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SHEA News

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Infection Control Education Required for Healthcare Workers in New York State

In response to the federal requirement that all states submit to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a statement that they had incorporated the CDC guidelines for the prevention of transmission of HIV and HBV during invasive procedures or had instituted an alternative system that would meet the CDC's definition of equivalency, the New York State Legislature has passed a bill requiring periodic infection control education for all healthcare workers as a condition for relicensure. Such a program is a massive undertaking that will require recurrent education of the 450,000 licensed healthcare workers in the state of New York.

To initiate this program, the State Education and Health

Departments have brought together a core group of infection control specialists to develop a core curriculum. Four members of SHEA, Drs. Michael Tapper, Beth Rauscher, William Greene, and John Sellick, are members of the core curriculum group. The core group will develop a basic curriculum structure that can be expanded by the various professional groups or healthcare institutions to meet their specific needs.

The educational programs will have to be in place over the next several months, because the law requires the initial cycle of education to be completed by 1994. The State Health and Education Departments intend to monitor closely the quality of these courses and their content.

A few other states also have established requirements for physician and other healthcare worker infection control education, but many changes in professional licensing and education have begun in New York and then spread to other states. If such mandatory educational programs become a trend in the United States, we believe that members of the Society for Hospital Epidemiology of America (SHEA) should play a major role as consultants to state agencies charged with the development and institution of these programs. Members of SHEA should also seek to play an active role in the development of enabling legislation for such programs.

Conference to Be Held on Prevention of Transmission of Bloodborne Pathogens in Surgery and Obstetrics

The conference will be sponsored by The American College of Surgeons and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The conference will take place at the Hilton Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 13-15, 1994.

The purpose of this

conference is to provide information regarding the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including HIV, and hepatitis B and C viruses during surgical and obstetrical procedures and describe methods to reduce that risk. The conference

will bring together surgeons, obstetricians, anesthesiologists, surgical and obstetrical nurses and technicians, hospital epidemiologists, and infection control practitioners. The program will include state of the art lectures by experts in the field as well as