



Patient safety is a top priority at Saint Mary's Hospital. We have a robust structure in place to ensure that our physicians, nurses and caregivers consistently provide the highest quality care for our patients. That structure includes the Quality and Patient Safety Committee of our Board of Directors, which is chaired by physicians and regularly helps measure Saint Mary's performance based on nationally accepted quality indicators, sets annual quality goals, and prioritizes areas that need attention.

In addition to continually reviewing quality and safety at the board level, Saint Mary's has established a Quality Coordinating Council within the hospital, which continually ensures that Saint Mary's is meeting multiple patient safety goals. In 2011 alone, Saint Mary's reduced the number of falls and infections by 50 percent and we are committed to eliminating those risks for our patients.

Our patient safety programs include:

Multidisciplinary Quality Rounds

Each week a multidisciplinary team meets to evaluate the care provided for inpatients at Saint Mary's. Members of the Quality Management department review patient charts with attending physicians, medical residents, clinical nurse managers, discharge planners, nutrition and pharmacy staff and ask key quality questions that allow the team to improve the quality of patient care in real time. The team focuses on medications, immunizations, DVT prophylaxis, pressure ulcers, Foley catheters and central lines with the goal of providing the highest-quality care and the best possible outcomes for patients.

Falling Star Program

The Falling Star program was initiated in the Critical Care and Telemetry Units, where nurses wanted to find a way to call attention to patients who were at particular risk of falling during their hospital stay. Today, all Saint Mary's patients are assessed upon admission to determine if they are at risk of falling. In addition to issuing yellow socks with slip-resistant soles and yellow fleece blankets to those who are at risk, staff provide patients and their families with information and post yellow stars outside the patient's room. This extra attention has helped Saint Mary's to significantly reduce patients' risk of falling.

Eyes on Prevention

Developed by Saint Mary's Infection Prevention and Quality Management team, the Eyes on Prevention program was piloted in the Critical Care Unit and quickly expanded to all patient care areas. Dedicated infection prevention coaches are continually on the lookout for good hand hygiene. To keep patients and visitors safe, staff are encouraged to hold each other accountable for maintaining good infection prevention practices.

HOPS Program

Saint Mary's Hospital is among several hospitals in Connecticut, and a growing number around the country, to implement a "minimal lift program" to promote the safe movement of patients in the healthcare setting. "The Handling of Patients Safely" or HOPS Program has helped to ensure safe patient handling through the use of specialized equipment and procedures.

Pressure Ulcer Initiative

Working together, a dedicated team of clinical nurse managers and nurse educators have significantly reduced the incidence of pressure ulcers among patients at Saint Mary's Hospital to well below the national average. Quarterly studies conducted on the nursing units provide an opportunity for the team to respond to questions from staff who provide hands-on care, and evaluate the use of interventions such as special beds and air mattresses. New nurses are educated at orientation and education continues with required competency training for all nursing staff.

Annual Patient Safety Fair

More than 240 staff participated in Saint Mary's 2011 Patient Safety Fair, which highlighted Saint Mary's commitment to the National Patient Safety Goals. This annual event provides an opportunity for all staff to focus on our corporate patient safety goals.