Summary of discussion

Attendees discussed three types of patient safety risks, which often go unrecognized and unaddressed, that result from health system expansion or consolidation:

- Lack of institutional communication/attention to the specialized needs of new patient populations
- New infrastructures (i.e., EHRs) are creating significant challenges for physicians—and even with training, a learning curve making formerly routine tasks more time- and attention-intensive and error-prone
- Hospital expansions require that physicians now travel to new practice sites with very little to no systematic orientation to their new setting, leaving them to practice through trial and error and may times with minimal resources

Attendees also shared their personal experiences related to the risks that system expansion has had on their patients and discussed potential strategies to manage those risks, including:

- Communication barriers when navigating routine care processes such as patient handoffs, patient transfers, and patient discharge need to be addressed not only at a unit-level, but also at an institutional-level
- Include scope of practice and physician supervision rules for advanced practice clinicians in onboarding processes
- Identify components within EHR/EMR systems that are not interoperable and engage leadership to institute a system-wide solution
- Engage your medical staff to address the barriers experienced due to cultural differences amongst physicians within the system (e.g., employment status, generational factors, etc.)

Additional resources

- Patient Safety for System Expansion (various resources) Ariadne Labs https://www.ariadnelabs.org/safe-expansion/