

# Press Release

## Patient Safety Collaborative Contributes to Fewer Hospital Infections, Better Health Outcomes

**Philadelphia, PA - February 15, 2009** - The likelihood of getting a serious or life-threatening infection at one of our region's hospitals decreased from 2006 to 2007, thanks in part to the efforts of the Partnership for Patient Care, a quality and patient safety collaborative led by southeastern Pennsylvania hospitals and one of the region's largest health care insurers, Independence Blue Cross.

In a report released last month by the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4), the number of patients who contracted an infection during their hospital stay decreased more than 8 percent from 2006 to 2007. The report is PHC4's third hospital-specific report on infections, and the first time it has released year-over-year data.

The Partnership for Patient Care is overseen by The Health Care Improvement Foundation (HCIF), a nonprofit organization that supports innovative efforts to improve health services and promote best practices and patient safety in the Delaware Valley.

"We're particularly proud that nearly 70 percent of hospitals in southeastern Pennsylvania achieved a decrease in overall infections," said Kate Flynn, president of HCIF. "The program improved care by providing the benefits of research and tested methods to all that participated, allowing individual hospitals to more readily and easily implement safety interventions that had already been proven successful."

"The encouraging results of the PHC4's important study clearly suggest that our region has made good progress toward becoming one of the safest places to get care in our state," said Joseph A. Frick, president and chief executive officer of Independence Blue Cross. "The Partnership for Patient Care encourages hospitals and other health care organizations to work collaboratively and non-competitively for the greater good of millions of people in our region. We are pleased to be part of this forward-thinking initiative and look forward to its continued success in fighting infections and tackling other safety issues in our health care system."

Nearly every hospital in the region participated in the Partnership's 2006 initiative to reduce health care-acquired infections and prevent bloodstream and surgical site infections. The work involved charting and analyzing hospital processes to find new or improved ways to prevent infections. Working together in workshops and through an interactive, web-based work site, hospitals shared clinical experience, knowledge, analyses, and solutions, quickly implementing evidence-based best practices.

Since its inception in 2006, the Partnership for Patient care has also led projects to help prevent life-threatening blood clots that can develop during hospitalization, improved the prevention of patient falls, enhanced monitoring of medications to prevent harmful drug interactions and

dosing errors, and raised awareness about the threat of MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus).

### **About Independence Blue Cross**

Independence Blue Cross is a leading health insurer in Southeastern Pennsylvania. IBC and its affiliates provide coverage to nearly 3.4 million people. For more than 70 years, Independence Blue Cross has offered high-quality health care coverage tailored to meet the changing needs of members, employers, and health care professionals. Independence Blue Cross is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans.

### **About The Health Care Improvement Foundation**

The Health Care Improvement Foundation (HCIF) is an independent, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to building partnerships for better health care in Southeastern Pennsylvania. With a multi-dimensional focus on health care safety -- in patient care, environmental practices, and disaster preparedness -- HCIF brings together diverse organizations to achieve regional collaboration and improvement.