

Improving patient safety

The AMA leads physicians' efforts to measurably improve patient safety and quality of care by working to ensure the implementation of the Patient Safety Act. Discover how the AMA is leading this effort and what physicians can do to increase patient safety in their practice.

Expediting patient safety

The AMA encourages physicians to take the lead in providing safe and effective patient care. AMA is committed to:

- Proper implementation of the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 (PSQIA), which establishes a voluntary reporting system designed to enhance the data available to assess and resolve patient safety and health care quality issues.
- Implementing the confidentiality protections and enforcement provisions of the Patient Safety Final Rule.

The Patient Safety Final Rule establishes a framework by which hospitals, physicians and other health care providers may voluntarily report information to Patient Safety Organizations (PSO). Since 2008, the AMA has been making recommendations on the federal framework for physicians, hospitals and other health care professionals and entities to voluntarily report patient safety work product to PSOs on a privileged and confidential basis.

Patient safety organizations

The Patient Safety Final Rule also reiterates that this voluntary program is:

- Not federally funded.
- Implemented and overseen by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for the process of certification and listing of patient safety organizations.
- Enforced by the Office of Civil Rights to ensure compliance with confidentiality requirements and will implement and oversee the process for certification and listing of PSOs.

Procedures for submitting to a patient safety organization

It is important for physicians to know that prior to submitting information to a Patient Safety Organization, they should take the following steps:

- Verify the entity is currently listed on AHRQ's website. If a physician submits information to an entity that is not listed on AHRQ site, the confidentiality and privilege protections of the Patient Safety Act will not apply.
- Do not submit information to a PSO listed before its effective listing date.
- Understand what the PSO does to protect data by asking to review the PSO's security policies.

Patient safety advocacy

Look up AMA's comments, letters and additional advocacy efforts on patient safety organizations in the Federal and State Correspondence Finder, and in the PolicyFinder, a database that lists all of AMA's positions and policies since the Association's inception.

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