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Mayor

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San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (SFGH) Recognized as National Leader in Patient Care, Quality and Safety

SFGH Demonstrates Innovative Models of Care for Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi

SAN FRANCISCO – San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (SFGH) was honored today to host a visit by Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. The visit focused on innovative efforts that the hospital is undertaking to improve patient safety and quality of care.

“We are firmly committed to working together with our patients to reduce harm, improve quality and lead them to better health,” said Sue Currin, CEO of SFGH. “At San Francisco General Hospital we understand that the patient is an essential partner and member of the care team.”

The event is the sixth in a series of hospital visits around the country Secretary Sebelius is making to highlight models of excellence as a part of the new HHS Partnership for Patients initiative. For more details on the Partnership for Patients, please go to <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/partnership04122011a.html>.

“We are thrilled that you picked San Francisco General Hospital to talk about the Partnership for Patients,” Currin said, welcoming Sebelius and Pelosi. “It’s really what we’ve done all along. We’ve always provided quality care with limited resources. It’s made us innovate, and that’s what you’ll get a flavor of today.”

Sebelius and Pelosi took a tour of the hospital’s Acute Care for Elders (ACE) unit, a specially designed geriatric unit that improves the health of hospitalized older adults. ACE is a model for inpatient geriatric care that focuses on returning patients to the highest level of independence possible upon discharge. This is important because older adults suffer more from the hospital stay itself than younger people do. Reasons includes inactivity, disruption of sleep and meal routines, isolation, depression, anxiety and the effects of medication.

San Francisco General Hospital was the first hospital in California to open an ACE unit in 2007. In this unit, interdisciplinary teams made up of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists and social workers round daily on each patient, planning for their return home on day one of hospital

admission. Patients on this unit, who are 65 or older, benefit from consistent walking to get them up and about, social eating and visiting areas and reduced medications.

“If you’re having trouble sleeping, we don’t prescribe something,” said Dr. Edgar Pierluissi, Medical Director of the ACE unit. “We get you up and exercising during the day, expose you to sunlight, and at night, turn off the lights so you can sleep.”

Following the tour, there was a roundtable discussion that featured former SFGH patients who told Sebelius and Pelosi their own care stories. One patient, Gregory Lyons, 63, who suffered a stroke in January, participated in an innovative program called Support from Hospital to Home for Elders (SHHE). The program’s goal is to reduce hospital readmissions and emergency room visits in patients aged 60 and older. It is currently available to English, Spanish and Chinese-speaking SFGH patients. These patients receive education about their medications and follow up care plans before they leave the hospital. Once they are back home, nurse practitioners or physician assistants call them 48 hours later, 10 days later and in 30 days to check on many factors that can lead to readmission such as medications, follow-up appointments and daily activities.

“The SHHE program focused on reintegration into *my* life,” Lyons said. “They were concerned about stairs, and food shopping – and I was too.”

This program targets a persistent problem in health care today. As Sebelius pointed out, one in five Medicare patients is readmitted within 30 days, and most haven’t heard from a provider in that time.

“Improving care and lowering costs is not only possible, but it is going on in many parts of the country,” Sebelius said.

Other speakers at the roundtable included Barbara Garcia, Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, Pierluissi, Dr. Geoff Manley, SFGH Chief of Neurosurgery and Crystal Elmendorf, a former patient who suffered traumatic brain injury.

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See attached photo of Sue Currin, Kathleen Sebelius and Nancy Pelosi at SFGH today.

San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (SFGH)

San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center is the sole provider of trauma and psychiatric emergency services for the City and County of San Francisco. A comprehensive medical center, SFGH serves some 100,000 patients per year and provides 20 percent of the city’s inpatient care. As San Francisco’s public hospital, SFGH’s mission is to provide quality health care and trauma services with compassion and respect to patients that include the city’s most vulnerable. General Hospital is also one of the nation’s top tertiary academic medical centers, partnering with the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine on clinical training and research.