

Safety & Quality REPORT

A periodic publication highlighting patient-safety efforts by Minnesota hospitals

A steady hand

Minnesota hospitals work to prevent patient falls

Hospitals throughout Minnesota launched a collaborative initiative in May aimed at preventing one of the most common adverse health events — patient falls.

By December, more than 100 hospitals had signed up for the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) SAFE from FALLS campaign. As a result, those facilities reported an 18-percent increase in use of best-practice steps included in the program's Roadmap to a Comprehensive Falls Prevention Program. The "road map" is a collection of interventions proven to reduce patient harm as a result of falling.

Techniques include, for example, bed alarms that sound when at-risk


patients attempt to get out of bed unassisted. A lower-tech tool uses signs posted outside patients' rooms to indicate fall risk to all. Any staffer — from housecleaning folks to the chief of surgery — who notices patients in such rooms getting out of bed or walking unaided is to speak up and get the patient some assistance.

The interventions are modeled after findings gleaned from the Minnesota Adverse Health Event Registry, a detailed accounting of the causes contributing to adverse health events reported by Minnesota hospitals. The measures are also based on the nationally recognized work of the Veterans Integrated Service Network 8 Patient Safety Center, a Tampa, Fla.-based U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs facility that promotes safe mobility for frail elderly and people with disabilities.

In the end, Minnesota's falls program helps hospitals focus on the specific actions that are needed to keep patients who

are at risk for falling safe, said Julie Apold, MHA director of patient safety.

The SAFE from FALLS tool kit and accompanying resources can be found on MHA's Web site, at www.mnhospitals.org. Click on "Priority Issues," then "Patient Safety."

"Sometimes, hospital patients don't even realize they're at risk for falling," she said. "Other times, they may be so accustomed to moving independently that asking for assistance seems awkward or unnecessary. In both of those kinds of cases, the tools in this program serve as an effective stop-gap." 

— Martha Parsons

Safety Coordination – Falls Prevention Program
Accurate and Concurrent Reporting
Facility Expectations, Staff Education and Accountability
Education for Patients and Families

from

Fall Risk Screening
Assessment of Risk Factors
Linked Interventions
Learn from Events
Safe Environment



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Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS)

The award-winning, broad-based coalition of MAPS continues to improve patient safety in Minnesota. MAPS launched two major projects in 2007: a standardized informed-consent process and a personal medication tracking form.

Informed consent

MHA and the Minnesota Medical Association spearheaded a first-of-its-kind universal informed-consent form and process for all providers. The new form, which complies with recent regulatory changes, is written at a consumer-friendly, 4th-grade reading level. A pilot project, completed in June, field-tested the document and garnered widespread support.

The first phase of the project focused on disseminating the form and concept in hospitals and ambulatory

surgery centers. While some organizations adopted the MAPS form, others instead revised their existing forms and policies to read at much lower reading levels.



This month, the project will move into the second phase — physician clinics.

Medication tracking form

Also in 2007, a MAPS workgroup launched an initiative to encourage individuals to track their medications. As a result of the communications campaign and MAPS members' hard work, the campaign signed more than 20 campaign partners from some of Minnesota's largest providers, insurers and health-care organizations. As a result, stories appeared in the *Star Tribune* and other Minnesota news outlets. In the first six months of the campaign, more than 100,000 free forms were distributed to consumers.

Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital

St. Louis Park

Falls prevention efforts progress score:

- 82 percent, up from 39 percent at beginning of program

Implementation:

- Training of nursing assistants on how to perform hourly falls rounds included one-on-one sessions with assistant nurse managers.
- The hospital instituted post-falls “huddles” and accompanying checklists to help caregivers comprehensively evaluate conditions that may have contributed to the incident.

Key lessons learned, in hospital staff members' own words:

- “Huddles function well ... and were immediately popular with staff members, possibly because huddles give them a structured method for channeling their ideas and reflections on preventing future falls.”

- “The associate nurse manager role was key in implementing this initiative. In a large organization such as ours, quick implementation of new initiatives can be difficult, but the associate nurse managers were able to devote the time to communicating with floor staff members about the falls huddle initiative.
- “The Minnesota Adverse Events Registry has helped highlight the importance of falls prevention and to help us develop parts of our initiative, such as the falls checklist used by nurses to identify conditions surrounding a fall. The registry was a great place we could draw ideas from; I don't think we would be as far along as we are without it. The “Safe from Falls Initiative” helped provide us the direction that we needed by providing the road map as our guide to make sure we have the correct interventions/initiatives in place.”



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Minnesota hospitals participating in MHA's SAFE from FALLS program:

Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis
 Albany Area Hospital & Medical Center
 Albert Lea Medical Center – Mayo Health System
 Austin Medical Center – Mayo Health System
 Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center
 Bethesda Hospital, St. Paul
 Bridges Medical Center, Ada
 Buffalo Hospital
 Cambridge Medical Center
 Children's Hospitals & Clinics of Minnesota,
 Minneapolis/St. Paul
 Chippewa County-Montevideo Hospital
 Clearwater County Health Services, Bagley
 Community Memorial Hospital, Cloquet
 Community Memorial Hospital, Winona
 Cook County North Shore Hospital, Grand Marais
 Cook Hospital & Nursing Home
 District One Hospital, Faribault
 Douglas County Hospital, Alexandria
 Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital
 Fairmont Medical Center – Mayo Health System
 Fairview Lakes Medical Center, Wyoming
 Fairview Northland Health Services, Princeton
 Fairview Red Wing Medical Center
 Fairview Southdale Hospital, Edina
 Fairview University Medical Center – Mesabi, Hibbing
 Falls Memorial Hospital, International Falls
 First Care Medical Services, Fosston
 Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, St. Paul
 Glacial Ridge Health System, Glenwood
 Glencoe Regional Health Services
 Graceville Health Center
 Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, Grand Rapids
 Granite Falls Municipal Hospital
 Hendricks Community Hospital Association
 Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis
 Hutchinson Area Health Care

Immanuel St. Joseph's – Mayo Health System,
 Mankato
 Johnson Memorial Health Services, Dawson
 Kanabec Hospital, Mora
 Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center, Hallock
 Lake Region Healthcare Corporation, Fergus Falls
 Lakeview Hospital, Stillwater
 LakeWood Health Center, Baudette
 Lakewood Health System, Staples
 LifeCare Medical Center, Roseau
 Long Prairie Memorial Hospital
 Meeker County Memorial Hospital, Litchfield
 Melrose Area Hospital – CentraCare
 Mercy Hospital & Health Care Center, Moose Lake
 MeritCare Thief River Falls Northwest Medical Center
 Minnesota Valley Health Center, Le Sueur
 Monticello-Big Lake Community Hospital
 Murray County Medical Center, Slayton
 New Ulm Medical Center
 North Country Health Services, Bemidji
 North Memorial Health Care, Robbinsdale
 Northfield Hospital
 Olmsted Medical Center, Rochester
 Ortonville Area Health Services
 Owatonna Hospital
 Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Park
 Paynesville Area Health Care System
 Perham Memorial Hospital
 Pipestone County Medical Center
 Queen of Peace Hospital, New Prague
 RC Hospital & Clinics, Olivia
 Redwood Area Hospital, Redwood Falls
 Regency Hospital of Minneapolis
 Regina Medical Center, Hastings
 Regions Hospital, St. Paul
 Rice Memorial Hospital, Willmar
 Ridgeview Medical Center, Waconia

RiverView Health Care Association, Crookston
 Rochester Methodist Hospital
 Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, Wabasha
 Saint Marys Hospital, Rochester
 St. Cloud Hospital
 St. Francis Regional Medical Center, Shakopee
 St. Gabriel's Hospital, Little Falls
 St. John's Hospital, Maplewood
 St. Joseph's Medical Center, Brainerd
 St. Joseph's Area Health Services, Park Rapids
 St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Paul
 St. Luke's Hospital, Duluth
 St. Mary's Medical Center, Duluth
 St. Mary's Regional Health Center, Detroit Lakes
 St. Michael's Hospital, Sauk Centre
 Sanford Hospital Luverne
 Sanford Jackson Medical Center
 Sanford Tracy Medical Center
 Sanford Westbrook Medical Center
 Shriners Hospitals for Children, Minneapolis
 Sibley Medical Center, Arlington
 Springfield Medical Center – Mayo Health System
 Stevens Community Medical Center, Morris
 Swift County-Benson Hospital
 Tri-County Hospital, Wadena
 Tyler Healthcare Center
 United Hospital Inc., St. Paul
 University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview,
 Minneapolis
 Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Minneapolis
 Virginia Regional Medical Center
 Wheaton Community Hospital
 White Community Hospital, Aurora
 Windom Area Hospital
 Woodwinds Health Campus, Woodbury