AAMI FOUNDATION INSTITUTE LAUNCHES INFUSION SAFETY STUDY THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE CAREFUSION FOUNDATION

May 29, 2012 – The Healthcare Technology Safety Institute (HTSI)—part of the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) Foundation—is taking a leading role in looking at one of healthcare’s toughest challenges.

The institute was awarded a $328,660 grant by the CareFusion Foundation to fund a three-year national study on key issues surrounding the administration of intravenous (IV) medication using smart pumps.

The goal of this first-ever study, to be coordinated by Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, is to evaluate the types of errors that may occur when using smart pumps to administer IV medications, and what can be done about them.

“Medication errors are probably the most common type of mistake in hospitals, and IV medications carry especially high risk,” said David Bates, MD, the study’s lead investigator who has researched problems surrounding smart pumps before. Bates is senior vice president for quality and safety at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

“When we established HTSI last year, the goal was to focus on patient safety issues with medical technologies,” said AAMI president Mary Logan. “This new research project is a perfect example of what we hoped would happen, and we see this as the first of many future research projects that will fill knowledge gaps about technology use.”
The study builds on prior work by AAMI related to infusion pumps, which have been linked to 56,000 adverse events and 710 patient deaths reported to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) between 2005 and 2009. AAMI and the agency held a summit in 2010 that resulted in the drafting of 13 priorities for improving infusion safety.

“IV medication errors represent one of the most significant safety and cost threats for hospitals, and studies have shown that many of these errors are preventable,” said Tim Vanderveen, PharmD, vice president of The Center for Safety and Clinical Excellence at CareFusion and a member of the AAMI board of directors. “The adoption of smart IV pumps has yielded a treasure trove of new information that has helped us understand the high degree of variability in the IV medication process. This study will deliver even more insight to drive best practices in IV therapy and help clinicians better leverage technology to avoid errors and improve patient care.”

The study is expected to start this fall, and will analyze smart pump usage at ten hospitals across the country, according to Kumiko Ohashi, research fellow at the Division of Internal General Medicine and Primary Care, the research arm of Brigham and Women’s Hospital. A team of two observers at each facility will compare the medication orders against the actual administration of drugs using smart pumps to find any discrepancies.

In the second year, the team will analyze the results and develop safety solutions to help prevent future errors. After those solutions are implemented, observers will measure IV medication errors at the facilities again to track improvement. The research team will then publish the error rates, results of the solutions, and best practices for smart pump use.

About AAMI
The Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1967. It is a diverse community of nearly 7,000 healthcare technology professionals united by one important mission—supporting the healthcare community in the development, management, and use of safe and effective medical technology. For more information on HTSI and other research projects, visit www.aami.org/htsi.

About the CareFusion Foundation
The CareFusion Foundation exists to create and support opportunities to improve the safety and cost of healthcare for generations to come. As part of this commitment, the Foundation supports organizations on the forefront of clinical excellence and best practices in healthcare. Established in 2009, the CareFusion Foundation is committed to helping improve health and wellness in the communities it serves and the interests of organizations working to improve healthcare around the world. www.carefusion.com/giving.

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