

PRESS CONTACTS:

Patricia McTiernan
pmctiernan@ihi.org | 617 391-9922

Joanna Clark
joanna@CXOCommunications.com | 207 712-1404

2018 PATIENT SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK, MARCH 11-17, FOCUSES ON PATIENT ENGAGEMENT AND SAFETY CULTURE

National experts to address the topic of speaking up for patient safety

Boston, MA, February 1, 2018 — The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) today announced plans for this year's [Patient Safety Awareness Week](#), March 11-17, 2018. This year's activities will focus on two critical issues – safety culture and patient engagement. This is the first Patient Safety Awareness Week since the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF), lead sponsor of the event for 15 years, merged with IHI in 2017. The events planned promise to reflect the combined energy and commitment to safety and improvement of both organizations.

Despite progress in patient safety over the years, studies suggest that medical error and preventable harm remain major sources of injury and death among patients. A [recent national survey](#) conducted by the IHI/NPSF Lucian Leape Institute and NORC at the University of Chicago found that 1 in 5 people reportedly experienced a medical error in their own care, and one-third reported an error in the care of a close relative or friend. Of those who experienced errors, 73 percent said the error had a long-term or permanent impact on the patient's physical health, emotional health, financial well-being, or family relationships.

Nearly half of those who say they experienced a medical error spoke up about it to a medical professional or someone else on the staff of the facility where they received care. Of those who did not speak up, most said they did not think it would do any good or they did not know how to report the error.

“Making sure patients and families feel that it's okay to speak up and ask questions is really a critical element in patient safety,” said **Tejal K. Gandhi, MD, MPH, CPPS**, Chief Clinical and Safety Officer, IHI. “Even health professionals sometimes fear speaking up, and that's directly tied to the culture of the organization in which they work. In order to improve, health care organizations need to see flaws or gaps in safety, encourage people to report problems when they see them, and take action to correct them.”

These themes will be among those addressed during the week and everyone is encouraged to mark your calendars for two highlighted events:

On **Monday, March 12**, from 1:00 to 2:00 PM Eastern Time, IHI is hosting a [complimentary webcast](#), *Engaging Patients and Providers: Speaking Up for Patient Safety*. Dr. Gandhi will moderate a panel featuring nationally known experts:

- **Jeff Brady, MD, MPH**, Director, Center for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety, US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- **Tiffany Christensen**, Vice President of Experience Innovation, Beryl Institute
- **Gerald Hickson, MD**, Senior Vice President, Quality, Safety & Risk Prevention, Joseph C. Ross Chair in Medical Education and Administration, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

The speakers will discuss the importance of speaking up from the perspective of clinicians, staff, and patients and families. The program is offered free of charge, but [registration is required](#).

On **Friday, March 16**, from 12 Noon to 1:00 pm Eastern Time, IHI (@TheIHI) will host a [Twitter Chat: Building a Safety Culture](#). Governmental, advocacy, and professional organizations and individuals will share questions, challenges, and strategies to advance a safety culture in health care. All are invited to participate by using the event hashtag **#PSAW18**.

Throughout the week, IHI is encouraging those taking part in the event to share their activities on social media and on the event website, www.unitedforpatientsafety.org, where they can take a pledge for patient safety, get ideas for engaging staff and patients, download free resources, order branded materials, or honor a loved one touched by medical harm.

IHI is pleased to recognize [Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals](#) for their generous support of Patient Safety Awareness Week 2018 and their ongoing commitment to patient and workforce safety.

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About Us

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) began working together as one organization in May 2017. The newly formed entity is committed to using its combined knowledge and resources to focus and energize the patient safety agenda in order to build systems of safety across the continuum of care. To learn more about our trainings, resources, and practical applications, visit ihi.org/PatientSafety.