



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### America's Best Hospitals Way Ahead of World Health Organization on Surgical Checklist Use

*Top U.S. hospitals have prevented thousands of deaths and complications by having surgeons use surgical safety checklists.*

**Memphis, TN – (January 16, 2009) –** Recent hoopla surrounding published research citing the patient safety benefits of surgery checklists would suggest medical experts have stumbled onto a startling new tactic to prevent medical error. In reality, research from the World Health Organization published Tuesday, January 13, 2009, in *The New England Journal of Medicine* is old news for many of the safest U.S. hospitals. The NEJM article describes how doctors using a simple checklist before surgery were able to reduce post-surgical deaths by more 36%.

Standout medical institutions like Vanderbilt, Rush, UCLA and Johns Hopkins have been successfully implementing safety tools like checklists for their physicians and nurses for years. Faced with a rising tide of medical errors, leading edge hospitals began turning to commercial aviation safety experts as far back as 1999 for advice on how to make their operations safer. Steve Harden, a commercial airline Captain and former Topgun pilot who has helped over 90 U.S. healthcare organizations adopt aviation-based safety tools says, "It's not rocket science. Rigid use of safety checklists is one of the key reasons commercial aviation travel is the safest transportation system in the world. It makes perfect sense that checklists would work for potentially dangerous activities like surgery." Captain Harden is president of LifeWings Partners – the nation's largest provider of aviation-based safety systems for hospitals. "For nine years we've been helping hospitals implement the same teamwork training, checklists, safety tools, and system processes used by the airlines. The best hospitals figured out long ago what the WHO is just now publishing – checklists save lives."

Hospital executives say using checklists have more benefits than just safety. Dr. Stanley W. Marks, Senior Vice President & Chief Medical Officer for six hospitals in the Memorial Healthcare System in Hollywood, FL says, "Not only have we made our hospitals much safer than they already were with our surgery checklists, our patients are more satisfied with their care and our physicians love working here because of our commitment to their patient's safety."

Other than safety, the most important benefit cited by healthcare leaders is the lower costs that come with better safety. By using checklists, administrators have discovered that staff make fewer costly mistakes, are less wasteful with medical supplies, and more efficient with their time. Says Dr. Marks, whose hospitals have used aviation-based checklists for three years, "Once we saw how our system began to run even more reliably and with fewer delays, we realized checklists were the right thing for our patients and the right thing to do for our bottom line."

#### **About LifeWings Partners LLC:**

LifeWings Partners was founded by a former U.S. Navy Top Gun instructor, a commercial airline pilot, and two physicians who are former NASA astronauts. LifeWings' practical and effective teamwork training programs are highly effective in reducing human error and currently involve the training of more than 13,000 high-performance medical team members per year. Measurable results are found in all LifeWings' initiatives. To find out more, please visit [www.SaferPatients.com](http://www.SaferPatients.com).

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