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News Release

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LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER WINS AWARD

Lebanon, PA - In 1997, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) put special focus on patient safety improvement and in 1999, the National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS) was established to promote this initiative. The Lebanon VA Medical Center is committed to improving health care safety. This commitment is inherent in our mission to continuously improve health care for our Veterans. Leadership strives to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality by promoting, "Excellence in All." In 2009, the medical center participated in the NCPS's culture safety survey. The purpose of the survey was to measure our medical center's culture of safety. In 15 of the 15 patient safety dimensions, our facility scored at or above the national average. Lebanon was the top facility in Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 4 (14 dimensions significantly above the VISN average).

Lebanon VA Medical Center's patient safety program has implemented a three-step approach to improve Veteran's safety. First, understanding the health care continuum as a system and exploring vulnerabilities that can result in patient harm has been emphasized in our patient safety improvement initiatives. Some examples of these initiatives include: Ensuring Correct Surgery and Invasive Procedures, Hand Hygiene, Anticoagulant Therapy, and Improving Safety in the Use of Reusable Medical Equipment. In 2009, our medical center was awarded two national Patient Safety Initiative (PSI) Awards (\$30,000) for innovative patient safety enhancement projects (Infection Control and Suicide Prevention). Both projects will be funded by the NCPS. The goal of the PSI is to stimulate creative approaches to complex patient safety issues.

The second step for promoting patient safety includes educating and encouraging all staff to report system vulnerabilities so those incidents can be studied to learn how to address them. Many valuable lessons have been learned to prevent future incidents. For example, numerous advancements have been implemented with the administration of medications and our Bar Code Medication Administration system.

The third step of the program emphasizes prevention rather than punishment. In the past, the focus was on individuals and mistakes, rather than on the cluster of events that had combined in an unfortunate sequence to cause an incident to occur. Our goal is simple: The reduction and prevention of inadvertent harm to our patients as a result

of their care. Reducing or eliminating harm to patients is the real key to patient safety. The goal is to design systems that are "fault tolerant," so that when an individual error occurs, it does not result in harm to a patient.

The Lebanon VA Medical Center has embraced the "root cause analysis" (RCA) process. The purpose of an RCA is to find out what happened, why it happened, and what to do to prevent it from happening again. With the support of leadership and staff participation from all areas of the organization, a true team effort has been achieved to improve patient safety. In 2009, The Lebanon VA Medical Center was awarded the NCPS Annual Silver Cornerstone RCA Award. The Cornerstone Recognition Program was initiated by the National Center for Patient Safety in 2008 to help enhance the RCA process and recognize the good work done for patient safety at the facility level.

At its heart, Lebanon's patient safety program has focused on putting Veterans first to improve their health care safety. To learn more about our commitment to improving Veterans health care safety, you can access <http://vaww.ncps.med.va.gov/>.

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