Hospitals Can Protect Patients By Understanding Medication Errors

(NAPS)—Recent events that have received national news coverage have highlighted the impact of medication errors on our society and the need to eliminate events that result in disabling medical injuries or death.

Because every hospital has an obligation to provide its patients with a safe level of care, the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) in Rockville, Maryland has launched Med-MARx℠ (pronounced med-marks), an Internet-accessible database for medication error reporting.

MedMARx is a program developed through the experience of the USP Practitioners' Reporting Network. Since 1820, USP has established quality standards for medicines in the U.S. Today's Pharmacopeia provides standards for more than 3,700 drugs and dosage forms for medicines and dietary supplements.

More than 300 hospitals nationwide are engaged in the program that anonymously collects, monitors, and tracks medication error data in a nationally standardized format.

"MedMARx was developed to help hospitals reduce medication errors by learning from the adverse experiences of others and sharing the successful solutions and policies instituted by others," said Diane D. Cousins, USP vice president for practitioner and product experience.

The National Database to Reduce Hospital Medication Errors®

By enrolling in the MedMARx Program, participating hospitals have made a commitment to ensure that their staff has 24-hour access to valuable, cutting-edge technology that enables them to quickly and easily report medication errors. Using MedMARx's powerful search capability, the hospital also is able to categorize errors, then compare experiences based upon type and cause of error, level of staff involved, and contributing factors surrounding the error. By applying lessons learned, institutions can take actions to prevent future errors.

USP will use information collected through the MedMARx Program to:

• Develop better practice standards through strategic partnerships with institutions and government agencies;

• Develop educational materials for practitioners and health care institutions; and

• Develop standards for drug packaging and labeling.

More information about Med-MARx is available at www.usp.org/medmarx or at 800-227-8772.