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More Hospitals Offering Complementary and Alternative Medicine Services

WASHINGTON—September 7, 2011— Hospitals across the nation are responding to patient demand and integrating complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) services with the conventional services they normally provide, according to the results of a new survey released today by Health Forum, a subsidiary of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and Samueli Institute, a non-profit research organization that investigates healing oriented practices. The survey shows that more than 42 percent of responding hospitals indicated they offer one or more CAM therapies, up from 37 percent in 2007.

CAM is not based solely on traditional western allopathic medical teachings, and can include acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, diet and lifestyle changes, herbal medicine, massage therapy and more. CAM services also reflect hospitals' desire to treat the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

“The rise of complementary and alternative medicine reflects the continued effort on the part of hospitals and caregivers to broaden the vital services they provide to patients and communities,” said Nancy Foster, vice president for quality and patient safety at the AHA. “Hospitals have long known that what they do to treat and heal involves more than just medications and procedures. It is about using all of the art and science of medicine to restore the patient as fully as possible.”

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According to the survey, 85 percent of responding hospitals indicated patient demand as the primary rationale in offering CAM services and 70 percent of survey respondents stated clinical effectiveness as their top reason.

“Today’s patients have better access to health information and are demanding more personalized care,” said study author Sita Ananth, director of knowledge services for Samueli Institute. “The survey results reinforce the fact that patients want the best that both conventional and alternative medicine can offer, and hospitals are responding.”

Other survey results find that the:

- Majority of respondents offer wellness services for patients and staff, including nutritional counseling, smoking cessation, fitness training and pastoral care;
- Massage therapy is in the top two services provided in both outpatient and inpatient settings;
- The majority of hospitals that offered CAM were urban hospitals (72 percent); and
- Seventy-five percent cited budgetary constraints as the biggest obstacle for implementation of CAM programs.

The 2010 Complementary and Alternative Medicine Survey of hospitals was mailed in to 5,858 hospitals in March of 2010 and based on 714 responses or a response rate of 12 percent. The report is available online at www.SamueliInstitute.org.

About the AHA

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and 38,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends.

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About Health Forum

Health Forum, an American Hospital Association company, is a trusted source of information in the areas of coding, data, publications and education. Health Forum's products and services seek to advance hospital leadership and improve organizational performance. Offerings include magazines, books, subscription services, custom publications, databases and conferences, as well as advertising and sponsorship opportunities. For more information, visit www.healthforum.com.

About the Samueli Institute

Samueli Institute is a non-profit research organization investigating the safety, effectiveness and integration of healing-oriented practices and environments. We convene and support expert teams to conduct research on natural products; nutrition and lifestyle; mind-body practices; complementary and traditional approaches such as acupuncture, manipulation and yoga; and the placebo (meaning) effect. We support a knowledge into mainstream health care and community settings and in creating Optimal Healing Environments. For more information, visit www.samueliinstitute.org.

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