



Inspira adopts “high reliability” practices to enhance patient safety

By John DiAngelo, Inspira Health Network President and CEO

When you or your loved ones need health care, you want the best. That is why it is our mission at Inspira Health Network to provide care for all of our patients in a safe environment that is distinguished by clinical excellence and exceptional customer service. Providing health care can be complicated. To achieve our goal, we must ensure that our staff consistently offers reliable care because our patients’ well-being depends on it.

Many experts compare health care to aviation and nuclear energy, where even the smallest mistakes can cause great harm. These industries have developed principles of “high reliability” and many hospitals are now adopting these practices to enhance patient safety. This year, Inspira is recommitting to our priority of a culture of safety, embarking upon a transformation to become a high reliability organization to provide even safer care for every patient we serve.

Of course we all know that people make mistakes. And while reducing mistakes must be part of our patient safety program, the focus of our high reliability transformation is eliminating events of preventable patient harm. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of learning, transparency and improvement in the way we provide care to our patients.

What’s the difference between preventing mistakes and eliminating preventable patient harm? An organization focused on eliminating incidents of patient harm recognizes that no one is perfect, but that the principles and tools of high reliability—when consistently followed and applied— can prevent patient harm, even

if we do make an honest mistake. By applying layers of checks to the way we provide care, our staff can identify mistakes before they affect our patients.

Our transformation to adopt these high reliability principles and tools began in March. With a series of training programs, we began teaching our leaders the science and behaviors needed to lead their teams toward high reliability.

A key to our success will be making habits out of high reliability behaviors. Only when something becomes a habit will it occur every time and in every circumstance. Our goal is to reach 100% adoption of these behaviors, by every member of the Inspira team, so that we can further reduce incidents of patient harm in our hospitals, physician offices and outpatient facilities.

A great example of a high reliability tool that we recently implemented is our daily safety briefings. Leaders, physicians and staff across our network meet every single morning to identify any patient safety concerns or potential safety issues. During the briefings, every participant is asked to be honest and open, and to share any safety concerns, such as high risk patients or safety issues during the last 24 hours, or those that might arise in the next 24 hours.

In the years I’ve been with Inspira, I cannot think of many initiatives that have made such a quick and profound impact on our organization. Our daily safety calls have fundamentally changed the way our leaders think about and react to patient harm, near misses and potentially dangerous situations. They serve as a daily reminder that safety is our number one priority.

I’m proud that our staff has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to achieving zero harm by being candid, caring and cooperative with each issue raised. I am certain that we will continue to see measurable improvements in patient outcomes, satisfaction, and overall health as a result of their hard work.

The next step in our transformation is educating every member of our staff to embrace the behaviors of high reliability. Dozens of our staff have volunteered to participate in a “train the trainer” program. They will become experts and bring the principles of high reliability back to their units and departments to further enhance patient safety across our network.

While the principles and tools of high reliability are fairly straight forward, they have a proven track record of success in many industries. I believe that our commitment to this high reliability transformation will help us to fulfill our mission of improving the health and well-being of everyone we serve by providing our neighbors with the safest possible care.

For more information about our network, please visit InspiraHealthNetwork.org.



www.InspiraHealthNetwork.org