New Sentinel Event Alert focuses on preventing patient falls
Preventing patient falls and fall-related injuries is the focus of the new Sentinel Event Alert: Issue 55 released Sept. 28 by The Joint Commission. The new alert examines the contributing factors to patient falls and includes suggested solutions to be implemented by health care organizations to help reduce patient falls and falls with injury.

This topic was chosen for Sentinel Event Alert because patient falls with serious injury are among the top 10 sentinel events reported to The Joint Commission Sentinel Event Database. The Joint Commission has received 465 reports of patient falls with injuries since 2009, and approximately 63 percent of those falls resulted in death. The Joint Commission defines a sentinel event as a patient safety event (not primarily related to the natural course of the patient’s illness or underlying condition) that reaches a patient and results in death, permanent harm or severe temporary harm where intervention is required to sustain life. Although the majority of falls reported to The Joint Commission occurred in hospitals, the ECRI Institute also reports a significant number of falls occurring in non-hospital settings such as long-term care facilities.

An analysis of falls with injury reported to The Joint Commission Sentinel Event Database from January 2009 through October 2014, showed the most common contributing factors include:

- Inadequate assessment
- Communication failures
- Lack of adherence to protocols and safety practices
- Inadequate staff orientation, supervision, staffing levels or skill mix
- Deficiencies in the physical environment
- Lack of leadership

The suggested actions in the Sentinel Event Alert address all of the identified contributing factors to patient falls. Listed resources in the alert include links to toolkits research on falls prevention, and introduces the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare’s Preventing Falls Targeted Solutions Tool®.

“Fall prevention is the responsibility of everyone in the organization, and success is highly dependent on leadership playing a primary role,” said Ana Pujols McKee, executive vice president and chief medical officer of The Joint Commission. “It is their commitment and approach that determines an organization’s ability to significantly reduce and sustain the reduction in falls. There are several proactive steps in the Sentinel Event Alert that leaders can initiate, such as educating and raising awareness of the need to prevent falls resulting in injury, ensuring the implementation of a validated tool to identify the risk factors for falls, and establishing an interdisciplinary falls injury prevention team.”

For more information, visit The Joint Commission’s Sentinel Event Alert Web page.
People

Joint Commission appoints new EVP for business development and marketing

The Joint Commission announced Sept. 28 the appointment of Brian H. Enochs, JD, to the position of executive vice president of business development and marketing.

In this senior leadership position, Mr. Enochs will oversee all business development and marketing efforts for The Joint Commission and its strategic business units, including oversight of external relations and state relations. He fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Chuck Mowll, FACHE, CSSBB, in May.

“Brian joins The Joint Commission as a highly accomplished, results-oriented executive with more than 20 years of extensive experience in the pharmaceutical industry,” said Mark R. Chassin, MD, FACP, MPP, MPH, president and CEO of The Joint Commission. “He is a strong leader who will energize our business development efforts in The Joint Commission’s pursuit of safe, high-quality care for all patients.”

Mr. Enochs has held executive positions with Intarcia Therapeutics, Abbvie Pharmaceuticals and Eli Lilly & Company, and has experience in general management, marketing and sales, business development, strategic planning, alliance management, new product planning, and commercial analysis. His accomplishments include establishing Eli Lilly Malaysia as the fastest-growing pharmaceutical company in that nation for three years, as well as being commercial leader for teams that have executed more than 20 licensing and acquisition transactions. Prior to his work in pharmaceuticals, Mr. Enochs held positions in the State Department in Washington, D.C., and Tokyo.

Resources

AAMI Foundation’s free seminar to focus on Joint Commission’s NPSG on alarm management

The AAMI Foundation is hosting a complimentary patient safety seminar that examines how hospitals can achieve The Joint Commission’s National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) 06.01.01 on alarm management. The seminar is scheduled for noon to 1 p.m. ET, Monday, Oct. 5, and is titled “Alarm Safety Update: Are You Ready?”

This seminar will help attendees with:

- Elements of Performance (EPs) for The Joint Commission’s NPSG 06.01.01
- Recommended approaches to implementing alarm management
- How to identify root causes and contributory factors that are related to alarm safety failures
- The way one Intensive Care Unit (ICU) used a bundled set of alarm reduction strategies to reduce alarm burden and improve alarm response

It will feature a presentation The Joint Commission’s Medical Director, Dr. Ronald Wyatt, and clinical alarm experts Dr. Maria Cvach and Sharon Allan, of Johns Hopkins Hospital. Register now.

New on the Web

- Standards Field Review — New community-based palliative care certification: The Joint Commission is seeking input on a newly proposed certification for home care organizations to provide palliative care services in the home.
- Behavioral Health Care Conference — Set for Oct. 15-16 in Rosemont, the conference will focus primarily on person-centered care and how the accreditation standards can position organizations to provide state-of-the-art treatment. Register.
Learn more about Joint Commission Resources' offerings online or call 877-223-6866.