

Contact: Will Battles
Director of Communications
678-527-3672
wbattles@gmcf.org



***gmcf* works to promote safer surgery in Georgia**

ATLANTA, Georgia (Oct. 23, 2006) – The Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) partnership today announced an increased emphasis on consumer engagement, in addition to its ongoing work with hospitals and other health-care providers, in efforts to make surgery safer across the country. ***gmcf*** is providing key support and resources to this effort to help ensure that surgical care in Georgia is improving.

More than 40 million operations are performed in the United States each year, many of them complicated by infection, blood clots, and heart problems, among other adverse events. These complications take a toll not only on the patients, but also on the overall cost of health care in Georgia and across the country. A significant percentage of these complications are preventable, however, and it is the goal of the SCIP initiative to use evidence-based measures to reduce preventable surgical complications nationwide by 25 percent by 2010.

“SCIP is combining the expertise of key health-care organizations and agencies across Georgia and now is taking steps to include patients and other consumers in improving the care they receive,” said ***gmcf***’s Susan Robbins. “This is a unique approach that can make a profound difference in the quality of surgery Georgia’s patients can expect to receive.”

SCIP is one of the first national quality improvement initiatives to unite hospitals; physician and nursing organizations; the federal government; the organization that accredits hospitals; private sector experts; and now consumer advocacy groups in far-reaching surgical quality improvement efforts. In Georgia, groups such as the Georgia Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, (ACS), and the Southeastern Kidney Foundation are working closely ***gmcf*** on the initiative, and they are now joined by the Georgia Hospital Association to ensure that the state’s consumers are involved in this important work.

The SCIP partnership has developed a tip sheet specifically designed to spur consumer involvement. The tip sheet, “Steps to Safer Surgery,” provides specific questions patients can ask their physicians and nurses before surgery to ensure they are receiving care that will reduce their risk of having complications. The tip sheet is available today and can be found at http://www.ofmq.com/qiosc_scip.html along with other information about SCIP. Patients can contact ***gmcf*** at 404-982-0411 or www.gmcf.org with questions about how to use the tip sheet to ensure they are receiving appropriate surgical care.

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About the National SCIP Partnership:

The SCIP Partnership includes the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the American College of Surgeons, the American Hospital Association, the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, and the Veterans Health Administration.

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