FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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BOXER URGES CALIFORNIA HOSPITALS TO
SHARE SOLUTIONS FOR PREVENTING
MEDICAL ERRORS

Preventable Hospital Errors are Third Leading Cause of Death
– At Least 210,000 Americans Are Killed by Mistakes in Hospitals Each Year

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) wrote to the heads of all 283 hospitals in California today to ask what steps they have taken to successfully prevent medical errors and reduce the transmission of infection within their facilities. Medical errors in hospitals are the third leading cause of death in this country, with 210,000 to 440,000 Americans killed by preventable hospital errors each year.

In the letter, Boxer also thanked the CEOs for demonstrating their commitment to patient safety by joining the Partnership for Patients, a program funded under the Affordable Care Act to improve the quality and safety of hospital care with the goal of reducing preventable medical errors nationwide.

“I am thrilled that every acute care hospital in California has agreed to participate in the Partnership, and that California will lead the country in reducing these needless and tragic deaths,” Senator Boxer wrote. “I would greatly appreciate hearing from you the actions you have taken to reduce these medical errors in your hospital.”

In the weeks and months ahead, Senator Boxer will challenge healthcare providers to do more to protect patients from preventable medical errors in their hospitals by highlighting successes and identifying areas where improvement is needed.

The full text of the letter, which was sent to the CEOs of all 283 acute care hospitals in California, follows:

February 4, 2014

I want to thank you for your commitment to reducing preventable medical errors by joining the Partnership for Patients, a program created by the Affordable Care Act.

I was shocked to learn that medical errors in hospitals are the third leading cause of death with 210,000 to 440,000 deaths per year. Concerned that there was not a uniform list of preventable
They responded with a final list of preventable errors:

- Adverse Drug Events
- Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections
- Central Line Associated Blood Stream Infections
- Injuries from Falls and Immobility
- Obstetrical Adverse Events
- Pressure Ulcers
- Surgical Site Infections
- Venous Thrombosis
- Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia

As you know, the goal of the Partnership for Patients is to reduce these preventable medical errors by 40 percent through Hospital Engagement Networks. These networks help identify solutions already working and disseminate them to other hospitals. I am thrilled that every acute care hospital in California has agreed to participate in the Partnership, and that California will lead the country in reducing these needless and tragic deaths.

I would greatly appreciate hearing from you the actions you have taken to reduce these medical errors in your hospital. Please respond to me by writing MedicalErrorPrevention@boxer.senate.gov outlining any recent successes you’ve had. I would appreciate a response by February 18.

Thank you for your commitment to reducing medical errors. According to my Jewish tradition, “Whoever saves a life – it is as if that person has saved the whole world.” This work is that important to American families, who should not have to face the tragedy of an otherwise preventable death.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator