

November 18, 2021

Dear Chief Executive, Patient Safety, and Quality Officers,

As you are keenly aware, healthcare operations were turned upside down by COVID-19. This challenge to our system laid bare some areas of vulnerability and patient safety and quality were certainly not spared. The nationwide staffing shortage-- an unfortunate aftereffect of the pandemic-- is now a major obstacle to maintaining the highest of standards of safety and quality in our industry.

- A recent CDC report indicated healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) increased substantially in 2020 for the first time in many years.
- A series of Press Ganey reports recently identified a marked increase in preventable safety events in 2020, including patient falls, as well as an increase in central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSIs).
- The release of the Fall 2021 Leapfrog Hospital grades showed a general decrease nationwide.

We recognize that the overwhelming stress of COVID-19, the staffing crisis, and a rise in patient safety events are certainly not exclusive to Maryland. However, we are in a unique position as these healthcare-associated infections and other quality metrics will be reviewed by CMMI as Maryland's Total Cost of Care model is evaluated.

Patient safety has made significant advancements over the years and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic may be causing a setback, but it does not need to be a permanent one.

The principles and fundamentals of patient safety that transformed the culture of our healthcare institutions over the past few decades can serve as our guide once more. We need to get back to basics and it starts at the top with healthcare leaders fully embracing and communicating their renewed commitment to quality and safety with their teams.

We know the pandemic is not yet truly behind us and much remains to amend in its wake. But our team at the Maryland Patient Safety Center stands ready to help with resources to address core safety and quality issues such as our educational programs, discussion forums, and numerous collaborative projects.

Additionally, the theme of our highly anticipated Annual Patient Safety Conference scheduled for March 4, 2022 is "I Thought We Fixed That?". In its 18th year, this event will focus on strategies to support healthcare professionals as we take a fresh look at those patient safety issues continuing to occur despite both individual and institutional best efforts. Registration is now open and we look forward to seeing many of at this event as we do each year.

I invite you and your team to reach out to the Maryland Patient Safety Center with any questions or concerns. We are eager to support your patient safety needs and to work alongside your organization as we collectively look toward a post-pandemic Maryland.

Sincerely,



Blair Eig, MD, MBA
President & CEO