



20th Anniversary of *To Err Is Human*

WHA Calendar	
Joint Labor & Health Committee Cheyenne	11/6-11/7
HFMA Fall Meeting Douglas	11/14-11/15
Thanksgiving	11/28

In November 1999, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), which is now the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), released its landmark report, *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System*.

The report, which estimated that as many as 98,000 people died each year in U.S. hospitals because of preventable medical harm, captured the attention of the public, policymakers and the media and was a call to action for hospitals, health systems and other providers of care.

In anticipation of the 20th anniversary of the report’s release, media outlets will be revisiting the report and commenting on the progress the field has made on the important issues of quality and patient safety. With this renewed interest, it is critical that your hospital or health system be prepared to respond to questions from the public and the media about what has been done to improve patient safety over the past two decades.

The anniversary is also an opportunity for you to proactively share through your various communications channels and methods, and with the AHA, the many strides your organization has taken to improve safety and the quality of care for patients.

Today – 20 years after the Institute of Medicine’s landmark report, *To Err Is Human*, was released – hospitals and

health systems are more dedicated than ever to patient safety and delivering the highest quality of care.

- While even one incident of preventable harm is one too many, hospitals and health systems continuously seek to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of their patients, which means avoiding medical errors and reliably delivering the most appropriate, highest quality care.
- Hospitals and health systems have also helped lead the way in developing transparent reporting of quality and patient safety data and helped create Hospital Compare, a website where consumers can find information about hospital quality. Physicians, nurses and other clinicians also use the data to improve care for patients.

To Err is Human was an important call to action to which the hospital field readily responded.

- Hospitals and health systems have taken numerous steps to develop a culture of safety within their organization and have increased their efforts to communicate effectively with clinicians, patients and their families, and the communities they serve.
- Hospitals have also adopted a variety of technologies

and practices that support safer care, including:

- electronic health records and prescription order systems with embedded systems to alert clinicians to potential dangers;
- barcoding systems that ensure the medication being given is the one that was ordered; and
- bedrails and monitors to alert the nursing staff, who can prevent falls, and a variety of other improvements in care.

Federal data show that hospitals have made care safer by:

- Reducing hospital-acquired by 13% from 2014-2017. This trend is consistent with previous data showing a 17% decline from 2010 through 2014.
- Significantly reducing healthcare-associated infections, including:
- Making a 77% reduction in the occurrence of medically unnecessary early elective deliveries between 2012 and 2016.
- Having more than 70,000 fewer avoidable readmissions between 2010 and 2015.

Between 2014 and 2018, hospitals directly engaged in the AHA Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN) program saved \$1.2 billion in healthcare costs, prevented 141,000 harms and saved 14,000 lives.

2019 PAC Contributions

Barry Burkart
 Bren Lowe
 Margie Molitor
 Doug Faus
 Andy Fitzgerald
 Maureen Cadwell
 Dr. Carol Solie
 Tim Thornell
 Eric Boley



Member Spotlight

NBHH Offers Only 3D Mammograms in Area

With brand new state-of-the-art equipment now in place, highly accurate 3D mammograms are now available to patients at North Big Horn Hospital in Lovell. North Big Horn Hospital is the only hospital in Big Horn and Park counties that currently offers 3D mammograms.

The newly purchased equipment provides earlier breast cancer detection than conventional mammography technology and reduces the need for unnecessary callbacks for repeat exams by up to 40 percent. On average, the equipment detects 2065 percent more

invasive cancers than 2D mammography technology.

"The big advantage is that there are more images for our radiologist Dr. Merrill to review, so if he sees a mass he can see before the mass, all through the mass and after. So, there's a lot of detail there," explained radiology manager Julaine Askvig. The exam is performed in a similar manner to 2D technology, but images generated by the new equipment show more detail.

"I feel very fortunate that we are able to provide this service to our patients," said Askvig. "I really am thankful for our administration and our board for approving this for us. I've dreamed of having this technology at our hospital for about four or five years. Anything that allows women in our area to get this kind of service close to home and not have to travel to Billings is important."



Banner Health Unveils New Virtual Assistant

Banner Health Community Hospital in Torrington has launched a new virtual chatbot tool that interacts with patients on their cell phones.

"Not knowing when—or sometimes if—a physician will come back to your patient room is so frustrating, said Banner Western Region President Margo Karsten in a statement.

"This tool will help patients find peace of mind."

An example: A patient waits an hour until she sees a provider who orders blood work. Back in the waiting room the chatbot tells her the provider needs 30-45 minutes to review the results and notes the expected time she will see the doctor. Upon request, the chatbot provides the URL and phone number where she can manager her medical information.

As she waits, the messages reassure her hospital staff are working

on her results. A tracker notifies her when the results are not yet started, 25 percent done, and 50 percent done. With the analysis completed, the chatbot again tells she must wait for the provider. After seeing a doctor, the chatbot reminds of discharge notes and asks to take a survey.

LifeLink is the Oakland, CA based company that designed the chatbot. Other chatbots can help patients find a doctor, schedule appoints, or access treatments

Volunteer Health Services Program Applications Sought

Providers and facilities interested in offering volunteer healthcare services to low-income patients are invited to take advantage of a special legal liability option offered by the Wyoming Volunteer Health Services Program.

The program allows licensed healthcare providers and medical facilities to provide volunteer services for low-income Wyoming residents while being protected from liability for medical negligence under the state's sovereign immunity.

By entering into a contract with the state, volunteer providers are deemed public employees and facilities are deemed state medical facilities for purposes of what's known as the Wyoming Governmental Claims Act. Any malpractice claim arising from uncompensated services rendered to eligible patients would be defended and paid by the state under the Governmental Claims Act.

Any healthcare provider, including physicians, dentists, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, op-

tometrists, psychiatrists and psychologists, who is licensed or certified by Wyoming law is eligible to enter into a contract under the program. Eligible facilities include hospitals, clinics, medical offices and nursing homes.

More information and important forms can be found on the Wyoming Department of Health website at <https://health.wyo.gov/admin/wyomings-volunteer-health-services-program/>.