

## **Template Media Statement**

### **WHO Save Lives: Clean Your Hands - A call for action from WHO for all health-care workers and organizations**

Health-care workers throughout the world have been invited to actively campaign for improved hand hygiene at the point of patient care to support the reduction of health care-associated infection following a WHO call for action. On 5 May 2010 the second global hand hygiene annual initiative will again highlight the need for health-care commitment to this priority global movement, as well as the many activities that are taking place around the globe.

International infection control expert Professor Didier Pittet from Switzerland and lead of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Patient Safety (Infection Control and Improving Practices) says that by improving hand hygiene at the point of care, patient lives will be saved.

'Infections like influenza, multi-drug resistant Gram negative bacilli, MRSA and diarrhoea can be substantially reduced through improved hand hygiene carried out at the right times. Through this global call for action, we are asking health-care workers around the world to make clean hands their priority.'

Professor Pittet says that already more than 6 000 health-care facilities worldwide have registered their support for WHO SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands, representing 5 million health-care workers and over 2 million patient beds.

'This is a tremendous level of support which we hope will continue to increase. We acknowledge this commitment by sending personalized commendation letters and displaying information on the activities of these facilities on dedicated WHO web pages.'

'Health care-associated infections place a serious burden and significant economic impact on patients and health-care systems throughout the world', he said. 'We know through research and evidence that we have collated over the last five years, that by the simple task of cleaning hands at the right times and in the right way, lives can be saved.'

'We must not forget that hand hygiene is a global issue. Patients are infected in health-care environments everywhere. It is our firm resolve to make hand hygiene improvement tools readily available so that health-care workers regardless of their environment can access and utilize them. We also aim to support education and training through the availability of media such as PowerPoint slides and on line live webinar sessions.'

During the week of 3 May 2010 WHO is delivering five live webinars on hand hygiene to support the many local activities taking place around the globe.

Health-care facilities can register their support for WHO SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands at <http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/register/en/index.html> and facilities already registered are encouraged to cascade information on the importance of this global annual initiative and clean hands in health care at all times, building on their existing achievements in support of reducing of health care-associated infection.

Refer <http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/en/index.html> for more information.