American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Hospital Association Announce New Quality Improvement Tool for Hospital-Based Patient Care

PHILADELPHIA and WASHINGTON, D.C., June 23, 2006 – The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) and American Hospital Association (AHA) today announced the release of a web-based tool to help physicians in internal medicine enhance the quality of care they provide to their hospital patients. This tool, jointly developed with the American College of Cardiology and with the participation of the Society for Hospital Medicine and American College of Physicians, allows physicians to review current clinical practice guidelines for heart attacks, heart failure and community-acquired pneumonia against their own hospital’s practice.

ABIM’s Hospital-Based Patient Care Practice Improvement Module (PIM) guides physicians through evaluation of the quality of care for patients utilizing performance data collected by hospitals as part of the public reporting initiative of the Hospital Quality Alliance that includes national hospital associations, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, and other public and private organizations.

“Hospitals that are striving to create and sustain reliable systems of care will find that this tool can potentially accelerate their improvement efforts,” said Steve Mayfield, AHA senior vice president of quality and performance improvement and director of the AHA Quality Center™. “This tool should help to communicate to physicians expectations about patient care, and is a great opportunity to align provider and organizational efforts around providing the best care possible for the patient.”

“Teamwork is essential to successful efforts in quality improvement, and physicians are encouraged to complete this module in collaboration with an interdisciplinary quality improvement team,” said Eric S. Holmboe, MD, ABIM’s Vice President for Evaluation and Quality Research and Director of Clinical Performance Services. “Nowhere is this more obvious than in the hospital, where the care of patients is handed off from one care team to another as they move from the emergency department to the intensive care unit, to a general medical floor and then through discharge.” The Hospital-Based Patient Care PIM helps physicians think through the work process steps behind quality measures and to design means of improving the processes and systems of care.
This module is well suited for any physician who spends a significant proportion of their practice in the hospital setting caring for these three conditions. Hospital medicine is a relatively young and rapidly growing discipline; “hospitalists” are physicians whose clinical work focuses on the care of hospitalized patients. In many institutions, hospitalists have become leaders in understanding and redesigning hospital systems of care to improve patient safety and outcomes of care. The Hospital-Based Patient Care PIM can assist the novice in identifying areas for improving patient care, and can allow those physicians who are already active in their hospital’s quality improvement programs to readily report on their work to the ABIM as part of Maintenance of Certification.

ABIM’s Practice Improvement Modules enable physicians to conduct a confidential self-evaluation of the medical care that they provide. Through a program jointly sponsored by the ABIM and specialty societies, the diplomate is eligible for Category 1 CME credit for completing each self-evaluation module and preparation for the secure exam. The Hospital-Based PIM is unique in that it utilizes hospital-level data and is thus particularly appropriate for physicians who are engaged in hospital-wide quality improvement programs.

ABIM’s first web-based PIM, released in March 2003, focused on preventive cardiology. Since then, the ABIM has developed additional PIMs for diabetes, general preventive services, asthma, hypertension, care of the vulnerable elderly, colonoscopy, hepatitis C, HIV and a self-directed module. ABIM is currently developing additional modules focusing on comprehensive care, care of patients on mechanical ventilation, and osteoporosis.

For additional information regarding ABIM’s Practice Improvement Modules, visit http://www.abim.org/moc/sempbpishtm or contact request@abim.org, or call 215-446-3500. Demonstration versions of all available PIMs can be viewed on-line at www.abim.org/online/pim/demo.aspx.

About ABIM
The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that grants board certification – a marker of physician quality in the United States and internationally — to internists and subspecialists. Certification is a rigorous, comprehensive program for evaluating physician knowledge, skills and attitudes to assure both patients and payers that a physician has achieved competence for practice in a given field. Individual physician certification results may be found at www.abim.org.

About the AHA
The American Hospital Association (AHA) is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, 4,800 hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and 33,000 individuals. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information visit the Web site at www.aha.org.

The AHA Quality Center™ is a resource of the AHA designed to help hospitals accelerate their quality improvement processes to achieve better outcomes for patients and improve organizational performance. In collaboration with leading quality improvement stakeholders, it provides access to leading practices, tools and resources that support hospitals to achieve better patient outcomes, improved operational
performance, enhanced safety and increased satisfaction. For more information, visit www.ahaqualitycenter.org.

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