



## Information for Patients and Families

In 2003, the Oregon legislature created the Oregon Patient Safety Commission to help protect patients from harm. The Patient Safety Commission works with health care facilities to prevent errors and medical mistakes. One way we do this is by requiring every participating facility to *report* to us any serious adverse event that occurs. Then we help that facility understand how it happened and plan how to keep it from happening again.

Who takes part in these reporting programs? Of Oregon's 57 hospitals, 55 are participants: see "[Hospital Members](#)." Participants for [nursing homes can be found here](#) (there are currently 142 licensed nursing homes in Oregon). A list of [ambulatory surgery center participants](#) (of the 80 in the state) is also found on our website.

We continue to work to include every hospital, nursing home and ambulatory surgery center in the state in our reporting programs – and we are building a similar program for retail pharmacies. In the future, we will expand our work to include renal dialysis facilities and birthing centers.

Fixing the causes of adverse health events may take a long time, and will take a lot of work by many people – including patients and their families. By learning from mistakes and making sure that everyone speaks up about possible risks, we believe we can make Oregon's health care the safest in the nation.

### What Can Patients and Their Families Do?

YOU have a crucial role to play. Although serious adverse health events are very, very rare, you should be aware of them so you can ask questions and make sure health care workers are doing their jobs in the safest possible way. Patients and their families should never feel embarrassed when they ask questions – because the right question might help avoid a mistake or clarify an important medical issue.

Here are some of the questions that patients or their family members might want to ask:

- What are you going to do now? Why?
- Can you explain that to me again?
- How will this react with the medicine I'm already taking?
- Have you done this procedure before?
- Would you please wash your hands before you examine me?

- How can I be more involved in my health care?
- How can we help the patient when we are back home?

You should also expect that health care workers will ask *you* questions. Sometimes several people may ask you the same question, even if you've already answered it, or they may ask you your name many times. These steps are designed help keep you safe – like using a marker to note the place where you will have surgery, or asking you to confirm the details of your surgery. Such repetitions are signs that these workers are watching out for your safety – and that's a good thing.

We include here some links to useful websites that have more information for you as a patient. And you are always welcome to contact [one of our staff members](#) with questions.

## **LINKS TO HELP YOU BE AN ACTIVE HEALTHCARE CONSUMER:**

The *Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research* (AHRQ) has useful web information for patients and their families:

- [Be an active healthcare consumer](#)
- [“Questions are the Answer”](#) (click on the video for a fun but informative reminder)
- [How to talk to your doctor](#)

The *National Patient Safety Foundation* (NPSF) shares [how you can help improve patient safety](#).

NPSF also provides useful information on [how you can help prevent hospital infections](#).

The *Journal of Patient Safety Patient Education* has several links for hospitalized patients here:

- [When you are in the hospital: A guide for patients](#).

The *Oregon Association of Hospitals & Health Systems* (OAHHS) has a [“quality indicators search page”](#) that may be helpful for patients choosing a hospital.

The Joint Commission has a [“Speak Up” campaign](#) with useful discussions on preparing for surgery, preventing infections, managing medications, and more.

 [Informacion en Español aquí.](#)