

MEDIA *advisory*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Joseph's Care Group Remains Committed to Reducing Healthcare-associated Infections

[THUNDER BAY, ON April 30, 2009] As part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) public reporting of patient safety indicators initiative, St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) has been tracking hand hygiene compliance rates among its care professionals and began publicly posting these results on April 30th, 2009.

Research shows that hand hygiene is the single most effective way to reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections, and SJCG has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring the overall safety and wellbeing of clients.

"We have focused a great deal of attention on improving hand hygiene," says Penny Anguish, Vice President of Clinical Services & Chief Nursing Officer. A few examples include:

- Increased the number of alcohol hand sanitizers
- Ongoing education of staff and clients on proper hand hygiene
- Posters, pamphlets, facts sheets available for staff and clients
- Implementing the *Just Clean Your Hands* campaign across the Care Group.

Beginning in March 2008, hospitals across Ontario participated in a comprehensive training program called *Just Clean Your Hands*. Since that time, trained observers in hospital settings have been conducting hand hygiene audits (using a provincial audit tool) and recording what they see. With specific sample sizes based on hospital size, hospitals must then report their compliance rates to the MOHLTC.

"Ontario's hospitals strongly support collecting and publicly reporting patient safety data such as hand hygiene compliance rates" explains OHA President and CEO Tom Closson. "This type of data, reported on a consistent, province-wide basis, will be an important element in our efforts to improve patient safety."

The collection and public reporting of these rates will allow hospitals to establish a baseline from which to track their hand hygiene improvement over time. Hospitals will use this information to identify areas for improvement and strategies for reducing the incidence of healthcare-associated infections.

The data is available on SJCG's website www.sjcg.net, and on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website at www.ontario.ca/patientsafety.

- 3 -

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St. Joseph's Health Centre • Behavioural Sciences Centre • Diabetes Health Thunder Bay • Sister Margaret Smith Centre**

St. Joseph's Care Group is accredited with Accreditation Canada and provides services in complex care, rehabilitation, mental health and addictions, long-term care and supportive housing. Community programs are provided at Frank Murphy Community Centre.

St. Joseph's Care Group has approximately 1700 employees and over 400 volunteers. With an annual operating budget of \$125M, SJCG is the fifth largest employer in Thunder Bay. To learn more about SJCG, visit the web site at www.sjcg.net