

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Partnership for patients to improve care and lower costs for Americans**

*New partnership between Administration, the private sector, hospitals and doctors to make care safer, potentially save up to \$50 billion*

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, joined by leaders of major hospitals, employers, health plans, physicians, nurses, and patient advocates, today announced the Partnership for Patients, a new national partnership that will help save 60,000 lives by stopping millions of preventable injuries and complications in patient care over the next three years. The Partnership for Patients also has the potential to save up to \$35 billion in health care costs, including up to \$10 billion for Medicare. Over the next ten years, the Partnership for Patients could reduce costs to Medicare by about \$50 billion and result in billions more in Medicaid savings. Already, more than 500 hospitals, as well as physicians and nurses groups, consumer groups, and employers have pledged their commitment to the new initiative.

“Americans go the hospital to get well, but millions of patients are injured because of preventable complications and accidents,” said Secretary Sebelius. “Working closely with hospitals, doctors, nurses, patients, families and employers, we will support efforts to help keep patients safe, improve care, and reduce costs. Working together, we can help eliminate preventable harm to patients.”

Today, leaders from across the nation pledged their commitment to this new initiative. To launch this initiative, HHS announced it would invest up to \$1 billion in federal funding, made available under the Affordable Care Act. Today, \$500 million of that funding was made available through the Community-based Care Transitions Program. Up to \$500 million more will be dedicated from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center to support new demonstrations related to reducing hospital-acquired conditions. The funding will be invested in reforms that help achieve two shared goals:

- **Keep hospital patients from getting injured or sicker.** By the end of 2013, preventable hospital-acquired conditions would decrease by 40-percent compared to 2010. Achieving this goal would mean approximately 1.8 million fewer injuries to patients, with more than 60,000 lives saved over the next three years.
- **Help patients heal without complication.** By the end of 2013, preventable complications during a transition from one care setting to another would be decreased so that all hospital readmissions would be reduced by 20-percent compared to 2010. Achieving this goal would mean more than 1.6 million patients will recover from illness without suffering a preventable complication requiring re-hospitalization within 30 days of discharge.

The Partnership will target all forms of harm to patients but will start by asking hospitals to focus on nine types of medical errors and complications where the potential for dramatic reductions in harm rates has been demonstrated by pioneering hospitals and systems across the country. Examples include preventing adverse drug reactions, pressure ulcers, childbirth complications and surgical site infections. The CMS Innovation Center will help hospitals adapt effective, evidence-based care improvements to target

preventable patient injuries on a local level, developing innovative approaches to spreading and sharing strategies among public and private partners in all states. Members of the partnership will identify specific steps they will take to reduce preventable injuries and complications in patient care.

“With new tools provided by the Affordable Care Act, we can aggressively implement programs that will help hospitals reduce preventable errors,” said CMS Administrator Donald Berwick, M.D. “We will provide hospitals with incentives to improve the quality of health care, and provide real assistance to medical professionals and hospitals to support their efforts to reduce harm.”

HHS has committed \$500 million to community-based organizations partnering with eligible hospitals to help patients safely transition between settings of care. Today, community-based organizations and acute care hospitals that partner with community-based organizations can begin submitting applications for this funding. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis. Awards will be made on an ongoing basis as funding permits.

In coordination with stakeholders from across the health care system, the CMS Innovation Center is planning to use up to \$500 million in additional funding to test different models of improving patient care and patient engagement and collaboration in order to reduce hospital-acquired conditions and improve care transitions nationwide. These collaborative models will help hospitals adopt effective interventions for improving patient safety in their facilities.

The programs announced today are just two of the many ways the Affordable Care Act is helping improve the health care system. Last month, HHS announced the first-ever National Quality Strategy, which will serve as a tool to help coordinate quality initiatives between public and private partners as well as to leverage and coordinate existing efforts by federal agencies and departments to improve patient care. HHS also announced new rules to help doctors, hospitals, and other providers better coordinate care for Medicare patients through Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). By 2015, a portion of Medicare payments to the majority of hospitals will be linked to whether hospitals are delivering safer care, using information technology effectively and meeting patient needs. Payment incentives and supports to improve quality and lower costs will also be available to state Medicaid programs.

“No single entity can improve care for millions of hospital patients alone,” said Berwick. “Through strong partnerships at national, regional, state and local levels – including the public sector and some of the nation’s largest companies – we are supporting the hospital community to significantly reduce harm to patients.”

For more information about the Partnership for Patients, visit [www.HealthCare.gov/center/programs/partnership](http://www.HealthCare.gov/center/programs/partnership). For a fact sheet on today’s announcement, visit [www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/partnership04122011a.html](http://www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/partnership04122011a.html). For more information about the Community-based Care Transitions Program funding opportunity, visit [www.cms.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts/MD/itemdetail.asp?itemID=CMS1239313](http://www.cms.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts/MD/itemdetail.asp?itemID=CMS1239313).

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