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Business and Civic Leaders Call Upon New York Area Hospitals to Clean Up Their Act; Thousands of NY Deaths are Preventable.

Dec. 7th Forum to Showcase US Hospitals That Slashed Infection Rates.

“RID calls upon New York hospitals to adopt the life saving and cost effective strategies used by hospitals in Pittsburgh and other cities to slash rates of infection.”

New York, NY—Dec. 2—New Yorkers deciding where to buy a pastrami sandwich have access to far more health safety information than they do when choosing a hospital at which to deliver their baby or have knee surgery according to The Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths (RID).

“New Yorkers can go online (<http://ibihost1.com/nycdoh/web/html/rii.pl>) and view the latest health department inspections for their local deli,” said RID Chairman, Betsy McCaughey, Ph.D. “Yet New Yorkers *cannot get* access to public information about which hospitals have a high infection rate. The hospital industry has lobbied aggressively to keep this vital information from the public,” McCaughey said. *Hospital infections are the fourth largest killer of Americans, more than breast cancer, automobile accidents or AIDS.*

“It is a tragic irony that each year nearly 100,000 Americans – about one every five minutes – die from an infection contracted in the one place they should feel safest,” said McCaughey. “Unlike other diseases, the cures for which either elude us or cost tens of thousands of dollars, many hospital infections can be prevented by following simple low-cost practices.” McCaughey said.

RID was founded by Betsy McCaughey, family members of hospital infection victims, and well known New Yorkers from business, healthcare, and media including Tina Brown, Sir Harold Evans, Jeremy Schaap, Laurel Pickering, Morton Dean and John Catsimatidis. **The group is calling upon New York area hospitals to adopt the life saving and cost effective strategies used by hospitals in Pittsburgh and other cities to slash their rates of infection.**

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RID's mission is twofold; to urge hospitals to adopt aggressive infection reduction programs, and to allow public access to hospital infection rates so that consumers can avoid infection ridden hospitals. According to Ms. McCaughey, disclosure of hospital infection rates would pressure hospitals to "clean up their act."

At a December 7th forum in New York hosted by RID and the New York Business Group on Health, physicians from Pittsburgh's hospital system will share best practices with an audience of New York area hospital officials, business leaders and health care professionals.

"For too long we have heard denials and empty promises from hospital lobbyists who claim that reducing infections is too costly, yet the data prove just the opposite," said McCaughey. "Reducing hospital infections requires no new medical breakthroughs, no additional public expenditures nor increased healthcare costs since many hospital contracted infections are easily prevented through adherence to basic hygienic practices such as washing hands and proper cleaning and use of medical equipment. In addition to saving lives, these best practices actually lower overall healthcare costs," McCaughey said.

WHO: Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths; New York Business Group on Health; leading physicians; experts.
WHAT: A forum on preventing hospital infections
WHEN: December 7th, 2004, 2 – 4 pm
WHERE: The Harvard Club of New York
 27 West 44th Street, New York, NY
CONTACT: **Members of the press are asked to RSVP to 202-965-4223**
MEDIA: Though the Forum is "on the record," the venue is a private club and the use of cameras and recording devices is restricted to certain rooms and angles. Credentialed media interested in filming or recording the Forum must contact Adam Dubitsky at 202-965-4223 in advance.

To arrange coverage of the December 7th Forum on Reducing Hospital Infections or for additional information, please contact Mark Coyle at 571-276-1893 or email miramx@aol.com.