

Tommy Thompson to Share Blueprint for Action to Prevent Medical Errors at NPSF Patient Safety Congress

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Bridge Medical Joins National Patient Safety Foundation and 34 Organizations in Convening Historic Congress During National Patient Safety Awareness Week

CHICAGO & WASHINGTON, D.C., Mar 6, 2003 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- With medical errors again making headlines this year, federal plans to address this issue become increasingly critical. Next week in Washington, the Honorable Tommy Thompson will tell attendees of the nation's foremost patient safety conference what the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is planning to do to help the healthcare sector better protect patients.

As President George Bush said, in a speech this week in Washington to the American Medical Association's National Advocacy Conference, "Patient safety is improved when doctors and nurses exchange information about problems and solutions." That's exactly what will happen Mar. 12-15 at the Renaissance Washington D.C. Hotel. Healthcare professionals from a variety of disciplines will "exchange information" on keeping patients safe . . . as Bridge Medical -- the nation's leading patient safety software company -- joins the National Patient Safety Foundation and 34 organizations in hosting the Fifth Annual NPSF Patient Safety Congress.

The Congress is being held in concert with National Patient Safety Awareness Week -- a national education and awareness-building campaign for improving patient safety at the local level -- celebrated Mar. 9-15. This year's theme: "Communication and Partnership: Safety Starts with All of Us."

"That's what President Bush was talking about," said Carol A. Ley, MD, MPH, who chairs the board of NPSF, an organizational founder of Patient Safety Awareness Week (PSAW). "It starts with us communicating and exchanging information."

"We are honored to have Secretary Thompson join us on Mar. 13 as our keynote speaker. His 'View from the Top' will be perfect for this year's Congress theme: 'Let's Get Results: Improving the Safety of Patients.'" The HHS secretary is expected to review the federal government's leadership in improving patient safety, and outline federal legislative, regulatory, research and technical assistance initiatives designed to help physicians, providers and patients enhance the safety of U.S. healthcare. Ley, is director, occupational medicine, at 3M in St. Paul, Minn., one of the founders of NPSF.

Other speakers include experts from the country's leading hospitals and health systems, as well as such organizations as the American Nurses Association, American Society for Healthcare Risk Management, Colorado Patient Safety Coalition, Institute for Safe Medication Practices, Leapfrog Group, Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors, National Quality Forum, Niagara Health Quality Coalition, PULSE of Colorado and the Foundation for Healthy Communities.

The NPSF Congress -- formerly known as the Annenberg Conference -- has historically attracted a diverse healthcare audience, including executives and department chairs; patient safety officers, quality directors and risk management officers; chief information officers; chief nursing and medical officers; and pharmacists, physicians, nurses and other clinicians. This year, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) will for the first time collaborate with NPSF to conduct two mini patient safety courses on Mar. 12 before the Congress officially begins with a 6 PM "Welcome Reception." (IHI President and CEO Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, is one of NPSF's "distinguished advisors.")

On Mar. 14, attendees will have an opportunity to find out how to use lessons learned in other industries to improve patient safety . . . then laugh at all the serious challenges healthcare faces. First, Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill will share his experiences as chairman of Alcoa, where his advocacy for a safe workplace led to phenomenal improvements in Alcoa's safety performance. Later that evening, the nationally known "Capitol Steps" -- a group of Congressional staffers-turned-comedians--will address the humorous side of healthcare with their scathing songs, skits and parodies.

More than 40 safety-minded organizations and vendors -- including the Maryland Hospital Association/Quality Indicator Project, the Safety Institute at Premier, U.S. Pharmacopeia, the VA National Center for Patient Safety and Bridge Medical (Booth #144) -- will be exhibiting at the Congress.

About NPSF

The National Patient Safety Foundation was founded in 1996 by the American Medical Association, CNA HealthPro, 3M, and contributions from the Schering-Plough Corporation. An independent, nonprofit research and education organization, NPSF is an unprecedented partnership of healthcare practitioners, institutional providers, health product providers, health product manufacturers, researchers, legal advisors, patient/consumer advocates, regulators and policymakers committed to making healthcare safer for patients. Through leadership, research support and education, the NPSF is committed to making patient safety a national priority.

The NPSF web site offers a variety of educational tools to help hospitals build partnerships with patients in their communities, and both teach and encourage patients to become more involved in their own health care.

NPSF's "Stand Up for Patient Safety" campaign helps hospitals and health systems both observe National Patient Safety Awareness Week and mobilize to take concerted action to reduce medical errors.

On the Net: NPSF site: <http://www.npsf.org> On the Net: Congress site: <http://www.mederrors.org/program.html> About Bridge

Bridge Medical, Inc. -- an AmerisourceBergen company (NYSE:ABC) -- is headquartered in Solana Beach, Calif., and has been educating healthcare professionals about medication errors and their prevention since the company was founded in 1996.

AmerisourceBergen is based in Valley Forge, Penn. On the Net: Bridge Medical site: <http://www.bridgemedical.com>

NOTE: For a full text of President Bush's remarks on patient safety and health information technology, visit http://www.bridgemedical.com/patient_gwb.shtml

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