Empowered Staff Make Positive Change to Patient Safety

Patient Safety

By: Anna Marie Hajek

The verdict is in…Patient Safety is on the front burner. How can staff prepare for the challenge?

Much is written today about establishing, supporting and sustaining a culture of safety across healthcare organizations. Accrediting bodies such as The Joint Commission focus on this construct; also national organizations such as the National Patient Safety Foundation, National Quality Forum, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and the LEAPFROG Group, a consumer focused organization. The verdict is in…Patient Safety is on the front burner. How can staff prepare for the challenge?

Setting the conditions for patient safety is the role of healthcare leadership including senior management and the board of directors. The senior leadership of Moses Cone Health System, a five hospital healthcare system in Greensboro, NC, chose to use information technology to help establish its culture of safety and to assist the staff as to achieve lasting and positive change.

Moses Cone selected an innovative web-based software application, the **Healthcare *SafetyZone* ®Portal as** a key part of their information management strategy. The Portal helps to gather information throughout their organization

and enables staff to collaborate and communicate more effectively. The easy to use interface of the Portal empowered staff to initiate important quality and safety improvements and became an integral part of cementing the System's culture of safety.

The following is an example of the power of the Portal in the hands of empowered staff at one of the Moses Cone Health System hospitals. At The Women's Hospital in Greensboro, NC, when pregnant women were admitted to another Moses Cone location, staff became concerned that they were unable to properly monitor the health of the fetus without physically transporting the patient to The Women's Hospital. Staff used the SafetyZone Portal to record these situations that caused them concern. They then used the data provided through the Portal to justify the purchase of a high-tech clinical information system that places fetal monitors in the hospitals that transmit real-time images and data to physicians at The Women's Hospital so they can monitor the well-being of the fetus remotely. As stated by Cheryl Koob, Director of Risk Management for Moses Cone Health System, "Before we had only anecdotal evidence; but the Portal data gave us solid justification for the new system on both medical and financial grounds, and empowered our people to initiate a significant improvement in the quality of care we provide."

This is one example of how senior leadership set the conditions of safety with the installation of the new SafetyZone Portal information management system. The Portal enabled the staff to communicate their concerns around real situations and to collaborate with the administration on

the best way to not only alleviate their concerns, but significantly impact healthcare quality.

This case study illustrates that one way to achieve a true culture of safety is to employ tools that staff need to identify imbedded procedures where changes can be introduced to create a full tapestry of safety for patients, visitors and staff. The **Healthcare *SafetyZone*® Portal** played a central role in the positive results being realized, and the organization's leadership openly set the conditions that made those results possible, while at the same time sending the clear message that a culture of safety is the mission at Moses Cone Health System.

The **Healthcare *SafetyZone*® Portal** is a product of Clarity Group, Inc. in Chicago, IL. To learn more about the Portal and other products and services of Clarity Group you are invited to visit our website at www.claritygrp.com.

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