

September 13, 2021

Dear Friends of Maryland Patient Safety Center:

Each September, the World Health Organization (WHO) observes World Patient Safety Day, a day focused on enhancing global understanding of patient safety, increasing public engagement in healthcare safety, and promoting global action to prevent and reduce avoidable harm in healthcare. A specific theme is selected each year to shed light on a priority area critical to patient safety.

For World Patient Safety Day on Friday, September 17, 2021, the WHO urges all stakeholders to “**Act now for safe and respectful childbirth!**” with the theme “**Safe maternal and newborn care**”.



**Act now  
for safe & respectful  
childbirth!**



**Approximately 810 women around the world die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.**

**In addition, around 6,700 newborns die every day, amounting to 47% of all under-5 deaths.**

**Moreover, about 2 million babies are stillborn every year.**

Considering the significant burden of risks and harm women and newborns are exposed to due to unsafe care, compounded by the disruption of essential health services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s campaign is as important and timely as ever.

Fortunately, the majority of stillbirths and maternal and newborn deaths are avoidable through the provision of safe and quality care by skilled health professionals working in supportive environments. This can only be achieved through the engagement of all stakeholders and the adoption of comprehensive health systems and community-based approaches.

There are a few simple ways you can help us advance this cause and raise awareness leading up to September 17:

1.) **Share social media content** from the WHO, Maryland Patient Safety Center or other hospitals and health systems observing World Patient Safety Day and the theme of “Safe maternal and newborn care”.

2.) Orange is the official color of patient safety, so **encourage your staff to wear orange on September 17 or install an orange bulb in your entrance way** to show your support.

We at the Maryland Patient Safety Center applaud the WHO for leading this global drive towards improving maternal and newborn care, and our team is extremely excited about a new program we will be launching soon that addresses many of these same challenges here in Maryland.

As the state of Maryland’s official patient safety center as designated by the Maryland Health Care Commission, it is our duty to identify and address emerging healthcare-related challenges impacting Marylanders. It is gratifying for our team to see that our programming and initiatives are matching up with needs that have also been identified by the WHO.

We will soon be launching a new program - **“Maternal Health Equity: A wholistic approach to improving outcomes for Black mothers”**. We convened a Maternal Health Equity Advisory Group comprised of local experts in the fields of maternal health, emergency medicine, and racial bias and healthcare inequities. We are working with this group to draw upon their experience in healthcare and the community to combat the leading causes of maternal morbidity in black mothers throughout Maryland.


In the near future, we will share more details on the tools we are creating to address the substantial disparity in maternal morbidity rate for minorities in our state. The program will help providers and patients recognize and address signs and symptoms of pregnancy complications in a timely and racially equitable manner. We aim to empower the patient voice at all levels of care and aid non-obstetric providers of care in identifying emerging challenges patients face during pregnancy and post-partum that pose a risk to expectant and new mothers. We are eager to share more details on this program of critical importance in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of our mission: keeping Maryland healthcare safe. As always, I welcome your thoughts, questions, ideas and comments.

For more information on the WHO and World Patient Safety Day, [click HERE](#).

For more information on the Maryland Patient Safety Center, visit [www.marylandpatientsafety.org](http://www.marylandpatientsafety.org).

Sincerely,



Blair Eig, MD

Blair M. Eig, M.D., M.B.A., M.A.  
President & CEO