How Medication Reconciliation Saves Lives

Medication errors are one of the leading causes of injury to hospitalized patients in the United States. According to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), poorly communicated medical information at admission and other health care transition points are responsible for as many as 50% of all medication errors in hospitals. To prevent errors or adverse drug events stemming from oversights, duplication and other discrepancies in a patient’s medication record, the IHI has made medication reconciliation a key strategy in its 100,000 Lives Campaign. The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations has made medication reconciliation a 2006 national patient safety goal.

Medication Reconciliation is an interdisciplinary process between Nursing, Physicians, and Pharmacy which compares the patient’s most current list of home medications, including over-the-counter and herbals, against the physician’s admission, transfer, or discharge orders. Discrepancies are brought to the attention of the physician, and if appropriate, changes are made to the orders, thereby decreasing potential Adverse Drug Events. Reconciliation should occur within 24 hours of admission.

Medication Reconciliation is an Interdisciplinary Process

Medication reconciliation is a collaborative effort. The nurse collects an accurate and complete list of the patient’s home medications, including drug name, dose, route, frequency, last dose and the source of information. This should be done upon the patient’s entry to the hospital. After completion of the form, the nurse sends the pink copy to pharmacy to alert them of the need for reconciliation. The admitting physician carefully reviews the information gathered by the nurse and must make decisions about what medications should be continued, changed, or discontinued. The physician indicates his/her intentions by placing a check mark next to each medication in the “Physician Review of Medication” column. The physician may then choose to use the form as a “Physician Order Sheet” or use it as a “Reconciliation Tool” by signing in the appropriate box at the bottom of the page. If the physician chooses to use the tool as an order sheet, all medications checked in the “Medication Changed” box must be rewritten on a supplemental physician order sheet. If the physician chooses to use it as a reconciliation tool only, then all appropriate orders must be re-written on a supplemental physician order sheet. The yellow copy of the form is then sent to pharmacy, which verifies each patient’s admission medication orders against the reconciliation form. If there are any discrepancies, the pharmacist clarifies them with the physician.

* Instructions are provided on the back of the form. Should you need further assistance in completing the form, please contact nursing or pharmacy.

Performance on Medication Reconciliation

Data regarding our performance and compliance with medication reconciliation has been collected throughout the past several months. Areas that have been audited include:

- Was the form present in the chart?
- Was the form initiated at point of entry to the hospital?
- Did the physician sign the form?
- Were the pink and yellow copies pulled and received by pharmacy?
- Did the pharmacy sign the form after reviewing it?
Newly Expanded Emergency Department...Open for Business

The ED has been expanded with 6 new rooms, allowing us to streamline the process for different types of emergencies, enabling the ED physicians to continue treat more acute emergencies and trauma cases swiftly, while at the same time reducing wait times for less acute emergencies such as minor sutures, simple fractures and other non-life threatening emergencies.

Upon arrival, patients will be triaged by a registered nurse for severity of the emergency and assigned an appropriate care provider. During our peak hours, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., additional staffing, including a physician assistant, registered nurses and licensed nursing assistants will perform initial assessments. The expansion also allows ED staff to do bedside registration.

With the new expansion, the ED parking lot has become a prime parking area. To best accommodate our patients, we are requesting this area be reserved for patient parking only.

If you have any questions regarding the ED expansion, please contact Dr. James Martin, MD, FACEP EMS/ED Medical Director at 595-3061 or Donna Infante, BS, RN Director of Emergency Department @ ext 66101.

The thought of discussing autopsy with a newly grieving family can make even the most seasoned practitioner cringe. Would an autopsy help clarify the cause of death? Will there be a cost to the family? What do I do if the family becomes angry or tearful?

Help is on the way! Social Work support is now available for providers during the autopsy request process. During normal business hours (M-F 8-4:30) a Social Worker can be reached by contacting the Quality and Resource Management office at extension 63850. At your request after hours and on weekends, the House Supervisor will contact an on-call Social Worker who will come to the hospital to provide support for both physician and families during the autopsy discussion. To further assist you, here are the answers to some frequently asked questions:

Q: Will there be a cost to the family?
A: At the request of the primary physician, the autopsy exam is performed free of charge on deceased in-house patients.

Q: Who must give permission for a non-medical/legal autopsy?
A: Permission for a non-medical/legal autopsy MUST BE OBTAINED FROM (Legally according to order listed below):
- Surviving spouse OR if not applicable,
- Both parents, if a minor unless divorced and one parent has full custody of the child.
- ALL of a group of next of kin, e.g.
  - ALL SURVIVING SONS AND DAUGHTERS
  - ALL SURVIVING PARENTS (non-minors)
  - ALL SURVIVING BROTHERS AND SISTERS
  - ALL SURVIVING UNCLEs AND AUNTS (blood relatives)
  - NEAREST SURVIVING BLOOD RELATIVES
- Note: If ANYONE of a group refuses to give permission, the autopsy cannot be performed and the physician must be notified.

Q: Where can I find more information regarding the Autopsy Request Procedure?
A: You can access the entire Autopsy Request/Procedure (ND-IV.D.3) on the Hospital Intranet by following the quick launch links on the left side of the Intranet homepage to SJH Policies: Nursing Policies: Patient Care (ND-IV.)
CARDIAC REHABILITATION HAS EXPANDED ITS SERVICES to include Outpatient Pulmonary Rehabilitation; a medically prescribed comprehensive multidisciplinary program of care for patients with chronic respiratory impairment. An exercise prescription is designed and tailored to optimize physical and social performance and autonomy. Educational classes and nutritional counseling provided. Please refer all questions to Jodi Boutwell, RN at (603) 595-3967.

Initial results indicate a high level of compliance that is improving over time. We will continue to monitor performance on an ongoing basis and provide feedback based on individual clinician performance.

Submitted by:  Candice Langenfeld, RN, QRM

DOCS DRIVEN TO THEIR GAME

When they’re not saving lives, doctors love to play golf. It was no exception this year at the 20th anniversary of the St. Joseph Hospital Annual Charity Golf Tournament, and many of St. Joe’s physicians enthusiastically enjoyed the links hoping to score that Hole-In-One.

It’s not just the game that drives our physicians, whether they play or they contribute as a sponsor, it is also their willingness to personally invest in the future of St. Joseph Hospital. As always, proceeds from the St. Joseph Hospital Annual Charity Golf Tournament will be used to acquire new medical equipment for the hospital.

Pictured in Foresome include: Mark Dubay, MD; Bob Demers; Mary Voltz, MD; and Jeff Nathan, MD
Naim Aoun, MD joins Pulmonary Associates

St. Joseph Hospital is pleased to welcome Dr. Naim Aoun. Dr. Aoun is board-certified in Pulmonary Medicine and received his medical degree from St. Joseph University Medical School in Beirut, Lebanon. For the past four years, Dr. Aoun has been completing a Fellowship program in Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Boston, a teaching hospital affiliated with Tufts Medical School. In 2002, he completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of Massachusetts Internal Medicine program at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester, MA.

Dr. Aoun is fluent in three languages (English, French, and Arabic). He is a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society; the American College of Chest Physicians, the Society of Critical Care Medicine, and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Dr. Aoun has published several papers in peer-reviewed journals and received awards for oral presentations at national and international meetings.

Dr. Aoun is accepting new patients. To refer a patient, call Pulmonary Associates at St. Joseph Hospital at (603) 889-4131.

Peter Lockard Row, MD, joins Emergency Department at St. Joseph Hospital

Dr. Row received his medical degree from Saint Louis University School of Medicine in St. Louis Missouri and completed his Residency in Emergency Medicine at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Row is a Diplomat of the American Board of Emergency Medicine and a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Dr. Row has received numerous awards including the Air Force Achievement Medal and National Defense Medal for service to the 1st Medical Group during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Dr. Row received the highest award of the Boy Scouts of America, Eagle Scout with two Silver Palms.

Prior to joining St. Joseph Hospital, Dr. Row served as Medical Director for Delaware County Emergency Medical Services in New York and was also an Attending Physician at A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital, Department of Emergency Medicine in Oneonta, New York. For more information regarding services at the newly expanded Emergency Department at St. Joseph Hospital, please call (603) 882.3000, ext. 66100.

Elizabeth J. Spatola, MD, joins The Cardiovascular Center at St. Joseph Hospital

The Cardiovascular Center is pleased to welcome Elizabeth Spatola to its medical staff. Dr. Spatola is a board certified Endocrinologist who will be working with new and existing adult diabetes patients.

Dr. Spatola received her medical degree from State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, in Buffalo, NY, and completed her undergraduate studies at Wesleyan University in Middleton, CT. She completed her Residency, SUNY, Stony Brook, Department of Internal Medicine in Stony Brook, NY and Fellowship, SUNY, Stony Brook, Division of Endocrinology/Metabolism, Department of Medicine in Stony Brook, NY. Currently, Dr. Spatola, is a Clinical Instructor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA.

Dr. Spatola is a member of the American College of Physicians - Associate; Endocrine Society, and American Diabetes Association. She is a published author and has received numerous awards for her cutting edge research in endocrinology science and medicine with regards to Insulin Growth Factor (IGF).

Prior to joining St. Joseph Hospital, Dr. Spatola was Medical Director for the Joslin Diabetes Program at Nashoba Valley Medical Center in Ayer, MA.

Douglas Tisdale, MD joins The Oncology Center

The Oncology Center at St. Joseph Hospital welcomes Douglas Tisdale, MD, to the medical staff. Dr. Tisdale is board-certified in Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology.

Dr. Tisdale received his medical degree from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, and completed his Internship and Residency at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Boston, MA, and his Hematology-Oncology Fellowship at Boston University Medical Center in Boston, MA.

Dr. Tisdale is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society Hematology and the American Medical Association. He is a national speaker and published author in the field of Clinical Trials and T-Cell Lymphoma.

Prior to joining St. Joseph Hospital, Dr. Tisdale served as a staff Oncologist-Hematologist with Commonwealth Hematology-Oncology, P.C., located at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, MA.