



Rocky Mountain Patient Safety Organization

What are patient safety organizations (PSO)?

Patient Safety Organizations (PSOs) are specially designated entities designed to work directly with providers to improve the quality and safety health care.

How do PSOs work with health care providers?

The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 (Patient Safety Act) establishes strong Federal confidentiality and privilege protections for information that clinicians and provider organizations gather and analyze when conducting quality and safety deliberations.

Federally qualified PSOs are authorized to:

- ▶▶ Offer health care providers a secure environment, protected by legal privilege and confidentiality, to conduct patient safety activities so that health care providers can analyze quality and safety issues to improve care and reduce risk to patients.
- ▶▶ Encourage health care providers to voluntarily submit and share information, which will be de-identified and used to track patient safety trends.
- ▶▶ Give feedback to health care providers on ways to reduce risk and improve patient quality and safety.

Source – Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research: *Patient Safety Organizations Your Partner in Improving Health Care Quality*

Rocky Mountain Patient Safety Organization (RMP SO)

The Colorado Hospital Association worked with a broad coalition of health care leaders in Colorado to establish the Rocky Mountain Patient Safety Organization. RMP SO is the first PSO in the region to be certified for listing as a federally qualified PSO by the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research. With this listing, the RMP SO:

- ▶▶ is able to serve as an independent, external partner to collect, analyze, and aggregate patient safety information locally and regionally to develop insights into the underlying causes of patient safety events.
- ▶▶ will provide confidential and privileged advice for health care providers seeking to understand and minimize the risks and hazards in delivering patient care
- ▶▶ will foster collaboration not just between hospitals but between providers in all care settings without fear of legal liability or professional sanctions

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The Rocky Mountain Patient Safety Organization is managed by



Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Initiatives

The Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) is committed to improving healthcare quality and patient safety in hospitals across the state. As a leader in the healthcare community and a representative of more than 90 Colorado hospitals, CHA plays a unique role in advancing safety initiatives among providers. CHA works to create a culture of safety among member hospitals by offering educational opportunities, technical support and guidance on the concrete steps that improve quality within healthcare facilities and further advance leadership commitment to patient safety.

Ultimately it is CHA's goal to improve healthcare for Colorado's residents by helping hospitals meet high quality and performance standards. CHA aims to achieve this goal through work in four key areas:

- ✓ Board Governance
- ✓ Education of Hospital Staff
- ✓ Consumer Education and Outreach
- ✓ Quality Systems Improvement

Building upon the momentum of recent quality improvement efforts, Colorado's healthcare community is currently poised to address several specific areas including medication reconciliation, reducing unnecessary readmissions to hospitals and improving transitions in care. CHA hopes to continue to collaborate with other stakeholders and healthcare leaders to make these efforts successful.

Please find below an overview of CHA's patient safety initiatives that demonstrate its continuing commitment to healthcare quality and performance improvement in Colorado hospitals.

1. **BOARD GOVERNANCE**

CHA's board governance work was born out of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) *Boards on Board* initiative, a part of the nationwide 5 Million Lives Campaign that was supported locally by The Colorado Trust. CHA spearheaded all activities of the *Boards on Board* initiative and further board governance initiatives in Colorado have resulted from those successes.

- ***Boards on Board Initiative*** – Beginning in 2007, CHA led an effort to engage and educate hospital trustees and administrators in quality and patient safety

improvement throughout the hospital setting by encouraging greater accountability for quality efforts in the boardroom. The initiative is based on IHI's principle that safety and quality must be integrated into the highest levels of leadership in hospitals to be successful and further a true culture of safety. The Colorado *Boards on Board* initiative has succeeded in creating a culture shift among hospitals across the state by creating system-wide accountability, whereby every person in the hospital – from board members to housekeeping staff – became responsible for improving safety.

- **Expanded Leadership Education and Training** – The success of the *Boards on Board* initiative has demonstrated the great effect board engagement can have in quality improvement. CHA intends to continue offering opportunities for trustees and hospital leadership to learn more and have greater involvement in safety initiatives. In 2008 CHA began distributing a quarterly newsletter to keep trustees up to date on current safety guidelines and standards. Other governance activities CHA intends to offer include:
 - A new trustee certification program that will provide trustees with education on a broad core foundation of healthcare topics necessary for effective governance in the healthcare community
 - Web-based education modules to enhance board members' knowledge of emerging issues and best practices in healthcare
 - A trustee quality curriculum to enhance board members' abilities to make the clear connections between their work in the boardroom, the performance of their organization, and the well-being of patients and the community

Additionally, in 2008 CHA appointed a Board Governance Advisory Committee, which is comprised of about 15 individuals including CEOs, trustees, chief medical and nursing officers and high-level quality professionals. Purpose of the committee, which meets quarterly, is to provide input and guidance for all of CHA's governance activities.

- **Promoting Diversity in Healthcare Leadership** – CHA is leading a statewide effort to support cultural diversity in leadership in Colorado's hospitals and health systems. As a first step, the Association co-hosted a full-day seminar aimed at identifying, preparing, and promoting individuals from diverse backgrounds as board candidates. The event was co-sponsored by the American Hospital Association's Center for Healthcare Governance and its Institute for Diversity, along with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Office of Health



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Colorado Hospital Association

Disparities. In addition to learning about the principles by which a board operates, the trustee's role and responsibilities, and the board's role in areas such as setting strategy and determining policy, participants had the opportunity to hear directly from minority trustees currently serving on hospital boards. Participants who attended the program and commit to serve will be entered into an online registry that Colorado hospitals and health systems can use to recruit these candidates with fresh perspectives to their boardrooms.

2. EDUCATION OF HOSPITAL STAFF

According to national best practices, quality and patient safety improvements must be hospital-wide initiatives, which is why CHA offers educational opportunities for hospital staff. These efforts allow providers in Colorado hospitals to share their experience and knowledge about effective quality improvement strategies.

- **Council of Quality Professionals** – CHA facilitates monthly meetings of Quality Improvement Professionals from hospitals across the state. The purpose of this group is to share emerging concepts in quality improvement and patient safety and identify best practice standards that can be implemented across the state. With the help of CHA this group has been able to initiate big changes in hospitals across Colorado to improve patient safety including standardization of wristbands and overhead emergency codes. The group currently is working on modifying the World Health Organization (WHO) surgical checklist to fit the needs of Colorado hospitals.
- **Rocky Mountain Patient Safety Organization** – In 2009, CHA showed its commitment to developing a federally qualified Patient Safety Organization (PSO) by hiring one of Colorado's leading hospital quality improvement specialists to oversee the effort. The PSO will give Colorado providers in all care settings the opportunity to learn from others' experiences with adverse health events and develop strategies to prevent them from occurring in the future. Beginning in 2010, the PSO will focus primarily on root-cause analysis of "never events" and transitions in care.

3. CONSUMER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

CHA proactively engages in education and outreach efforts to inform the public and other key stakeholders about the quality and patient safety improvements in Colorado hospitals. By participating in the policy process and communicating with consumers, we aim to improve transparency and accountability for quality and safety outcomes.

- **Colorado Hospital Report Card** – In 2006 CHA led an effort to pass legislation to create the Colorado Hospital Report Card, a web-based tool that allows consumers to research and compare outcomes for hospitals throughout Colorado. Launched in 2007, the website was founded on the belief that increased transparency can lead to further safety and quality improvements by providers and more informed decision making by consumers. The first generation of the Report Card included clinical information and data in five categories including patient safety measures, pediatric inpatient volume, total volume, mortality and ambulatory care - encompassing 39 different measures in all. In 2008, the site was redesigned to further enhance navigation and ease of use. Future improvements will include eight new nursing quality measures as well as a planned effort to translate the website to provide information for Spanish speaking consumers.
- **Non-Payment of Adverse Health Events** – As the organization representing Colorado’s hospital community, CHA has been proactive in helping Colorado hospitals to adopt standards to improve safety. Even before the federal implementation of new standards for non-payment for adverse health events, CHA developed and achieved nearly 100 percent adoption among its membership of similar principles of non-payment including all 28 of the National Quality Forum (NQF) Serious Reportable Events, or “never events.” This voluntary effort demonstrated a coordinated, statewide commitment to quality improvement and patient safety by Colorado’s hospitals.

4. QUALITY SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

CHA has helped Colorado hospitals to implement a number of meaningful systems changes that directly impact quality and patient safety measures within their facilities. The goal of each of the various systems improvements initiatives is to provide hospitals with customizable tools, technical support and meaningful guidance to help them achieve measurable results.

- **Alert Wristband Standardization Project** – Beginning in 2007, CHA led an effort to get Colorado hospitals to implement standardized color-coding of patient wristbands that alert care givers about certain conditions such as allergies. The effort was one of the first in the country and to date, over 90 percent of Colorado hospitals have adopted the standardized wristband colors, helping to prevent confusion for nurses and physicians who practice in more than one hospital.
- **Colorado Telehealth Network** – CHA’s Colorado Telehealth Network is a statewide broadband network that connects Colorado’s healthcare providers by



allowing them to share accurate and time-sensitive medical data. The project increases access to healthcare in rural communities by allowing rural providers to consult with specialists and other providers on urgent medical care, allowing the patient to receive timely care in their own community. By arming providers with greater information, education and a link to providers at other hospitals, the Colorado Telehealth Network can help rural health care providers offer care with better outcomes and fewer errors. The Colorado Telehealth Network will be launched in the summer of 2009 and will connect more than 388 Colorado healthcare facilities by the end of the year.

- **Emergency Code Standardization Project** – In addition to standardized wristbands, CHA worked with Colorado hospitals in 2008 to adopt standard overhead emergency codes for all hospitals. Like the wristband project, this helps to prevent confusion for care givers who practice in multiple hospital settings.
- **Infection Prevention Project** – National and state initiatives in the past several years have pushed hospitals to focus their efforts on infection prevention and reporting infection data. In 2009, CHA launched the Infection Prevention Project to provide hospitals with the information they needed to implement successful infection prevention systems and to assist them in accurately reporting their infection data. As part of the project, CHA created and distributed a MRSA toolkit that provides Colorado hospitals with the opportunity to review specific infection control strategies and tailor processes to address the needs of their organization and patient population. Hospitals were also invited to a MRSA summit hosted by CHA.
- **On the CUSP: Stop BSI** – In partnership with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Health Research and Educational Trust and Johns Hopkins University, CHA will help Colorado hospitals implement a national initiative to reduce central line-associated blood stream infections (BSIs) in hospital intensive care settings. The Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program, known as *On the CUSP*, will combine evidence-based protocols with patient safety culture assessment. In early 2009, CHA began recruiting hospitals for the project; the initiative will begin in the summer of 2009.
- **WHO Surgical Site Checklist** – In 2009, CHA began working to tailor the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Surgical Site Checklist* to the needs of Colorado hospitals. The effort includes the creation of additional "checks" for the WHO list including Joint Commission requirements and other recommended steps to improve surgical safety in Colorado hospitals. Once the new checklist is complete, CHA will work to implement its standard use throughout Colorado.