



## *NEWS RELEASE*

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### **HRET, ISMP and MGMA to Develop Educational Tools on Patient Safety for Physician Practices**

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (Jan. 16, 2007) – Physician practices will soon have new online resources to help enhance patient safety. The Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET), the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) and the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) have received a grant from The Commonwealth Fund to develop three educational, Web-based tools for physician practices. The tools, titled Pathways for Patient Safety™, will increase awareness, knowledge and implementation of best practices to reduce the risk of patient harm in physician practices.

The project is funded through The Commonwealth Fund's program on Health Care Quality Improvement and Efficiency. It began Dec. 1 and will continue through June 2008. Tool development will build on findings from a 2006 self-assessment of patient safety in physician practices conducted by HRET, ISMP and MGMA. In mid-2006, the three groups collected data from 200 physician practices on their current procedures.

“Physicians are concerned about the quality and safety of care that they provide in their offices, but if they practice solo or in small groups, they often don't have the infrastructure to monitor the handoffs and communication linkages where quality and safety can be compromised,” said Mary A. Pittman, DrPH, president of HRET. “We will highlight some key areas for them to focus their attention.”

“Time is the most critical resource for a practice as clinicians focus their attention on delivering high-quality, personalized care while contending with an increasingly complex reimbursement and regulatory system. We will focus on tools to help busy providers improve the quality of services and minimize the potential for harm,” said David N. Gans, MSHA, FACMPE, MGMA vice president for Practice Management Resources. “Ease of use will be a key consideration.”

The project will continue the work of a similar endeavor. HRET, ISMP and the American Hospital Association collaborated in 2002 to develop Pathways for Medication Safety, a series of tools that help health care organizations take practical steps to reduce medication errors. Findings from the 2000 ISMP Medication Safety Self-Assessment for Hospitals informed the development of the Pathways tools, which attract significant web traffic. They have been widely referenced in trade and peer-reviewed literature, and by organizations such as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the National Patient Safety Foundation.

“The web-based Pathways tools for medication safety have proven a valuable resource for the health care community,” says Michael R. Cohen, RPh, MS, ScD, president of ISMP. “We expect that the new tools targeted for physician practices also will become an important resource for implementing medication-safety best-practices.”

In early 2007, HRET, ISMP and MGMA will convene an expert committee composed of representatives of patient safety organizations, research centers and the physician practice community. The committee will make recommendations to the project team on tool content, based on members’ experience and review of data from the physician practice patient safety self-assessment. Tool topics will be selected based on their ability to reduce potential for serious harm, promote positive behavior change, applicability to most or all practice settings, and ability to be implemented without a large capital investment.

The project team will pilot-test the tools in 10-15 demographically varied physician practices. The estimated launch date for the tools is April 2008.

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### **The Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)**

Founded in 1926, the Medical Group Management Association is the nation’s principal voice for medical group practice. MGMA’s 20,000 members manage and lead more than 12,000 organizations in which more than 242,000 physicians practice. MGMA’s core purpose is to improve the effectiveness of medical group practices and the knowledge and skills of the individuals who manage and lead them. MGMA headquarters are in Englewood, Colorado. Visit MGMA’s web site at [www.mgma.com](http://www.mgma.com).

### **The Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET)**

Founded in 1944, the Health Research and Educational Trust is a private, not-for-profit organization involved in research, education and demonstration programs addressing health management and policy issues. HRET, an American Hospital Association affiliate, collaborates with health care, government, academic, business and community organizations across the United States to conduct research and disseminate findings that shape the future of health care. Visit HRET's web site at [www.hret.org](http://www.hret.org).

### **The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP)**

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices is a nonprofit organization recognized worldwide as the premier education resource for understanding and preventing medication errors. ISMP represents more than 30 years of experience in helping keep patients safe, and continues to lead efforts to improve the medication use process. Working with health care practitioners and institutions, regulatory and accrediting agencies, consumers, professional organizations, the pharmaceutical industry, and others, ISMP also provides timely, accurate medication safety information to the healthcare community, policy makers, and the general public. For more information on ISMP, or to read more about the 2004 ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment for Hospitals, visit the Institute’s web site at [www.ismp.org](http://www.ismp.org).

### **The Commonwealth Fund**

The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation that supports independent research on health and social issues and makes grants to improve health care practice and policy. The mission of The Commonwealth Fund is to promote a high performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, minority Americans, young children, and elderly adults. To read or download publications, visit the Fund’s web site at [www.cmf.org](http://www.cmf.org).