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Five Steps to Create a Culture of Patient Safety

Although hospitals have put in place patient safety programs aimed to reduce hospital-acquired infections (HAI), further steps are necessary to prevent avoidable patient deaths, according to Joe Kiani, founder of The Patient Safety Movement Foundation.

The following five steps can help to create a culture of patient safety and prevent avoidable patient deaths:

1. Develop a system of transparency. The government needs to lead in the creation of a standardized process for hospitals to define, measure and report HAI and healthcare-acquired conditions (HAC). In addition, require hospitals to publicly report HAI and HAC rates to facilitate quality comparisons.
2. Create incentives and disincentives by suspending payments to hospitals that don't have evidence-based strategies for prevention and shield hospitals that do implement evidence-based practices from malpractice lawsuits through an affirmative defense and limits on damages.
3. Establish a "patient data super highway" so hospitals can openly share data with each other, patients and all parties that can use the information to improve patient safety.
4. Extend legal safe harbor to medical technology companies to encourage reporting of adverse events.
5. Assign a patient advocate to every hospital so patients and their families have someone to turn to if they experience a lack of empathy or problems with communication related to their care.

New Guidelines Released on Caring for Seniors in the ED

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), the American Geriatrics Society, the Emergency Nurses Association and the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine have issued [Geriatric Emergency Department Guidelines](#) to more effectively allocate healthcare resources and improve patient care among geriatric patients.

The guidelines cover everything from staffing to education to handling common problems of aging, such as falls, delirium and dementia.

The guidelines were developed over a two-year period to address the unprecedented and overwhelming challenge to the American healthcare system and EDs that the population explosion among seniors presents. On average, geriatric patients stay longer in the ED, use more resources and are significantly more likely to require social services.

Since geriatric emergency patients represent 43 percent of hospital admissions, it is important that the special needs of these vulnerable patients are met appropriately in the emergency setting. As of 2010, there were 40 million people in this age group, and many of them will be emergency patients at some point, according to ACEP.

Save the Date

Please note: While the information below is a list of planned programs for 2014, at this time not all programs can be accessed online for registration.

March 21	Improving Community Health Through Wellness and Nutrition (rescheduled from Nov., available for registration)
March 31	Statewide Perinatal Safety Learning Collaborative
April 4	Transforming Care at the Bedside
May 8	Preventing Readmissions and Improving Transitions in Care (co-provided with HQSI)
May 13	CUSP for ESRD in New Jersey
May 20	Reducing Healthcare-Acquired Infections Using a Collaborative Approach
May 29	Adverse Drug Events

[Click here to register.](#)

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