

## Safe Injection Practices Campaign

### PRESS RELEASE

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## New Study Confirms Cases of Unsafe Injection Practices Safe Injection Practices Coalition Seeks Solutions to National Issue

**WASHINGTON --(January 6, 2009)** – Unsafe injection practices by U.S. healthcare professionals have exposed more than 60,000 patients to life-threatening hepatitis B or C over the past decade, according to a groundbreaking review by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published in this month's edition of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

CDC researchers identified at least 33 hepatitis outbreaks since 1998 resulting from deficient healthcare practices. This article focuses on outbreaks that have occurred in outpatient settings such as doctor's offices, outpatient clinics, dialysis centers and nursing homes. Unsafe injection practices, such as reuse of syringes, accounted for most of the infections and exposures.

To eliminate such outbreaks, nine organizations with a wide range of interests in healthcare and patient safety have joined together to form the Safe Injection Practices Coalition with the goal of finding solutions to this national issue.

The coalition -comprised of patient advocacy organizations, foundations, provider associations and societies and industry partners -is in the process of developing a national pilot public health education and awareness campaign aimed at both healthcare professionals and the public to advance and promote safe injection practices.

Evelyn McKnight knows all too well the need for greater provider awareness. An audiologist battling a recurrence of breast cancer, McKnight was one of 99 Nebraska cancer patients infected with hepatitis C because her healthcare providers reused syringes.

"These tragedies must be seen as 'never events,' like operating on the wrong side of the brain or cutting off the wrong limb. No patient should ever contract a deadly disease while seeking care or treatment," said McKnight.

"I had hoped the enormity of the Nebraska outbreak would have spurred a public outcry and led to universal reform. Sadly, that never happened," added McKnight, who through her foundation, HONORreform, is also a member of the Safe Injection Practices Coalition. "This study leaves no doubt that there is a dire need for greater education and awareness of safe injection practices."

“This new coalition is a superb example of the power of partnerships in enhancing our national ability to protect people’s safety in all healthcare settings. I feel strongly that this coalition can make an extraordinary impact on the safety of healthcare for all Americans,” said Charles Stokes, President and CEO of the CDC Foundation and a member of the coalition.

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### **About Safe Injection Practices Coalition**

The Safe Injection Practices Coalition is comprised of patient advocacy organizations, foundations, provider associations and societies and industry partners. The Coalition is in the process of developing a national pilot public health education and awareness campaign aimed at both healthcare providers and the public to advance and promote safe injection practices, especially in outpatient settings.

The Coalition was established in June 2008 to address the lack of understanding and adherence to the most basic safe injection practices in nonhospital settings. Issues of concern include the common reuse of syringes and misuse of multidose vials. Coalition partners include the following organizations: Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), Ambulatory Surgery Foundation, Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc (APIC), BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CDC Foundation, HONORReform Foundation, Nebraska Medical Association (NMA), and Nevada State Medical Association (NSMA).