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**Programs to Combat Depression in College Students, Reduce Inappropriate Use of Antibiotics Win Innovations in Quality Improvement Awards**

*Awards Presented by the AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement*

Skokie, Ill. [Sept. 9, 2009] — A national initiative to identify and treat college students who suffer from depression, and a program that reduces the potential misuse of potent broad spectrum antibiotics are the winners of the 2009 Innovations in Quality Improvement Awards from the AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement (AAAHC Institute), a not-for-profit subsidiary of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC/Accreditation Association).

The winners will present their studies and receive their awards at the AAAHC Institute's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual **National Educational Forum** for Ambulatory Health Care, Dec. 5 – 6, in Las Vegas. For more information or to register, visit [www.aaahciqi.org](http://www.aaahciqi.org) and click on “National Educational Forum.”

**Depression in College Students**

“Unrecognized and untreated depression is currently the most common serious public health problem in college students,” said Henry Chung, M.D., associate vice president of student health, New York University, who first developed the program and will accept the award on behalf of the National College Depression Partnership (NCDP). NYU piloted and is the national coordinating center for the program.

According to a survey conducted by the American College Health Association, the number of college students who reported receiving a diagnosis of clinical depression increased from 10 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2005. In 2008, 11 percent of students were diagnosed with depression, but the survey also found high rates of hopeless feelings (47 percent), feeling

overwhelmed (87 percent), feeling overwhelming anxiety (49 percent), feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function (31 percent) and feeling overwhelming anger (39 percent).

In a population of nearly 18 million students, as many as 2.35 million may experience significant depression during their college years.

“The impact of depression on college students is substantial. It negatively affects learning, success in school and student retention, yet most students go undiagnosed and untreated,” Chung said. A 2005 survey of college counseling directors found that only 17.5 percent of 154 students who committed suicide had been treated for depression, he said.

For the NCDP program, more than 80,000 students have been screened since June 2008, out of a total of 200,000 enrolled students at 20 participating schools.\* Of students who were identified as clinically depressed, 91.8 percent began treatment within four weeks. At 12 weeks, nearly half (47.8 percent) reported improved functioning.

For more information, visit [www.nyu.edu/ncdp](http://www.nyu.edu/ncdp).

### **Reducing Misuse of Potent Antibiotics**

The Delaware Surgery Center, Dover, will receive the other Innovations in Quality Improvement Award for a program to reduce unnecessary use of the potent antibiotics ciprofloxacin (Cipro®) and vancomycin in patients who report an allergy to penicillin. The antibiotics are given prior to surgery to prevent infection. In non-allergic patients, cephalosporins and other less potent classes of antibiotics are typically used.

“Many surgeons prescribe ciprofloxacin or vancomycin in patients with penicillin allergy because some studies have shown that these patients may also react to cephalosporins,” said Lynn Watts, R.N., improvement coordinator, Delaware Surgery Center, who will accept the award on behalf of the center. “More recent research indicates, however, that cephalosporins can safely be given to some patients with penicillin allergies.”

The more potent antibiotics pose a higher risk of adverse reactions and can contribute to the growing global problem of drug resistant infections. Before the program was initiated, seven of 31 patients (23 percent) who were prescribed ciprofloxacin in a three-month period at the Delaware Center developed adverse reactions to the drug.

With all antibiotics, there is the potential that patients will develop resistance to the drugs. “Because of their potency against many types of infection, ciprofloxacin and vancomycin are often considered drugs of last resort for infections that don’t respond to other antibiotics. We don’t want patients to risk developing resistance to these drugs when many less potent drugs are available for preventing postoperative infection,” Watts said.

In the program, patients were screened using a questionnaire based on an algorithm published in scientific literature, which was modified significantly to meet the specific needs of the Delaware center. Over 15 months, 300 patients with reported penicillin allergy were screened, and 80 were randomly selected for analysis. Of the 80 patients studied, only 2 percent received ciprofloxacin and 1 percent received vancomycin, a significant reduction in the center’s use of these drugs. The other patients received cephalosporins or other less potent antibiotics. There were no adverse reactions in any of the patients.

“The program also significantly reduced our costs,” Watts said. During the study period, the center realized \$2,000 in savings by decreasing use of the more potent – and more expensive – broad spectrum antibiotics.

**The AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement** (AAAHC Institute) is among the few organizations to provide ambulatory care providers with the opportunities for benchmarking on a national level. The Accreditation Association established the AAAHC Institute in 1999 to provide ambulatory health care organizations opportunities to participate in quality improvement and performance measurement studies and educational programs. To date, the AAAHC Institute has conducted and published more than 50 performance measurement studies and has convened annual national educational forums on quality improvement in ambulatory health care. Involvement in clinical performance measurement is a signal to patients, government agencies, professional liability insurers, and third-party payers, that an ambulatory health organization is committed to continually improving the care it provides to its patients.

**The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care** (AAAHC/Accreditation Association), founded in 1979, is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the leader in ambulatory health care accreditation, with more than 4,500 organizations accredited nationwide. The

AAAHC accredits a variety of ambulatory health care organizations, including ambulatory surgery centers, office-based surgery centers, college student health centers, managed care organizations, military health care clinics, and large medical and dental practices. The Accreditation Association serves as an advocate for the provision of high-quality health care through the development of nationally recognized standards and through its survey and accreditation programs. AAAHC accreditation is recognized as a symbol of quality by third-party payers, medical organizations, liability insurance companies, state and federal agencies and the public.

**\*Schools participating in the NCDP partnership are:**

- Baruch College of the City University of New York
- Bowling Green State University, Ohio
- Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
- Columbia University, New York City, N.Y.
- Evergreen State University, Olympia, Wash.
- Louisiana State University, Shreveport
- Michigan State University, East Lansing
- The New School, New York City
- New York University, New York City
- Pennsylvania State University, Altoona
- Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y.
- Saint Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y.
- Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y.
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Ill.
- Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
- Texas Christian University, Fort Worth
- Tufts University, Medford, Mass.
- University of Arizona, Tucson
- University of California, Los Angeles

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