



## HALIFAX 6 CANADIAN HEALTHCARE SAFETY SYMPOSIUM

### News Release

Oct. 20, 2006

#### **Aviation safety management systems also fly in health care**

Vancouver, BC – The safety management systems in aviation that keep planes from crashing may also keep accidents and fatalities at bay in the health care system.

Rob Lee, PhD, an international expert in human factors and systems safety, will speak today at the Halifax 6 Canadian Healthcare Safety Symposium about how aviation knowledge, experience and lessons learned can be applied to the development of integrated safety management systems within the health care industry.

“All too often, a major accident results in an extremely expensive and time-consuming investigation, or commission of inquiry, which, ultimately, reveals systemic deficiencies that were often well known to many key people, and, generally, had been documented, before the accident occurred,” said Dr. Lee.

According to Dr. Lee, the risk of aviation accidents is being further reduced by the introduction of international standards and mandatory requirements for safety management systems -- one of the most significant changes within civil aviation in recent years. Beginning in the early 1990s, the primary focus of air safety investigation has moved from the performances of individual frontline operators, such as pilots, air traffic controllers and maintenance engineers, to consideration of the performance of the system as a whole.

The success of these changes in investigation has driven the adoption of a total, integrated systemic approach to all dimensions of aviation safety, both in the air and on the ground.

“An integrated safety management system provides a very effective and proactive means of identifying where the organization is vulnerable, so that human, technical and financial resources can be directed to rectifying such safety deficiencies before an accident or serious incident occurs,” added Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee will describe the fundamental generic elements of an aviation safety management system, using the model developed by the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority, and will refer to the Transport Canada regulations concerning aviation safety management systems, which were introduced in 2005. He will also describe an example of a major international airline’s integrated safety management system and, ultimately, how safety management systems can work within health care.

“For example, a proactive risk-management process, which incorporates principles of human factors and error-tolerant systems design, is a critical element of any safety management system and would apply to any high tech industry, including health care,” said Dr. Lee.

**Dr. Lee's presentation takes place today between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. in the Pavillion Ballroom at the Sheraton Wall Centre Hotel.**

Making health care safer and enhancing the overall quality of the health care system is the common goal uniting health care experts from across the country and around the world at the Symposium. The theme of this year's Symposium is "Safety management: changing the way we do things."

The Symposium begins at 8:15 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 20 and runs until 4:15 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 21. Two pre-conference sessions take place on Thursday, Oct. 19: one on "Partnering for Patient Safety" at the Sheraton Wall Centre (8:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.); and the other on the use of simulation techniques, entitled "Advances in Healthcare Education for Safety" at the Cordula and Günter Paetzold Health Education Centre at Vancouver General Hospital (12:30 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.).

For more information, go to: <http://www.buksa.com/halifax>

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