National Patient Safety Goals – A “Safety First” Approach to Health Care

Bridge Medical Barcode System – A nurse scans a patient’s ID bracelet matching it with her ID and the medication.

By the time Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) reviews and renews their annual recommendations for patient safety themes, and presents mandated guidelines to hospitals, most are already standard operating procedures at Eisenhower Medical Center. From the inception of “National Patient Safety Goals” in 2002, Eisenhower has been an active participant in educating staff, patients and families in safeguarding and maintaining the wellness of patients – meeting and exceeding nationally imposed goals.

“At Eisenhower Medical Center, we have a deep commitment to the patients and the community we serve,” explains Beverley Ingelson, Eisenhower Medical Center’s Patient Safety Officer. “This commitment motivates us to proactively address, identify, assess and implement programs to ensure patient safety before, during and after hospital stays. In fact,” she adds, “Eisenhower works on initiatives that place them at the forefront of patient safety before JCAHO mandates the standards.An example of this is the implementation of the Bridge Medical barcode medication administration system.”

Here are two of the 2005 safety goals set forth by JCAHO, currently standard practices at Eisenhower Medical Center:

National Patient Safety Goal: Improving the accuracy of hospital patient identification with the use of at least two patient identifiers.Eisenhower improves the accuracy of hospital patient identification with the use of two identifiers in an aggressive, proactive manner. In addition to patient identification bands, Eisenhower utilizes barcode technology with Bridge Medical to double-check the patient identity prior to administering any medications. The barcode system verifies the five rights for medication administration – the right patient, given the right medication, at the right time, with the right dose, in the right manner.

National Patient Safety Goal: Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls.

Eisenhower implemented an aggressive campaign in 2004 to prevent patient falls, prior to the JCAHO mandated 2005 goal. Patients, families and staff increase awareness and participate in the safety of the patient who may be at-risk for falls.The Eisenhower Medical Center staff proudly participates in this campus-wide initiative, demonstrated daily through preventative actions. The practical application and knowledge of this goal is evident throughout the hospital.

Patients and families can be assured that all Eisenhower safety initiatives are monitored to ensure that Eisenhower’s safety-first priority is always maintained. Management and staff routinely assess patient safety, and evaluate the effectiveness, or need for improvement, in a supportive, dynamic environment.

In addition, Eisenhower Medical Center invites patients, families and visitors to participate in the Speak Up™ initiatives, a national program developed to empower the patient and family members to ask questions about all aspects of their care and safety. During National Patient Safety Awareness Week, the staff at Eisenhower demonstrated their commitment to partnering with patients, families and visitors. “Ask, Listen & Learn” was the theme highlighting “effective communication” as the patient safety tool of choice. Health care providers are encouraged to: listen carefully to patients, speak in simple terms, and encourage patients to be involved in their health care. Eisenhower Medical Center encourages patients to: ask questions until they understand what they need to do, and partner with the health care professionals to manage their health.

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