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IAPMO Announces Commitment to Improve WASH in Healthcare Facilities

Washington, D.C. (June 19, 2019) – The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO®) today pledged to work with plumbing industry and NGO partners to advance effective water and sanitation services in healthcare facilities for millions of the world’s poor during a stakeholder commitments gathering hosted by Global Water 2020 and the Global Health Council at the Pan American Health Organization Assembly Chamber in Washington, D.C.

“Resolving a Fundamental Challenge to Global Health: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Healthcare Facilities” seeks to gather support from a breadth of organizations to help ensure no person, wherever they live, has to receive treatment in a hospital or health clinic without water, soap and toilets.

Across all regions, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in healthcare facilities fall short of World Health Organization (WHO) and national standards. An estimated 896 million people use healthcare facilities with no water service and 1.5 billion use facilities with no sanitation service. Lack of water and sanitation services in healthcare facilities has profound impacts on health. An estimated 15% of patients develop one or more infections during a hospital stay. The risks associated with sepsis are 34 times greater in low-resource settings. Even more troubling is that more than 1 million deaths each year are associated with births in unsanitary conditions, while infections account for 26% of neonatal deaths and 11% of maternal mortality. Lack of access to water and sanitation in health care facilities may significantly compromise safe birth and cause delays in care-seeking.

“Provision of WASH services in health care facilities is achievable,” said Christopher Lindsay, IAPMO director of Government Relations. “The United Nations has learned from experiences in several countries that incremental improvements, such as the installation of toilets, hand-washing stations and water treatment systems, can improve the quality of care, increase the uptake of services and encourage community members to change WASH practices at home. The plumbing industry has an important role to play in helping to ensure that these facilities have access to the skilled personnel, the quality products and the governance necessary to make WASH services sustainable. We are grateful to join today with wonderful institutions like USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and industry stakeholders like LIXIL Americas in taking a stand on this important issue.”

More than 70 NGOs, governments, financial institutions, corporations, universities, and health care delivery organizations are joining together to announce in excess of \$100 million in commitments, as well as services and expertise in the form of advocacy, training and technical guidance, project monitoring and evaluation, and donations of products, to answer the call to action to establish and maintain WASH services at every healthcare facility in the world.

More information on this issue may be found at www.washinhcf.org.

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Sponsor of the Uniform Codes, IAPMO® – The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials – works in concert with government and industry for safe, sanitary plumbing and mechanical systems. Learn more about IAPMO at www.iapmo.org.