



Quality & Safety Research Group

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To: Hospital CEO's
From: Peter Pronovost
Re: Preventing needless death in U.S. hospitals

Hello

Today the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released its' National Quality Report for 2009. The story is grim. One of the key findings: "Some areas merit urgent attention, including patient safety and health care-associated infections (HAIs)". Despite campaigns, hospital activities and rhetoric, the report indicates that there has been **no national improvement** in one type of HAI: central line associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI). These infections kill over 30,000 people in the U.S. each year.

Yet these infections are measurable and largely preventable. We demonstrated this with over 100 Michigan intensive care units (ICU) nearly 6 years ago. Participating ICUs continue to sustain their improvements, saving thousands of lives and millions of dollars each year.

In late 2008, The Secretary of Health and Human Services and AHRQ provided funds to make the program we implemented in Michigan available to virtually every hospital in the country. The American Hospital Association included savings anticipated from implementing the program in its commitment to congress and the president on how it will "bend the cost curve".

Unfortunately, talking is easier than doing. Fewer than 20% of hospitals in most states are participating in the program. (www.safercare.net). People are dying needlessly. They need your help and they need it now.

It is time for hospital leaders to be accountable not just for actions, but for results.

I ask you to do five things:

1. If you do not know the CLABSI rate(s) in your hospital ICUs, know it by the end of the day
2. If the CLABSI rate is not zero, contact your state hospital association and sign up for the program
3. Review the attached "CEO/Executive" checklist. It will begin to orient you to leadership for the project
4. If you ARE in the program, contact your project leader and assess progress
5. If you ARE in the program, reach out to other CEO's you know and encourage their participation.

No patient, in any hospital, deserves to die needlessly.

Best regards,

Peter J. Pronovost, MD, PhD
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Director, Quality and Safety Research Group