FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stop! Clean Your Hands
Canada’s National Hand Hygiene Campaign Launched

Edmonton, June 10, 2007 - The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) today announced the launch of the pilot phase of Stop! Clean Your Hands, the national hand hygiene campaign aimed at promoting the importance of hand hygiene in reducing the occurrence of healthcare associated infections in Canada. This campaign is part of a larger initiative. Last October, Canada joined the Global Patient Safety Challenge and has committed to participate in the Clean Care is Safer Care initiative The World Health Organization’s challenge Clean Care is Safer Care was launched worldwide in October 2005 and aims at raising awareness of healthcare associated infections as an important priority for patient safety.

Together, the Community and Hospital Infection Control Association- Canada (CHICA-Canada), the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and CPSI are working on a pan-Canadian hand hygiene campaign that will support, supplement and integrate existing hand hygiene initiatives locally, regionally and provincially. The goal of the campaign is to respond to the needs of healthcare organizations for capacity building, leadership development and the production of tools to help promote hand hygiene in healthcare facilities.

“We know that organizations are working really hard at reducing infections,” says Phil Hassen, CEO of the CPSI. “Commitment and involvement of CEOs, boards and all levels of management within the organization are required in order to change hand hygiene practices, get sustainable and cost effective results over time. Leadership is really integral to the success of the campaign.”

During the pilot phase, which will take place this summer, the campaign will be implemented in select healthcare facilities across the country. During this phase, the campaign materials will be refined based on feedback from ten pilot facilities. The official launch of the campaign will take place at the Halifax 7 Canadian Healthcare Safety Symposium in Ottawa on October 10, 2007.

“Infection prevention and control has always been an issue in health care,” said Wendy Nicklin, President and Chief Executive Officer, CCHSA. “Coordinated and effective strategies, such as this one, that are relevant to all health care workers as well as the public are essential. This campaign is tackling it in a manageable, affordable and effective way.”

“Hand hygiene is one of the most important methods of reducing infections and enhancing patient safety in all health-care settings, whether it’s in hospitals, homes or long-term care facilities,” said Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer for Canada. “We are pleased to collaborate with our partners on this important initiative to improve the quality of care for Canadians.”

“We are very pleased to be working with our partners CHICA, CCHSA and PHAC and excited about working with the ten pilot sites,” continued Hassen. “This is an important campaign. Good hand hygiene saves lives.”

Healthcare associated infections affect the quality of care and patient safety and add needless costs to the healthcare system. The total cost of hand hygiene promotion corresponds to less than 1% of the costs associated with healthcare associated infections and a correlation has been proven to exist between promoting hand hygiene and lowering overall healthcare costs.

“Every year 8,000-12,000 Canadians die from a hospital acquired infection” notes Dr. Dick Zoutman, Physician Director of CHICA-Canada. “Together we can make safer health care a reality.”

For more information, please go to www.handhygiene.ca.
About CPSI
The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) was established in 2003 as an independent, not-for-profit corporation, operating collaboratively with health professionals and organizations, regulatory bodies and governments to build and advance a safer healthcare system for Canadians. CPSI performs a coordinating and leadership role across health sectors and systems, promotes leading practices and raises awareness about patient safety by working in collaboration with partners, patients, their families and the general public.

About CHICA-Canada
The Community and Hospital Infection Control Association - Canada (CHICA-Canada) is a multidisciplinary, professional association comprised of those interested in the prevention and control of infections in all health care settings. Incorporated in 1976, CHICA-Canada has over 1400 members from acute care, long term care, community and public health settings. CHICA-Canada provides communication and education for those involved in infection prevention and control activities. Its goal is to prevent infections and as a result improve patient care and staff health in hospitals, other health care facilities, and the community by:

- initiating and coordinating effective communication and cooperation among all disciplines united by infection prevention and control activities
- supporting and/or developing effective and rational infection control practices
- standardizing infection control practices
- promoting research in areas related to infection prevention and control
- promoting and facilitating infection prevention and control education for both infection prevention and control practitioners and other personnel working in hospitals, nursing homes and related institutions

About CCHSA
The Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation www.cchsa-ccass.ca is a non-profit and independent organization that provides national and international health and social service organizations with a voluntary, external peer review to assess the quality of their services. CCHSA’s guidance has been helping organizations strive for excellence for close to 50 years.

About PHAC
Please visit http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/about_apropos/index.html

Contact:
Pierrette Leonard
Canadian Patient Safety Institute
pleonard@cpsi-icsp.ca
Tel: 613-889-1767

Chantal Backman
PM, Canadian Patient Safety Institute
cbackman@cpsi-icsp.ca
Tel: 613-875-0024