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University of Connecticut Health Center

Special Health & Safety Fair Edition

November 2005 263 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, Connecticut 06030-3806 Volume VI

Collaborative Center for Clinical Care Improvement

Patient Safety and Employee Safety Go Hand-In-Hand

Patient Safety and Employee Safety are Collaborative Efforts with a Common Goal: The Improvement of Healthcare Quality and Safety

You would be surprised at how many departments and individuals throughout our institution are currently involved in activities that affect patient and employee safety. It could be you. From the carpenter hanging safety containers for needles, to the research safety tech monitoring for hazardous levels in the research areas, to the housekeeper putting out the "Wet Floors" signs to prevent slips, trips, and falls—all are working to keep patients, employees and visitors safe.

Consider This:

A nurse wants to tend to a patient's special need for safe patient handling. The nurse attempts to use a lifting device, only to find out that the battery is not properly charged. In order to safely lift this patient, looking out for his/her back, neck and shoulders, and the patient's safety, he/she needs to collaborate with our Clinical Engineering Department to get a properly charged battery to operate the lift.

This is an example of how employees working together not only protect our patients, but each other.

There's Safety in Numbers: Collaborators in Employee and Patient Safety

Safe working conditions for *employees* and best practice directed toward improving quality of care and *patient* safety will improve health and safety outcomes for *everyone*. Here are some of the collaborators who focus on employee safety:

C4I Culture—Our organizational culture is being reviewed by many—workers, union members, upper management, etc. The goal of this collaboration is to foster a culture of safety. The results of the surveys are in, and six topics have been identified. You will soon hear about opportunities to join one of the focus groups to address the issues.

Clinical Engineering—Ensures that all medical equipment in JDH is safe and reliable and that the hospital is in compliance with current codes, regulations, and standards pertaining to electrical safety, maintenance, and testing of medical equipment. They ensure staff confidence in the reliability of the function of medical equipment and that users are knowledgeable of its operation.

(Continued…)

Collaboration at its Best

In May 2005, C4I sponsored the CT Healthcare Research Education Foundation, Patient Safety Organization (CHREF PSO) Patient Safety Symposium at the CT State Capital. L-R: Patti Wawzyniecki, Doug Rinaldi, Cande Pettigrew, Rhea Sanford & Sandra Barnosky

The Collaborative Center for Clinical Care Improvement ("C4I") is dedicated to making John Dempsey Hospital the safest hospital in the State of Connecticut.

James O. Menzoian, MD and Rhea Sanford, RN, PhD, CS—Co-Directors

We'd like your feedback and comments! Call us at Ext. 7650

Safety in Numbers (Continued)

Employee Health Service and Occupational Medicine—The Employee Health Service (EHS) is responsible for working together with all UCHC employees to prevent work-related illness and injury and to assist its employees in returning to work after an acute or chronic disease. The EHS provides many services to accomplish these goals.

Facilities Management/Environment of Care— From the sidewalks and stairs, to mechanical and electrical equipment, Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining a safe physical environment.

Hospital Epidemiology—Our Hospital Epidemiologist and Infection Control Specialist oversee immunizations, hand washing, needle safety devices, and other infection control initiatives such as effective antiseptics for the worker and patient. Wash your hands!

Materials Management—This department plays a major role in employee safety by having personal protective equipment and supplies readily available to Health Center departments. Through their state-of-the-art e-Portal Web Orders System and Just-In-Time PAR Program, supplies are always available when and where they are needed. Working with Epidemiology and Research Safety, Materials Management ensures that the appropriate product is always in stock and readily available for our employees.

Office of Research Safety—This group is charged with the task of maintaining a safe working environment for patients, employees and visitors by adhering to State and Federal regulations. They strive to reduce, minimize, and eliminate exposures to hazardous agents (chemical, biological, radioactive) through the use of engineering controls, product substitution and personal protective equipment. *Working in a safe and hazard-free environment fosters better patient care.*

Public Safety—The Police Department responds to over 1,500 calls per week, and the Fire Department patrols our buildings and corrects hazardous conditions. Workplace violence prevention is everyone's business. If you see it, report it and get help from the Police Department and Employee Assistance.

Communication and collaboration are enhancing our organizational safety culture!

Reporting a near miss is a good catch!

A "near miss" is an event or situation that could have resulted in an accident, injury or illness, but did not, either by chance or through timely intervention. When there is potential for an error, we need to figure out what could go wrong, and how we can prevent the possibility of the error occurring.

We want to change our culture so that everyone understands there is no blame, and that it's not only OK to report a "good catch" —it's encouraged! We would like to dedicate a newsletter in 2006 to "good catches" - near-miss success stories.

Here is an example:
As a healthcare provider, you walk into a patient's room with medication but then realize that the medication you brought with you is not the right one for this patient. You realize this before the medication is administered. Whew! That was a near miss. The reason you realize this is a mistake is that you were following the National Patient Safety Goal for properly identifying the patient.

Please send us your stories. We plan to award our very first *"JDH Catcher's Mitt"* award to the best one. Maybe your good catch can save a life.
E-mail stories to: garthwait@uchc.edu by 1/15/06

Employee and Patient Safety Quiz

Employee safety and patient safety are everyone's responsibility.
True or False?

Many departments within UCHC collaborate toward a common goal of employee and patient safety.
True or False?

Reporting near misses can improve patient safety outcomes in the future and help make us the safest hospital in Connecticut. ***True or False?***

Answers to all of the above questions are TRUE.

Candace Pettigrew, RN, BSN
Patient Safety Coordinator, C4I, Ext. 3999

Save the Date!

"C4I One Year Later"
Thursday, December 1, 2005
C4I started our formal work in December of 2004. Please join us for an update on what we've accomplished and a review of future plans.
Place: Keller Auditorium
Times: 10:00 AM & 4:00 PM.
Please mark your calendar and join us!