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***Improving the Practice of Nutrition Therapy in the Critically ill:
An International Quality Improvement Project***

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Dear Healthcare Professional

We are writing to inform you about an upcoming international quality improvement initiative geared at nutrition practices in ICU's. We are hoping that you and/or your colleagues interested in nutrition in the ICU would be willing to support us in this exciting initiative. As you may be aware, we recently published clinical practice guidelines for the management of nutrition support in the critical care setting (¹). We have also conducted various surveys of nutrition therapies in Canadian ICUs (^{2,3}). These surveys, contrasted with the Nutrition guidelines, highlighted a number of opportunities to improve our nutrition practice in Canada.

We would like to extend the scope of our quality improvement initiative. We propose to conduct an international survey that will allow ICU practitioners to compare their nutrition practices to other ICUs within their own countries and across other countries. Such comparisons will illuminate differences, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and hopefully lead to practice improvements. The tentative date for the international survey is **January 25th 2007**. The results of this survey of nutrition practice and comparisons across countries will be presented at an exciting, upcoming international conference on "Nutrition Therapies in the ICU" to be held in Toronto, Canada on June 14-16th 2007. For more details on this conference, sponsored by the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine and the American Society of Critical Care Medicine, see SCCM website: (<http://www.sccm.org/SCCM/Education/Summer+Conference>).

To be successful, we need a critical mass of ICU practitioners in various countries to participate in this project. We have already received official endorsement from the American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN). We would like to know if you (or delegate) would be interested in participating in this survey. Specifically, we are asking that dietitians (or other practitioners) at participating ICUs collect and enter data on a minimum of 20 ICU patients using a web-based data collection tool (see www.criticalcarenutrition.com). We will instruct you (or delegate) on the data collection procedures. The data to be collected includes hospital/ICU characteristics, patient characteristics, the elements of the APACHE II score (does not need to be calculated), type of nutrition received, blood sugars, insulin, length of stay, mortality, etc. Some

data will need to be collected daily for a maximum of 12 days (from date of ICU admission onwards). The average time spent for data collection and entry is approximately 2 hours per patient. There is no remuneration for the data collection. Rather, the participating ICUs will be provided with bench-marked performance reports that highlight their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other ICUs in the database (you can download an example of such a report on www.criticalcarenutrition.com). We believe that this report will be of significant value to participating ICUs and the results will illuminate opportunities for improvement and ultimately, translate into improved clinical outcomes for our critically ill patients.

Since this is a quality improvement initiative and the data is to be collected retrospectively, we do not think that an ethics submission is needed. However, some sites may want to check with their local research ethics board. There will be no patient identifiers on the web based data entry, so patient confidentiality will not be breached. **Can you please indicate your interest in endorsing this survey by contacting Naomi Jones (see email address below) within 2 weeks of receiving this letter?** If you are interested, we can provide you with a package detailing the nature of the data to be collected and how it will be collected.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our request. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions. We can be reached at the contact information below.

Sincerely,

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¹ Heyland DK, Dhaliwal R, Drover JW, Gramlich L, Dodek P and the Canadian Critical Care Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee (2003) "Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines for Nutrition Support in Mechanically Ventilated, Critically Ill Adult Patients". J Parenter Enteral Nutr 27;355-373. For current version of the Guidelines, see www.criticalcarenutrition.com

² Heyland DK, Schroter-Noppe D, Drover JW et al "Nutrition Support in the Critical Care Setting: Current Practice in Canadian ICU, Opportunities for Improvement? JPEN 2003;27(1):74-83

³ Jain M, Heyland DK, Dhaliwal R et al "Dissemination of the Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines for Nutrition Support: Results of a Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial" Crit Care Med 2006; 34(9):2362-2369