

Administrator's Note #1
August 23, 2006

Posting a note on a website seems quixotic, akin to stuffing a message in a bottle and flinging it into the sea. Still, in a way it captures the spirit of the Oregon Patient Safety Commission. We are a small organization, we struggle to make ends meet, but we have some unique tools and an abiding passion for our subject matter. We believe we are helping to improve the quality of healthcare in Oregon.

Toward that end, the Commission's Patient Safety Reporting Program is on its way. With very little fanfare 51 hospitals (providing 98% of patient care in the state) have not only agreed to report adverse events, they're begun *doing* it. This is an amazing thing – *hospitals have never before shared such data with a statewide organization*. Reporting is motivated from a common belief that we can improve patient safety by working together, sharing crucial information, and by digging deep into the root causes of negative outcomes. The Commission's job is to make sense of that information and to get the word out. The premise is simple—if something bad happens at hospital A, it doesn't have to be repeated at hospital B.

Elsewhere on our website you might have noticed that we have begun publishing "Patient Safety Bulletins." The Patient Safety Commission intends to use Bulletins as a means to alert hospitals about emerging safety issues. The content of these Bulletins is based on information sent to us from reporting hospitals.

One of the issues debated by the Commission was whether the Bulletins should be made public. In general, information shared with the Commission will be kept confidential; we believe that hospitals will not share detailed, case-specific information if they feel threatened by legal action. But the information used for these Bulletins does not identify a specific hospital or any specific patient. Therefore the Commission strongly feels that Oregonians have a right to gain some insight into the complex systems problems faced by hospitals. Our ongoing challenge will be to make such Bulletins understandable to all.

We seek your comments (Jim.Dameron@OregonPatientSafety.org) and your perspective. Look for updates about twice a month, and please let us know how we are doing.

Sincerely,

Jim Dameron
Administrator
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