

QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY – HOSPITALS TAKE THE LEAD

THE ISSUE

Improving the quality and safety of patient care is the cornerstone of health care reform, and Maryland is a health care quality pioneer. In 2004, the Maryland Patient Safety Center was launched, the first of its kind and a model for the nation. The Patient Safety Center, the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA), and Maryland's hospitals work together on initiatives to create and sustain a culture of safety through improved teamwork and communication, a culture that empowers all caregivers to contribute toward improved care regardless of their position.

WHAT WE'RE FOR

Driving down infections--Healthcare-associated infections are the most common complication of hospital care. Maryland's hospitals take part in many efforts to cut down on infections; here are three key programs.

- **On the CUSP: Stop BSI** is a national initiative to reduce central line-associated bloodstream infections, which can occur when patients, usually in intensive care, need lines inserted into large veins to provide fluids, blood, or medications, or to do medical tests quickly. Maryland's program began December 6, 2010 with a meeting of more than 300 hospital representatives, and has one of the highest percentages of hospital participation in the country. After 11 months of results, the infection rate among Maryland's 44 participating hospitals and 78 hospital units continues a steady but measurable decrease.
- **On the CUSP: Stop CAUTI** is a new initiative in Maryland to reduce urinary tract infections caused by catheters, which are inserted to allow a patient's urine to drain from the bladder for collection. Using the same principles of teamwork and communication employed by the On the CUSP: Stop BSI initiative, 36 participating hospitals and 70 hospital units on November 14, 2011 began Maryland's effort to eliminate these urinary tract infections.
- **Maryland's Hospital Hand Hygiene Collaborative** began in 2009. Strict adherence to recommended hand hygiene practices is the most effective way to prevent infections; this is the first statewide hand hygiene campaign to use a uniform, standard measure: observation by unknown observers, "secret shoppers," to help hospitals improve. The compliance rate has improved to more than 80 percent, with 327 hospital units reporting data as of September 2011.

Providing necessary care – The Maryland Hospital Association in 2010 convened a Necessary Care Work Group of hospital medical directors and quality leaders to develop guidelines on the appropriateness of procedures, such as stents, to open coronary arteries; the guidelines were distributed to all Maryland hospitals. The Work Group's next charge: ensuring that implantable cardiac devices like pacemakers are used only when the patient's condition requires them.

- MHA is working with the state's Office of Health Care Quality to help hospitals and physician leaders strengthen their internal practitioner performance evaluation processes to ensure that care is provided according to proven clinical criteria.