



NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL DEC. 7, 2008 (2 p.m.)
REF 2008-19

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**Novant Health Receives \$50,000 Award for Excellence in Medication-Use Safety
from ASHP Foundation**

*Annual award, sponsored by Cardinal Health Foundation, encourages pharmacists
to lead system-wide improvements in medication safety*

ORLANDO, Fla. (Dec. 7, 2008) — The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Research and Education Foundation today announced that Novant Health received the 2008 Award for Excellence in Medication-Use Safety, the only national award that honors a pharmacist-led multidisciplinary team for implementing significant institution-wide improvements in medication safety.

Now in its fifth year, the ASHP Foundation Award for Excellence in Medication-Use Safety is sponsored by the Cardinal Health Foundation. At a ceremony held during the 2008 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting in Orlando, Fla., Novant Health received \$50,000 to further promote medication-use safety. Two award finalists, Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital at The Ohio State University Medical Center, received awards of \$10,000 each.

“In administering this awards program, the ASHP Foundation seeks to share the success stories of the winner and finalist organizations so practitioners across the country can benefit and learn from their experiences,” said Stephen J. Allen, ASHP Foundation Executive Vice President. “The primary goal of this program is to provide opportunities for others to improve the quality and safety of medication management.”

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Novant Health, a not-for-profit, integrated health care system based in Winston-Salem, N.C., was named this year's award recipient in recognition of a patient outreach initiative titled the Safe Med program. The program aimed to prevent adverse drug events (ADEs) in outpatients who are 65 years or older. Through the program, a team of pharmacists contacts patients in the targeted age group within seven days of being discharged from the hospital to assess each patient's medication regimen, educate them about safe medication adherence and also give both the patient and primary care provider a reconciled list of medications. In its first year, the program reduced hospital admissions related to ADEs from 17.9 percent to 4 percent. In addition, predictive models estimate that Safe Med patients have experienced a remarkable 29-percent reduction in overall hospital admissions.

"The Safe Med Program represents Novant Health's mission of improving the health of our communities, one person at a time," said Nan Holland, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H., Director of Clinical and Quality Services for Novant Medical Group, Novant Health. "The program serves to not only reconcile the medication list but to empower patients and families to understand more about and become a partner in their health care. We are truly working to enhance the movement of patients across the continuum of care and to enhance the continuity of care."

One of this year's award finalists, **Northwestern Memorial Hospital**, an 873-bed academic medical center in Chicago, was recognized for a program that significantly improved medication reconciliation compliance. This multidisciplinary team initiative, supported by hospital leadership, identified non-standardized processes for reviewing, communicating and documenting patients' medications as a major barrier to medication reconciliation. In addition to incorporating enhancements to the hospital's electronic medical record system, the program included mandatory, multidisciplinary training to ensure that physicians were aware of medication histories prior to placing orders. The program also ensured that nurses and pharmacists validated medication histories against active orders and that pharmacists participated as the final point of reconciliation. By weaving medication reconciliation into each discipline's workflow, this program raised patient medication reconciliation compliance rates from 40 percent to more than 90 percent with sustainable results.

This year's second finalist, **Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital at The Ohio State University Medical Center** in Columbus, Ohio, was recognized for a pharmacist-led continuous quality improvement project that focused on the safe administration of two different types of antithrombotics used when treating patients with coronary artery disease. An evaluation of 285 patients in 2004 revealed that patients who received one agent – bivalirudin – instead of GP IIb/IIIa inhibitors plus heparin experienced a decrease in bleeding and shorter hospital stays. These results prompted an operational change to ensure physicians, nurses and pharmacists received intensive education and training to safely incorporate bivalirudin as the preferred antithrombotic agent when treating patients with coronary artery disease. An evaluation of 389 patients, performed three years after

the program was implemented, concluded that total bleeding was significantly lower for patients who received bivalirudin when compared to the patients who received GP IIb/IIIa inhibitors plus heparin, 2.9 percent versus 14.5 percent. Length of stay was also significantly lower with bivalirudin, 1.9 days versus 3.1 days.

“The Cardinal Health Foundation is honored to recognize this year’s award finalists for their innovative approaches to improving medication safety for patients,” said Shelley Bird, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs for Cardinal Health and Chair of the Cardinal Health Foundation. “We invite hospitals from around the nation to join our chase for zero medication errors by incorporating these proven best practices into their approach to medication management.”

The award recipient and finalists were chosen by an interdisciplinary panel of judges who evaluated all applicants. Finalists were chosen based on the initiative’s scope; planning and implementation; measurable outcomes and impact; innovation and applicability to other health care organizations. Judges visited each finalist’s site before selecting the award recipient. Selection panel members are:

Donald E. Casey Jr., M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FACP
Vice President of Quality and Chief Medical Officer
Atlantic Health System
Morristown, N.J.

Hedy Cohen, R.N., B.S.N., M.S.
Vice President
Institute for Safe Medication Practices
Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

Kathy Crea, Pharm.D., BCPS
Medication Safety Coordinator
OhioHealth, Clinical Resource Management
Columbus, Ohio

Sherry Danello, R.N., M.S.N., CNA
Vice President, Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer for System
St. Joseph’s/Candler Health System
Savannah, Ga.

Joanne Kowiatek, R.Ph., M.P.M.
Pharmacy Manager, Medication Patient Safety
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Timothy S. Lesar, B.S., Pharm.D., FASHP
Director of Pharmacy
Albany Medical Center
Albany, N.Y.

About the ASHP Research and Education Foundation

The ASHP Research and Education Foundation (www.ashpfoundation.org) was established in 1968 by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of patients in hospitals and health systems through appropriate, safe and effective medication use. We conduct leadership, education and research activities that foster the coordination of interdisciplinary medication management leading to optimal patient outcomes. Emphasis is given to programs that will have a major impact on advancing pharmacy practice in hospitals and health systems, thereby improving public health.

About the Cardinal Health Foundation

Supported by the global resources of Cardinal Health and its more than 40,000 employees, the Cardinal Health Foundation supports regional, national and international programs that improve health care quality and build healthy communities. The Cardinal Health Foundation also offers grants to encourage employee service to the community and works through international agencies to donate much-needed medical supplies and funding to those who need them in times of disaster. With annual revenues of \$91 billion and operations on five continents, Cardinal Health serves the health care industry with products and services that help hospitals, physician offices and pharmacies reduce costs, improve safety, productivity and profitability, and deliver better care to patients. To learn more about the Cardinal Health Foundation, visit www.CardinalHealth.com/community.

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