infection Pilot Project**

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health announced today that six hospitals have volunteered to participate in the Department of Health’s healthcare-associated infection pilot project. Participating hospitals are University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center in Albuquerque, Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center in Alamogordo, Heart Hospital of New Mexico in Albuquerque, Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces, San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington and Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque.

“Our original goal was to have three hospitals report to us in our first year. We are pleased that six hospitals from different areas of the state are working with us to report important data about healthcare-associated infections,” Dr. Vigil said. “We expect to work with hospitals to minimize healthcare-associated infections in New Mexico and avoid adverse outcomes in patients.”

In 2007, the Department of Health created a taskforce to study the feasibility of requiring hospitals to report healthcare-associated infections. The Department has designed its pilot project based on recommendations from the taskforce.

“San Juan Regional Medical Center feels that it's important to participate in this pilot program because the program will lay the foundation for future reporting of hospital-acquired infections, and it will assist the Department of Health in setting realistic goals and expectations for hospitals,” said Penny Hill, infection control manager at San Juan Regional Medical Center. “Everyone is working diligently to prevent these terrible infections, and we're hopeful that this program will help us communicate those proactive, preventative efforts to the communities we serve.”

The Department has appointed a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee that will help them develop methods for surveying for infections and reporting findings to the public. Committee members are infection-control practitioners, a consumer advocate and members of New Mexico Hospital Association, New Mexico Medical Review Association and Association of Practitioners in Infection Control.

In July, six hospitals began reporting central-line associated bloodstream infections. These infections result from having an intravenous (IV) catheter that can lead to bacteria invading a patient’s bloodstream if the IV is not properly cared for. Hospitals will also report influenza vaccination rates of their health-care workers during the upcoming flu season.

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The Department of Health is collecting data that applies to different kinds and sizes of hospitals. Facilities can also easily measure and improve vaccination rates and decrease central-line associated bloodstream infections. Hospitals are reporting data through the National Healthcare Safety Network, a secure, internet-based surveillance system managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Central-line associated infections are serious infections that can be prevented. Influenza is a vaccine-preventable disease, and all direct health-care providers should protect themselves with a flu shot so they protect their patients,” said Dr. Susan Kellie, MPH, member of the Advisory Committee and Hospital Epidemiologist for the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center.

During the pilot year of the program, the data will be confidential as the Advisory Committee determines the best way to interpret the information and provide the data to the public in an understandable and useful manner. During the pilot, the National Healthcare Safety Network will provide participating hospitals with information to improve their surveillance for healthcare-associated infections and to prevent such infections.

After the year-long pilot, the Advisory Committee will make recommendations about how to get the highest quality information for public reporting purposes. The Advisory Committee will consider how to expand the program and when to add more measures for reporting.

“The goal is to collect useful information that will result in better patient care,” Dr. Vigil said.

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