Two Leading Health Care Quality Organizations Hold National Summit to Build Consensus Around Ways to Minimize Overuse of Five Treatments

Appropriate Use Will Improve Quality and Safety of Patient Care

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – September 28, 2012) – To help reach a consensus on ways to reduce the occurrence of medical treatments that are commonly used but not always necessary, the American Medical Association (AMA)-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement (PCPI) and The Joint Commission co-sponsored the National Summit on Overuse, September 24, 2012, to discuss strategies to improve the quality and safety of patient care.

A variety of key stakeholders, including representatives from physician organizations, medical specialties, government agencies, research institutions and patient groups, came together at the National Summit on Overuse to discuss the appropriate use of the following treatments and procedures:

- Heart vessel stents (percutaneous coronary intervention or PCI)
- Blood transfusions (blood management)
- Ear tubes (tympanostomy tubes) for brief periods of fluid behind the ear drum
- Antibiotics for the common cold (viral upper respiratory infections)
- Early scheduled births (early induction) without medical need

At the summit, participants considered the existing evidence surrounding the appropriate use of these five treatments and discussed ways to raise awareness among health care professionals and patients and provide ways to reduce overuse by health care professionals.
Recommendations to effectively address appropriate use of these treatments to improve health care quality and reduce potential risk to the patient were developed using a consensus-building process. For example, the recommendations included the creation of educational tools for health care professionals and patients, dissemination of leading practices to health care professionals, standardized reporting of data, and the alignment of existing guidelines.

“Overuse of medical tests, treatments, and procedures is a serious quality and patient safety concern that needs urgent attention,” says Mark R. Chassin, M.D., FACP, M.P.P., M.P.H., president, The Joint Commission. “Our aim is to help improve safety for patients by raising awareness about the inappropriate indications for these procedures and treatments. Widespread and effective dissemination of this important information will help physicians and patients make informed decisions and avoid overuse.”

“By bringing attention to and discussing appropriate use of these five treatments and sharing best practices with a diverse group of health care stakeholders, we can work together to ensure that patients receive the highest quality care,” says Bernard M. Rosof, M.D., chair, AMA-convened PCPI.

“The AMA is committed to helping physicians improve the health of their patients and is focused on improving patient health outcomes,” says Steven J. Stack, M.D., chair, AMA Board. “We are pleased to be working with The Joint Commission. By building on the strategies discussed at the summit, we can help health care professionals ensure that the right patient gets the right treatment at the right time.”

There are some medical treatments that, when overused or used inappropriately, do little to benefit the patient or may even put the patient at unnecessary risk. In some of these areas, the solutions are known or guidelines already exist but need to be more widely communicated. In other areas, more analysis and research is needed. Appropriate practices must be made consistent from organization to organization and from health professional to health professional to ensure appropriate use.

Podcasts highlighting the day’s events are available at www.jointcommission.org/podcast.aspx?CategoryId=12&F_All=y

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About The Joint Commission (TJC)
Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission currently certifies more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, focused on the care of patients with chronic illnesses such as stroke, joint replacement, stroke rehabilitation, heart failure and many others. The Joint Commission also provides health care
staffing services certification for more than 750 staffing offices. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.

About the American Medical Association (AMA)
The American Medical Association helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional, public health and health policy issues. The nation’s largest physician organization plays a leading role in shaping the future of medicine. For more information on the AMA, please visit www.ama-assn.org. The AMA-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement (PCPI) convenes over 190 organizations and is dedicated to aligning patient-centered care, performance measurement and quality improvement. For more information on the AMA-convened PCPI, please visit www.physicianconsortium.org.