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**Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Wins Award For Patient Safety  
*First in the country to begin aggressive MRSA screening program***

Evanston, Illinois – (September 12, 2007) Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH) is the recipient of this year's John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award. ENH has been recognized for its' methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Reduction Program Team.

Evanston Northwestern Healthcare was the first in the country to begin a universal MRSA surveillance program, swabbing all in-patients at its' three hospitals for the MRSA bacteria beginning in 2005, well before any recommendations from state law-makers. "The goal of the program was always to reduce the risk of MRSA infection to patients cared for by ENH and all our benchmarks were achieved by the end of the program's first year, said Lance Peterson, MD, FIDSA, FASCP, Epidemiologist and a founder of the MRSA program at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare. "Everyone at ENH put a lot of effort into this initiative to benefit our patients, and it is really wonderful that ENH as a whole is recognized by this very prestigious award."

This award, sponsored by the National Quality Forum (NQF) and The Joint Commission, recognizes ENH for local innovation when it comes to patient safety. Evanston Northwestern Healthcare's MRSA screening program involves performing nasal swabs for colonization during the hospital admission process. A new molecular diagnostic technique called a real-time PCR is used to quickly assess MRSA infection. This allows hospital staff to promptly identify and isolate infected patients.

At its' three hospitals, ENH has been able to reduce MRSA infection rates by 60% within the first year of the program. Universal MRSA surveillance has also decreased the risk of other patients and staff becoming infected. Peterson indicates that "The biggest risk for getting a MRSA infection is becoming colonized in the nose with it. Our program has successfully prevented nasal colonization of patients coming to ENH for their care. We want people to come here for their healthcare and not go home with something unexpected that will later cause an infection – and the program is successful in doing just that."

The approach judged by the NQF to be easy to reproduce and cost effective in any organization, has the potential to have a positive impact on the nationally increasing mortality rates and rising costs associated with MRSA infections. Consequently, it would have a commensurate impact on the quality and safety of patient care.

Evanston Northwestern Healthcare's MRSA Reduction Program Team will soon publish its' findings in a peer reviewed journal. Members are offering an outreach program to long-term care facilities to help prevent MRSA infection. They are also consulting with various hospitals across the country on how to start similar MRSA surveillance programs.

The patient safety awards program, launched in 2002 by NQF and The Joint Commission, honors John M. Eisenberg, MD, MBA, former administrator of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Dr. Eisenberg was one of the founding leaders of the NQF and sat on its board of directors.

### **About Evanston Northwestern Healthcare**

Located in Chicago's northern suburbs, Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH) is an integrated healthcare system that includes Evanston, Glenbrook and Highland Park Hospitals, ENH Medical Group (comprising 65 medical offices and facilities), ENH Home Services, ENH Research Institute and ENH Foundation.

Through its affiliation with Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, ENH supports extensive medical education and research. ENH is in the top five percent of all institutions that receive funding from the National Institutes of Health; among multi-specialty independent research hospitals, it ranks 10th in the nation.

ENH is the only healthcare system in the United States that has been named a top 100 hospital 11 times by Solucient®. ENH is also ranked among the top 50 hospitals in the country by U.S. News & World Report.

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