

Patient safety from the patient perspective

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Patient safety traditionally has been focused on improving patient safety by focusing on the actions of health care professionals rather than through the empowerment or education of patients. In July 2005, a new organization was formed, choosing as its name “Safe Care Wisconsin: Partners for Advancing Health Care Safety.” The purpose of the group is to help health care consumers to be safer as they engage with health care professionals.

Safe Care Wisconsin is the successor organization to the Wisconsin Patient Safety Institute (WPSI), which was founded in 2001 by a coalition of health care professionals, business, and consumer organizations and individuals committed to enhancing, promoting, and improving patient safety through education, research, and collaboration. In 2005, WPSI voted to end its operations and to transition ongoing functions to a new organization that would be administratively supported by MetaStar. The organizations that came together to form Safe Care Wisconsin felt that most of the original mission of WPSI was being carried out through other collaborations in the state. However, there seemed to be

1 remaining gap in patient safety, and that was the absence of activities focused specifically on what consumers could do to keep themselves safe.

Many partners have come together to promote patient safety through Safe Care Wisconsin (see box). After establishing the mission of this new group, the partners began working on ideas for projects. The first large project being undertaken by the group is called “List It, Don’t Risk It.” This initiative seeks to enlist people in the maintenance of an accurate list of their medications. The project, through public education and messages, emphasizes the importance of keeping such a list, carrying the list in a wallet or purse, and making sure loved ones are aware of the list. The campaign will point out that in an emergency, such a list could save lives if people are unable to tell medical personnel the medications they are taking. It also will make them aware that the list should be brought to appointments with their physician in order to avoid medication errors.

The “List It, Don’t Risk It” project will officially launch in early 2008 with a news conference and statewide media messages. Hospitals, pharmacies, and physician offices will be asked to help promote the campaign and to provide forms on which patients can list their medications. A medicine list form is currently available on the Safe Care Wisconsin Web site (<http://www.safecarewisconsin.org>), but consumers will be encour-

Safe Care Wisconsin Member Organizations

- Aurora Health Care
- Center for Quality and Productivity Improvement
- Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin
- Confident Conversations, LLC
- Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health
- Madison Patient Safety Collaborative
- MetaStar, Inc
- Ministry Health Care
- National Patient Safety Foundation
- Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital – ProHealth Care, Inc
- Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin
- Visonex
- WEA Trust
- Wisconsin Academy of Trial Lawyers
- Wisconsin Hospital Association
- Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
- Wisconsin Medical Society

aged to use any form they may pick up at their pharmacy or their physician’s office. The campaign does not wish to standardize a medication list across the state, but is simply focusing on persuading consumers of the importance of having a medication list and taking the step of making their list.

Safe Care Wisconsin is now beginning to consider options for its next project. Topping the list of ideas under consideration is an effort to help consumers reduce the threat of infections due to *methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

For more information about the “List It, Don’t Risk It” project and about Safe Care Wisconsin, visit the Web site at <http://www.safecarewisconsin.org> or contact one of the member organizations.

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