



## Safe & Sound in Arizona: Building a Safer Healthcare Delivery System

### Overview

Healthcare professionals have always worked to improve patient safety, going back to that time-honored tenet of medicine: “First, do no harm.” But despite their best efforts, healthcare providers are human and make mistakes. From 2002-04, communication misunderstandings and other errors accounted for 1.24 million total patient safety incidents among the 40 million hospitalizations covered under the Medicare program.<sup>1</sup> However, when it comes to patient care, one error is one too many. AzHHA’s Board of Directors—representing Arizona’s hospital community—elevated patient safety to a statewide priority by establishing the Patient Safety Steering Committee in 2005. This committee founded AzHHA’s *Safe & Sound*, which brings together a cross section of Arizona hospital leaders to identify and share patient safety practices, that are then implemented by individual hospitals. The ultimate goal of *Safe & Sound* is to make Arizona the safest state in the country to receive healthcare.

*Safe & Sound* emphasizes collaborative programs and helps implement the *5 Million Lives Campaign*, the follow-up initiative to the successful *100,000 Lives Campaign* launched by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in 2004. Through these and other broad-based efforts, Arizona hospitals are proactively addressing patient safety.

### Putting Safety into Action

Through *Safe & Sound*, Arizona hospital executives, patient safety officers and quality improvement directors articulate statewide safety standards

and develop practical tools that allow hospitals to quickly implement those standards. Through *Safe & Sound*, Arizona hospitals:

- introduced *The Med Form* ([www.themedform.com](http://www.themedform.com)) to reduce medication errors by providing consumers a single form on which to track their prescription, non-prescription and herbal medications as well as to record allergies and immunizations;
- were the first in the nation to implement a statewide initiative to standardize color-coded wristbands that alert hospital clinicians of specific patient care directives (i.e., allergies, do not resuscitate, fall risk);
- identified SBAR (Situation/Background/Assessment/Recommendation) communications tactics as a statewide initiative for healthcare teams; and
- promote patient participation in safety.

### The Colors Purple, Yellow & Red

Arizona is the first in the nation to implement statewide standards for the colors of patient wristbands through its *Safe & Sound* initiative<sup>2</sup>. Pictured is one example of wristbands Arizona hospitals have selected for their facilities. Scheduled for statewide rollout throughout 2007,



the color code and its key are:

- Red: Allergy
- Purple: Do Not Resuscitate
- Yellow: Fall Risk



## One Campaign, 5 Million Lives

The *5 Million Lives Campaign* aims to prevent 5 million incidents of medical harm nationwide over a 24-month period ending in December 2008. The campaign includes a total of six interventions to prevent harm that hospitals nationwide and in Arizona are embracing along with the six that were adopted by hospitals participating in the IHI's previous campaign, *100,000 Lives*. The new strategies focus on:

- preventing infections due to methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (also known as MRSA, a type of “staph” bacteria that are resistant to many antibiotics);
- reducing harm from high-alert medications (medications that have the highest risk of causing injury when misused);
- adopting Surgical Care Improvement Project interventions;
- preventing pressure ulcers;
- improving care for congestive heart failure; and
- involving hospital boards of directors in patient safety.



The IHI has recognized Arizona's leadership on medication safety by honoring *The Med Form* with a best practice designation. *The Med Form* is available in English and Spanish to all consumers via Arizona hospitals, physician's offices and at [www.themedform.com](http://www.themedform.com).

## Safe to Say, Efforts are Having an Impact

Recognizing that patient safety must be embraced across the entire healthcare delivery spectrum, hospitals are collaborating with the healthcare community to share best practices. In addition, hospitals are working to empower patients to help improve their care. Since 2005, Arizona hospitals have addressed patient safety via a series of significant voluntary efforts that:

- prevent infections (central line, surgical site and ventilator-associated pneumonia);
- enhance medication safety; and
- improve response times to patients in distress through Rapid Response Teams (RRTs).

## Caring Collaboratively to Address Patient Safety

Patient safety through collaboration is the driving force behind *Safe & Sound*. The graphic below demonstrates how Arizona providers working together are collaborating across the continuum of care.



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- 1 HealthGrades Inc.
  - 2 Institute for Healthcare Improvement,  
*AzHHA Safe & Sound*
  - 3 IHI Web site
  - 4 IHI
  - 5,6 AHRQ, State Snapshots

## Safety in Numbers: Data Tells the Story

- Hospitals statewide are committed to the IHI’s *100k Lives Campaign*, which outlines six specific strategies to enhance patient safety. Thus far, an estimated 122,300 lives have been saved by U.S. hospitals participating in the campaign.<sup>4</sup>
- Arizona hospitals performed better than most other U.S. states in a recent study that examined the prevalence of patient safety incidents nationwide between 2002-04, based on 13 patient safety indicators developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).<sup>5</sup>
- According to AHRQ, healthcare quality in Arizona is well above average when compared with the U.S. as a whole. Arizona received high marks in the areas of treating cancer and minimizing cancer deaths, as well as home healthcare and nursing home care.<sup>6</sup>