

January 19, 2009

To: Sir Liam Donaldson
Chair, WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety
World Health Organization
IER/PSP
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

As surgery is an integral part of health care and a major public health concern, and whilst the volume of surgery is rapidly growing worldwide, the California Hospital Patient Safety Organization welcomes the new “Safe Surgery Saves Lives” initiative of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) World Alliance for Patient Safety, which for the first time, addresses patient safety in surgical care as a matter of global importance.

The California Hospital Patient Safety Organization considers the improvement of surgical safety as essential to public health and endorses the concept of the “WHO Surgical Safety Checklist”. The Checklist aims to support surgical teams anywhere in the world to ensure that patients undergo the right operation, at the correct body site, with safe anesthesia, established infection prevention measures, and effective teamwork for safer care. The California Hospital Patient Safety Organization also supports the establishment of “Surgical Vital Statistics” requesting that countries track surgical volume and in-hospital surgical death rates.

The importance of concerted unified action in these areas cannot be overstated. Together, we can prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths and complications from surgery on a global level.

The California Hospital Patient Safety Organization, therefore, strongly supports the “Safe Surgery Saves Lives” initiative and congratulates WHO on making it possible for all stakeholders to move in this direction.



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