As a patient safety liaison (PSL), most of my conversations with facilities focus on what the facility’s patient safety officers are doing well and where opportunities for improvement exist within their facilities. Representatives of the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority often hear about the challenges of meeting requirements of external agencies such as the Joint Commission and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), coupled with the internal challenges of running a hospital. Many of the requirements impact not only the facilities’ finances, but also patient safety, patient satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. Many facilities are working on the same initiatives and barriers. A few of these shared challenges include falls, medication errors, infections, and readmissions. Partnership for Patients, a program developed by CMS, encourages collective learning through hospital engagement networks (HENs) that support finding strategies and solutions through collaboration.

HOSPITAL ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

On December 14, 2011, CMS announced the award of $218 million to 26 state, regional, and national hospital system organizations to serve as HENs. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sponsored the contract, which is a part of Partnership for Patients. This initiative was started to help keep patients from being harmed while in the hospital and heal without complications once they are discharged.1

Partnership for Patients has two goals:2

1. Keep patients from getting injured or sicker. By the end of 2013, preventable hospital-acquired conditions would decrease by 40% compared to 2010. Achieving this goal would mean approximately 1.8 million fewer injuries to patients, with more than 60,000 lives saved over the next three years.

2. Help patients heal without complication. By the end of 2013, preventable complications during a transition from one care setting to another would be decreased so that hospital readmissions would be reduced by 20% compared to 2010. Achieving this goal would mean that more than 1.6 million patients would recover from illness without suffering a preventable complication requiring re-hospitalization within 30 days of discharge.

Partnership for Patients was launched in April 2011 to help improve quality, safety, and affordability of healthcare. The partnership consists of more than 65,000 partners, 3,167 of which are hospitals. Achieving these goals will save lives and prevent injuries to U.S. patients, as well as potentially save up to $35 billion across the U.S. healthcare system over the next three years, including up to $10 billion in Medicare savings. Over the next 10 years, it could reduce costs to Medicare by about $50 billion and result in billions more in Medicaid savings.2

In April 2011, the Authority released information about tools that are provided to assist facilities with meeting the goals of Partnership for Patients. The Authority’s website contains a “Hospital-Acquired Condition” link that will help healthcare providers link directly to research, information, and tools developed from Pennsylvania data on 10 event types.1 The targeted areas include retained foreign objects, air embolism, blood incompatibility, pressure ulcer stages III and IV, harmful falls, manifestations of poor glycemic control, catheter urinary tract infections, vascular catheter-associated infections, surgical site infections, and deep-vein thrombosis following hip and knee replacements.

The 26 organizations that serve as HENs will help identify solutions that healthcare facilities have already implemented to reduce healthcare-acquired conditions and
disseminate the solutions to other hospitals and healthcare providers. Some requirements of the HENs are as follows: conduct intensive training, develop learning collaborations, provide technical assistance for hospitals and other providers, and establish monitoring systems to help observe progress and improvement.

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) is the only Pennsylvania-based organization that serves as a HEN as part of the Partnership for Patients initiative. According to HAP, it will be under a two-year contract with its partners (the Authority, the Health Care Improvement Foundation, Quality Insights of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Healthcare Quality Alliance) to implement strategies to support Pennsylvania hospitals in achieving Partnership for Patients’ goals of reducing preventable hospital-acquired conditions, readmissions, and complications during hospitalization.

Topics that will be included in the Pennsylvania HEN are as follows: falls, obstetrical adverse events, surgical site infections, adverse drug events, venous thromboembolism, pressure ulcers, central line-associated bloodstream infections, ventilator-associated pneumonia, and wrong-site surgery. A culture of safety curriculum will be offered to hospitals that participate in the projects. All of these projects will provide opportunities for improvement using both outcome and process measures; have guidelines, tools, and resources for each topic; and include technical assistance, networking, and other support to the participating facilities.

The topics that will be included in the Pennsylvania HEN will be led by the following partners:

- **The Authority**
  - Patient falls
  - Adverse medication events
  - Wrong-person, wrong-site, and wrong-procedure surgeries
  - Education—culture of safety curriculum

- **The Health Care Improvement Foundation**
  - Adverse obstetrical events

- **Quality Insights of Pennsylvania**
  - Venous thromboembolism

- **HAP**
  - Surgical site infections
  - Ventilator-associated pneumonia
  - Central line-associated bloodstream infections
  - Pressure ulcers
  - Readmissions

All of these projects are high-interest areas for hospitals. Having a resource and network available to share information will be a great asset to Pennsylvania hospitals. For more information on HENs or the projects listed above, contact your regional Authority PSL or see [http://www.haponline.org/quality/engagement-network](http://www.haponline.org/quality/engagement-network).

**NOTES**


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The Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority and Its Contractors

The Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority is an independent state agency created by Act 13 of 2002, the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (“Mcare”) Act. Consistent with Act 13, ECRI Institute, as contractor for the Authority, is issuing this publication to advise medical facilities of immediate changes that can be instituted to reduce Serious Events and Incidents. For more information about the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority, see the Authority’s website at http://www.patientsafetyauthority.org.

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