

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Ensure safe health care

“At the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, we believe that every patient experience should be safe,” says CEO Chris Power. “Unfortunately, that is not the reality.”

In terms of causes of death, patient safety currently ranks third behind cancer and heart disease. In Canada today, an adverse event occurs every one minute and 18 seconds. Every 13 minutes and 14 seconds, someone will die from preventable harm - 28,000 people per year. Hospital-acquired infections account for roughly 70,000 patient safety incidents annually.

It's no better in the community, where up to 13% of people receiving home care will experience a harmful adverse event like a fall or medication error.

In 2014-15, an estimated 138,000 hospitalizations resulted in harm, with one-fifth of those with more than one occurrence. Over 40% of complex surgical patients suffer harm and those who do are four times more likely to die in hospital. Harm can affect the young and old alike: a recent study revealed that 9.2% of children experience harm while in hospital and an estimated 37% of seniors in nine provinces received a prescription for a drug that should not be taken by this population.

Patient Safety Right Now

“Last year,” says Power, “we unveiled our new strategic plan, *Patient Safety Right Now*, to create real and lasting change in Canada's health care system. This bold new direction calls for inspiring and advancing a culture committed to sustained improvement for safer care. We will ensure safe health care by demonstrating what works and strengthening commitment to patient safety in Canada ... right now!”

To demonstrate what works, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute has launched four learning collaboratives designed by patient safety experts from around the world, to deliver the most up-to-date information and techniques to improve patient safety outcomes. The [Safety Improvement Projects](#) use a knowledge translation approach aligned with pan-Canadian priorities, including: a framework to foster and promote a new approach to measuring and monitoring safety; enhanced recovery outcomes after colorectal surgery; medication safety best practices – especially among the frail or elderly – at transitions of care; and proven teamwork and communication improvements.

An example of strengthening commitment to patient safety in Canada is our support of the *Protecting Canadians from Unsafe Drugs Act*, also known as *Vanessa's Law*. These are regulations for mandatory reporting of serious adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and medical device incidents (MDIs) by health care institutions, effective this December.

Under-reporting and the poor quality of reporting of ADRs and MDIs is an issue in Canada and internationally. It is estimated that only 6% of ADRs are actually reported. *Vanessa's Law* mandates hospitals to report serious ADR and MDI to Health Canada within 30 days of the first documentation of the reaction or incident within the hospital.

Together with the [Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada \(ISMP Canada\)](#) and [Health Standards Organization](#), the [Canadian Patient Safety Institute](#) is working to assist Health Canada with outreach, education, and feedback to encourage serious ADR and MDI reporting. [Educational modules are now available](#) for download to support health care professionals and educators, and raise awareness of mandatory reporting requirements.

World Patient Safety Day

“On September 17, Canada will join countries around the world to recognize the first ever [World Patient Safety Day](#) and promote all aspects of patient safety,” says Power. The theme selected by the World Health Organization for the inaugural World Patient Safety Day is “Speak up for patient safety”. World Patient Safety Day aims to galvanize global action for safer systems, services, procedures and practices in health care to eliminate avoidable harm, and manage and mitigate risks of harm to people in all care settings.

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute is coordinating World Patient Safety Day activities in Canada and invites you to participate in this international event. [Learn how you can get involved](#).

Canadian Patient Safety Week

[Canadian Patient Safety Week \(CPSW\)](#) is a national, annual campaign that started in 2005 to inspire extraordinary improvement in patient safety and quality.

“CPSW is relevant to anyone who engages with our health care system,” says Power. “Whether they’re providers, patients, or anyone, anywhere in Canada. Our health care system is so important to each and every one of us.”

CPSW will be celebrated from October 28 to November 1.

In conjunction with CPSW, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute has created an award-winning patient podcast series, about people trying to change modern medicine from the inside out. It’s a non-fiction medical drama from the perspective of the patient. You can listen to these informative podcasts by going to www.patientpodcastcanada.com

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute has also produced a collection of 26 [patient videos](#) that tell personal stories of heartache, loss, grief and frustration due to unsafe care. Through the series of patient safety narrative videos, patients and families tell their stories with the hope it will improve a system that has failed them in their time of need. These poignant stories are inspirational and a great motivator to improve the quality of health care in Canada.

For more information on these and other initiatives, visit www.patientsafety.ca

References available upon request.

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