

EMMC's Commitment to Safety

EMMC strives to be the safest hospital in Maine. Our entire staff of caregivers, support staff, physicians, and other providers commit to this goal each and every day.

Below you will find specific examples of what EMMC is doing to ensure that each of our patients receive the safe, high quality healthcare that they deserve.

Examples of EMMC's Patient Safety Initiatives:

- **Empowering patients through Communication** – Communication is the key to quality care. EMMC encourages patients and families to be active participants in their care by talking to their healthcare providers and asking questions. EMMC's patient safety website (www.emmc.org/patientsafety) provides helpful communication tips for patients and families.
- **Commitment to Technology** – EMMC continually invests in technology to improve patient safety. Our computer systems are designed so that care providers across the hospital have access to the information they need to provide the highest quality care. In the fall of 2007, EMMC will be launching a Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) process that will even further enhance our capabilities for ensuring patient safety through technology. CPOE uses a system of advanced checks-and-balances to eliminate many of the healthcare errors that could potentially occur from hand-written orders, miscommunications, contraindicated medications, etc.
- **Culture of Safety** – EMMC promotes a culture of safety where the safety of our patients and our employees is our first priority. An organization with a strong culture of patient safety is one in which all employees feel empowered to speak up and take action to prevent medical errors and to help others prevent medical errors. In March of 2007, EMMC participated in the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research's Culture of Safety survey. More than 1,000 employees participated in the survey, answering a series of questions about patient safety in their departments. Seventy-nine percent of employees gave patient safety at EMMC an overall grade of "Excellent" or "Very Good," which exceeds the national average for this question by sixteen percentage points.
- **Medication Safety and Reconciliation** – All EMMC employees and pharmacists are committed to ensuring patients receive the correct medication at the correct time. In the fall of 2007, EMMC will be launching a public awareness campaign with St. Joseph Healthcare and Penobscot Community Healthcare to educate our community about the importance of medication safety. The program will encourage all patients to keep an accurate and updated list of their medications and to share their list with all their healthcare providers whenever they receive healthcare services.

- **Hand Washing** – Good hand hygiene is an essential element in safe patient care. Caregivers are required to wash their hands either with soap and water or alcohol based cleaner before and after every patient interaction. EMMC regularly monitors employee hand hygiene and has encouraged patients to question their caregivers about their hand hygiene through the “Partners in Your Care” program.
- **Annual Patient Safety Fair for Employees** – Each March, EMMC holds a mandatory patient safety fair for employees. At the fair, employees learn the importance of patient safety initiatives in eight key areas: Patient Identification, Communication, Safe Use of Medications, Risk Management, Safe Use of IV Pumps, Fall Prevention, and Infection Control.
- **Rapid Response Teams** – In 2005, EMMC developed a Rapid Response Team. This team of highly skilled nurses and physicians bring critical care expertise to patients who need it no matter where they are in the hospital. Nurses, physicians, and even family members can call on the Rapid Response Team if they notice a patient who needs immediate, critical attention.
- **Commitment to national Patient Safety Initiatives** – EMMC is committed to supporting national patient safety initiatives such as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s (IHI) 5 Million Lives Campaign which is a national campaign to dramatically reduce incidents of medical harm in U.S. hospitals. The 5 Million Lives Campaign challenges hospitals to improve the care they provide in order to protect patients from five million incidents of medical harm over a 24-month period, ending December 9, 2008. EMMC also supports other national patient safety and quality initiatives such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Core Indicators, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations’ (JCAHO) National Patient Safety Goals, and the Leapfrog Group’s Hospital Performance Measurement Initiative, including the National Quality Forum’s (NQF) 30 Safe Practices.
- **Flu Shots for Employees** – In 2007, EMMC will require all employees to get a yearly flu shot or sign a declination form. This is based on recommendations from The Center for Disease Control and The State of Maine. In 2006, EMMC embarked on a campaign to significantly increase voluntary flu vaccination rates among employees. Compliance rates for vaccination went from 38% in 2005 to 71% in 2006 (86% of employees in 2006 either got a flu shot or signed a declination). With the new mandatory requirements in 2007, EMMC hopes that 100% of employees will either receive a flu shot or sign a declination form.

The above examples are just a small sample of the ongoing efforts at EMMC to ensure patient safety. All our staff is committed to ensuring that EMMC is the safest hospital in Maine, and the depth of our expertise means we are ready for virtually any healthcare need – anticipated or unanticipated. At EMMC, we provide exceptional care – for our patients, families, communities, and one another.