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QCHI Launches Health Facts Card Campaign: Know It, Show It, Tell It

The Quad City Health Initiative wants every individual in the Quad Cities to be the center of their health care team. This means that the individual understands their medication and medical treatments and shares this information with all of their providers at every visit. To help facilitate this communication, QCHI and its founding sponsors, Genesis Health System and Trinity Regional Health System, are distributing 100,000 Health Facts Cards to community members. Free Health Facts Cards will be available at Genesis and Trinity sites as well as at physician offices and pharmacies throughout the community.

The wallet-sized Health Facts Cards provide individuals with space to record their medications, vitamins, herbal and nutritional supplements, allergies, health history and emergency contact information. Such a list saves precious time during an emergency situation and is especially valuable when a patient cannot speak for himself. The Health Facts Card campaign "Know It, Show It, Tell It" encourages everyone to make and carry such a list and to share this information with all of his or her doctors and pharmacists at every visit. The Health Facts campaign is a natural extension of QCHI's "Choose Health. Live Well." messages which educate community members about making healthier choices regarding diet and exercise.

"Keeping a current and accurate list of medications is one of the most important things a patient can do to help improve the quality of their care," says Dr. Jim Lehman, Vice-President of Quality at Genesis Health System. "Physicians and hospitals must review medication information at every point in the care continuum and having an informed and engaged patient reduces the possibility of medication errors and improves the safety of the care provided."

The Health Facts Cards should be completed in pencil and updated whenever there are changes in medications or health status. "Often, the only thing that patients really know about their medication is the color of the pill," says Virginia Fedorchak, Clinical Pharmacist, Trinity Regional Health System. "Patients need to know what medications they are taking, why they are taking them and how to take them correctly. It's also important to understand possible side effects, things to avoid while taking the medication and if any laboratory tests are required while taking the medication. Our hope is that the Health Facts cards will spark dialogue between pharmacists, physicians and patients and help patients to become more educated about their own health care."

The Quad City Health Initiative (QCHI) is a community partnership in active pursuit of a healthier community. The Initiative seeks to be a catalyst for improving the health and overall quality of life within the Quad City community by raising awareness of health issues, creating projects to address gaps in health services and fostering community collaboration in all aspects of health. Genesis Health System and Trinity Regional Health System are major financial sponsors of the Initiative. Additional financial support is provided in 2008 by Alcoa. For more information or to join the efforts of the Quad City Health Initiative, please call 563-421-2826 or visit our website at www.qchealthinitiative.org.

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