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SHEA News

THE SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA

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Draft HICPAC Guideline

The HICPAC *Draft Guideline for Prevention of Intravascular Catheter-Related Infections* is available for public comment until October 22, 2001. The draft document was not published in the *Federal Register*.

The draft guideline, *Federal Register Notice of Availability and Request for Comment*, along with on-line request and comment pages, is available at the following web site: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/ivguide.htm.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Issues Report on Patient Safety

Public awareness of patient safety issues was heightened after national news coverage of victims of medical errors and a 1999 Institute of Medicine report, *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System*. In response to this publication, the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force released *Doing What Counts for Patient Safety: Federal Actions to Reduce Medical Errors and Their Impact*, listing over 100 action items for federal agencies to explore to reduce medical errors, thereby improving patient safety.

In July 2001, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the federal agency leading efforts to research and promote patient safety, issued the report *Making Health Care Safer: A Critical Analysis of Patient Safety Practices*. The report indicated that using an evidence-based approach can help identify practices that are likely to improve patient safety. It is the authors' hope that the report will serve as a template for future clinicians, researchers, and policy makers to extend and improve upon.

Although SHEA and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc (APIC) are encouraged by the recognition of infection control and

healthcare epidemiology as an important patient safety issue and by the report's acknowledgment of the value of infection control surveillance, prevention, and intervention programs in improving patient and healthcare worker safety and the quality of patient care, the organizations believe that the level of evaluation of existing data was insufficient and the recommendations often were not reflective of the most current and scientifically proven infection control and patient-safety practices.

Together, SHEA and APIC sent a formal response to Dr. John Eisenberg, Director, AHRQ, on August 2, 2001. You can read the SHEA and APIC response letter at www.shea-online.org/News.html. SHEA and APIC urge you to work with your patient-safety teams, quality and performance improvement colleagues, and administrative and policy personnel within your facilities to consider the many science-based and clinically proven patient safety practices in healthcare infection prevention and control before adopting the AHRQ report recommendations.

The full report can be located at www.ahrq.gov/clinic/ptsafety, and a summary prepared by Dr. Salgado is located at SHEA's web site, www.shea-online.org.

New ICHE Editor

In August 2000, Dr. Michael Decker stepped down as editor of *ICHE*, and the SHEA Publications Committee launched a search to fill the position, receiving applications from outstanding individuals. Dr. Barry Farr, University of Virginia-Charlottesville, was offered, and accepted, the position. Our Society is fortunate to have someone of Barry's respected scientific stature, extensive bibliography, and wide experience in healthcare epidemiology to accept this important position.

The new editor and his staff will face many challenges during the transition of the editorship from Nashville to Charlottesville. It is hoped that the Charlottesville office will open in October (for new submissions) and will be fully operational by early 2002.

Thanks to Michael Decker, Susan Cantrell, and the rest of the Nashville *ICHE* staff for all their hard work. They will continue to play a critical role in the transition of the editorial office.

Additional News Editor

The SHEA Board of Directors is encouraging the "younger generation" of SHEA members to get more involved in the Society by volunteering for SHEA committees, such as the Membership Committee and the External Affairs Committee, as well as becoming involved with the *SHEA Newsletter* and SHEA News page. The editors of this news page are very glad to welcome Cassandra Salgado to the news team. "Cassy" completed an Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residency at West Virginia University and is currently a second-year infectious diseases fellow at the University of Virginia. Her interests include the epidemiology of antimicrobial-resistant organisms and infection control.

Brief items of interest for the SHEA News or SHEA Newsletter may be sent to Andreas Voss, MD, PhD, Dept. of Medical Microbiology, University of Nijmegen, Postbus 9101, 6500 HB Nijmegen, The Netherlands; fax, 31-024-354-0216; e-mail, a.voss@mmb.azn.nl.