



Action on Patient Safety: High 5s

Overview

The provision of safe care continues to present daunting challenges around the world. To address this problem, the **Action on Patient Safety: High 5s** initiative seeks to leverage the implementation of standardized patient safety solutions that would have broad impact in preventing catastrophic adverse events in health care. This initiative has received support from the World Health Organization, the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Commonwealth Fund, and is in support of the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Alliance for Patient Safety efforts to improve patient safety worldwide. The initiative is coordinated by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Patient Safety, which is led by The Joint Commission and Joint Commission International. Its initial development was supported by the established partnership of the Commonwealth Fund with Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. In addition, plans are in progress to expand the initiative to include additional countries.

Mission

The Mission of the High 5s initiative is to facilitate implementation and evaluation of standardized patient safety solutions within a global learning community to achieve measurable, significant, and sustained reductions in high risk patient safety problems.

Progress

A High 5s Steering Committee was established in 2006 to determine the overall architecture of the initiative. The project is being implemented in 3 phases.

The first phase, initiated in late 2006, has involved the identification of 5 evidence-based solutions for patient safety and the development of a Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for each solution. These solutions include:

- Managing Concentrated Injectable Medicines
- Assuring Medication Accuracy at Transitions in Care
- Communication During Patient Care Handovers
- Improved Hand Hygiene to Prevent Health Care-Associated Infections
- Performance of Correct Procedure at Correct Body Sites

Each SOP summarizes the problem, the strength of evidence that supports the solution, potential barriers to adoption, potential unintended consequences created by the solution,

patient and family roles in the solution, and references and resources. The SOPs provide specific guidance for implementing the solutions in countries participating in the High 5s initiative.

The second phase has involved the identification of a Lead Technical Agency in each participating country to coordinate the High 5s initiative at the country level. The Lead Technical Agency within each country will coordinate and support the implementation of SOPs in participating hospitals. A related impact evaluation strategy will focus on assessing the effectiveness of SOP implementation and correlating the underlying causes of adverse events and trigger events with SOP implementation and with the safety culture within participating hospitals. Each agency will collect data from participating hospitals and submit it to the WHO Collaborating Centre for Patient Safety for analysis, tracking, and reporting as appropriate. In preparation for these efforts, three of the SOPs have been refined for implementation; SOP-specific performance measures and trigger events have been identified; an event analysis plan has been finalized; a culture of safety assessment tool has been selected; and initial development of the Learning Community framework has been completed.

The third phase will consist of actual Project implementation, and will start with Lead Technical Agency selection of the SOP(s) intended for implementation in their participating hospitals. Each Lead Technical Agency will seek to enroll approximately ten hospitals per SOP to participate in the project. Lead Technical Agency personnel will be trained in SOP implementation and will then in turn train the participating hospital staff. Project launch in participating hospitals is planned for late summer 2009, with actual data collection to begin several months thereafter. Participating hospitals will be given high visibility and recognition for their acceptance of this challenge and for their leadership in standardizing patient care practices.

The Lead Technical Agency in each country will coordinate and support the implementation of the SOPs at participating hospitals, and monitor their impact through applying the evaluation tools developed for the project. Each agency will collect data from participating hospitals and submit them to the WHO Collaborating Centre for Patient Safety Solutions for analysis and tracking, and eventually for dissemination and exchange of knowledge to support effective solution implementation.

During 2009, as many as five additional countries are expected to join the High 5s initiative.