



Silver Use Grows with Infection Control Products, Reports the Silver Institute

(Washington, D.C. - July 13, 2011) Silver usage has grown exponentially in medicine and health-related products, notes The Silver Institute based here, which has been tracking its increased usage.

The high efficiency of silver – its effective concentration is in parts per million or less, the difficulty microorganisms have in developing resistance to silver, and its long history of use as an antimicrobial are all highly positive factors for predicting increased growth in the use of products containing silver for healthcare, explained Michael DiRienzo, Executive Director of the Silver Institute. He said that silver's use in hygiene and medicine is expected to reach over six million ounces by 2015 – up from nearly one million ounces in 2010 – according to a recent Silver Institute report entitled, *The Future of Silver Industrial Demand*, which represents a fivefold increase.

Silver usage and components were in wide display at the annual conference of the Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) in Baltimore, Maryland last month. Its use in medicinal and hygiene are in a variety of forms, including silver sulfadiazine, silver chloride, silver sulfate and nano silver metallic particles.

How is silver being deployed? Let me count the ways, offered Mr. DiRienzo.

"Silver is increasingly used in hygiene, including its incorporation into socks, air purifying sprays, hair dryers, sportswear, hospital gowns, door handles, counter tops, bed rails, and paints and lacquers. Clearly, medical and hygiene professions are looking to silver to help control bacteria and prevent infection."

Among the silver-containing items exhibited at the APIC conference were textile products such as operating gowns, mattress covers and bed linens. Wound-care products also make major use of antimicrobial silver. With respect to wound dressings, studies have shown that dressings containing silver increase the comfort level for burn patients by minimizing adhesion between wound and dressing, thereby reducing pain when changing dressings. Antimicrobial-silver sprays are also used to protect surfaces likely to collect infectious organisms and silver-based coatings are also increasingly used in medical devices such as catheters and tubing to prevent surgical-site infections.

The antimicrobial effects of silver have been known since ancient times, but only within the last five years has silver been used more extensively to control hospital-acquired infections (HAIs). This has been in response to efforts by the Centers for Disease Control and by legislative mandates forcing hospitals to prevent the occurrence of HAIs.

The Silver Institute has been actively involved with educating APIC professionals on silver and has followed through with monitoring the progress in the use of silver for infection-control products. Manufacturers of healthcare products containing silver exhibit at conferences worldwide to educate infection-control professionals at hospitals and other patient-treatment centers on the many beneficial effects of the metal.

About The Silver Institute

The Silver Institute is a nonprofit international industry association headquartered in Washington, D.C. Established in 1971, the Institute serves as the industry's voice in increasing public understanding of the value and many uses of silver. Its members include leading silver producers, refiners, manufacturers and dealers. For more information about the Silver Institute, or for a copy of the free report, *The Future of Silver Industrial Demand*, visit www.silverinstitute.org.

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