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Florida Medicare Quality Improvement Organization Supports First World MRSA Day

Tampa, FL, October 5, 2009 -- FMQAI is pleased to announce its support of the first World MRSA Day Oct. 2 and recognition of MRSA Awareness Month in October to heighten awareness of how MRSA is transmitted and how to protect ourselves and others.

MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. These infections are resistant to many antibiotics and so can be hard to treat. Nationally, MRSA infections kill thousands of people each year and increase health care costs by more than \$2.5 billion.

As part of its quality improvement work with healthcare facilities in Florida, FMQAI is working to reduce the number of MRSA infections through its contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

“Nationally, invasive MRSA infections occur in approximately 94,000 persons each year, resulting in about 19,000 deaths each year,” said *Marie Hall, Patient Safety Project Director at FMQAI*. “At FMQAI, we are working closely with hospitals across the state to reduce the incidence and transmission of MRSA in Florida.”

“We at CMS are deeply concerned about the upward trend in MRSA infections over the past few decades, particularly in those patients who are already acutely ill enough to require inpatient hospitalization,” said Paul E. McGann, M.D., Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “By working with hospitals across the state, QIOs can serve as go-to resources for slowing—and hopefully one day, stopping—the spread of this debilitating complication of treatment.”

QIOs are working as part of CMS’ National Patient Safety Initiative, which aims to Patient Safety efforts will reduce patient harm using proven strategies that improve patient safety. “Reducing the rates of hospital-acquired MRSA is one of the key areas where we as a healthcare community can come together and implement common-sense solutions to reduce or eliminate causes of patient harm that result from patients’ interactions with the healthcare system, rather than from other causes,” said Dr. McGann. “Reducing MRSA rates in healthcare facilities will by definition increase the value of healthcare services as it produces higher quality care for Medicare beneficiaries, and by turn, all patients.”

World MRSA Day, a national grassroots event, is being coordinated by the MRSA Survivors Network. Following a press conference Oct. 1 at Loyola University in Chicago, the first national event will be a remembrance ceremony for those who have lost their lives or suffered from this preventable disease.

Organizations are encouraged to participate in World MRSA Day by organizing an event or presentation in their community to help raise awareness of MRSA and how to prevent it. For more information on World MRSA Day events and participation, please visit

www.worldmrsaday.org.

For more information about FMQAI and the work being conducted in Florida, visit www.fmqai.com.

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This material was prepared by FMQAI, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Florida, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.
FL2009F62MA1511451