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DHS NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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Health Department Encourages Active Patient Involvement in Care

New Patient Safety Brochures Available in Multiple Languages

March 09, 2009 - As part of its ongoing commitment to patient education and safety initiatives and in concert with National Patient Safety Awareness week (March 8 -14), the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) has created a series of new brochures to educate consumers about safety practices and tips to prepare for surgery, outpatient visits and inpatient stays.

The brochures offer guidance on creating lists of medications, preventing infection, preparing for surgery, inquiring about test results, seeking a medical interpreter, involving family members, and asking questions about all aspects of care.

“Patient education, awareness, and involvement is a very important safety strategy and a focus across the Department,” said DHS Corporate Patient Safety Officer Kenneth Aaron, MD. “We created these brochures to be helpful tools for patients and their families, so that they can take a more active role in their medical care.”

“The culture of safety in any health organization is improved by informed patients asking questions and communicating with their caregivers,” added Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center Physician Patient Safety Officer Moises Carpio, MD.

The DHS Patient Safety Committee surveys staff members across all facilities to assess the organizational culture of safety and to identify areas of focus, such as improving communication. The committee also promotes patient safety education for physicians and other staff at all facilities through a variety of venues including conferences and the yearly publication of a patient safety handbook.

The brochures are currently available in English and Spanish at all DHS health care facilities, and will be available in additional languages in coming weeks. The brochures can also be downloaded from the department’s website, www.ladhs.org. **Patient Safety Awareness Week** is a national education and awareness-building effort for improving patient safety at the local level, during which hospitals and healthcare organizations across the country plan events to promote patient safety within their organizations. More information is available at www.npsf.org.

About DHS

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services is the second largest municipal health system in the nation, serving the county’s low-income, indigent and uninsured populations through three teaching hospitals, a national rehabilitation hospital, and multiple health centers and clinics located across the county. The department is a leader in chronic disease management initiatives and develops programs tailored to the needs of children in foster care, homeless, and other vulnerable populations.
