

Hospitals Seek New Ways To Ensure Patient Safety

(NAPSA)—There's good news about health and safety: Hospitals are prescribing new measures to minimize errors. In an effort to confront continuing growing concerns for patient safety, hospitals are investing in training programs designed specifically to help caregivers minimize mistakes that can harm patients and themselves.

This can save lives, time and money. According to the Institute of Medicine, up to 98,000 people die each year from medical errors. Furthermore, almost 22 percent of Americans report they or a family member have experienced a medical error of some kind. In order to avoid these incidents, caregivers are being taught to recognize and avoid inherent attitudes, routines and behaviors that lead to critical errors.

Rushing, frustration, fatigue and complacency are some of the core contributing factors that lead to critical mistakes. Medical errors and patient injuries can be greatly reduced, however, by providing basic awareness and avoidance training.

What's more, the financial impact of medical errors is enormous. According to the National Patient Safety Foundation, such errors cost hospitals an estimated \$29 billion a year.

Patient safety efforts have typically focused on new procedures and technology but fail to teach employees "how" to prevent errors from occurring; increasingly, hospitals are turning toward a more human approach.

"When you learn that simple avoidable human behaviors contribute to more than 90 percent of all medical injuries and errors, you realize that hospitals need a different style of training. Health care facilities need a safety initiative that will complement existing patient safety programs by ad-



The next time you or someone you care about is hospitalized, you may find the care is better, safer and more efficient than ever.

dressing the fact that we're all human and can make mistakes," said Deanna Parsons, director of risk management for Cabell Huntington Hospital in West Virginia.

By giving caregivers a heightened awareness of how certain behavior affects their safety and patient safety, accidents and injuries can be significantly reduced and/or avoided.

One such patient safety initiative uses real-life examples to show hospital staff how subtle behaviors such as fatigue and working on autopilot can lead to medical errors. SAFESTART™ Healthcare, created by PRIMEDIA Healthcare, teaches staff how to prevent errors, helps medical facilities focus on teamwork, and fosters a culture of openness, which improves safety and employee morale.

"Patient safety programs are important in creating a more open environment and culture which allows caregivers to learn from close calls, and thus avoid many mistakes," said Barbara Crim, a registered nurse and health care administrator for PRIMEDIA Healthcare.

More information on advanced safety awareness initiatives is available at <http://www.safestarthealthcare.com>.