

## **Trillium Health Centre wins national patient safety award**

### ***Mississauga hospital recognized for Safe Patient Hand Off initiative***

Friday June 5, 2009 - Jason Thompson, HIROC Axiom News

<http://www.hiroc.com/AxiomNews/2009/June/June05.html>

In recognition of their Safe Patient Hand Off – Transfer of Accountability initiative, Mississauga's Trillium Health Centre has been awarded the Canadian College of Health Service Executives' (CCHSE) Health Care Safety Award.

"Our project was inspired by all of the outstanding nurses at our Mississauga and West Toronto locations and by their commitment to patient safety," Susan Bisailon, director of neuroscience and complex continuing care at Trillium Health Centre said in a news release.

"In the hospital setting, the care of a patient is typically transferred from one nurse to another during a shift change. Yet, studies show that patients are most vulnerable to sentinel events from miscommunication at hand-off."

Made possible by a grant from BD Canada, the Health Care Safety Award is part of the CCHSE's 2009 National Awards Program. The award recognizes leading healthcare organizations that are committed to improving safety within the healthcare environment through leadership, culture, best practices, innovation and change management expertise.

According to Trillium, when patient care is transferred from one nurse to another ineffectively or incompletely, patient safety can be jeopardized.

Using the hospital's orthopaedic and cardiac surgery units as pilot sites, Trillium set out to implement and evaluate a new process for patient hand offs. For instance, the orthopaedic surgery unit developed a comprehensive standardized template posted at each patient's bedside for nurses to use when giving verbal report.

This standardized template serves as a trigger for communication so that vital information is not forgotten.

"The goal of Trillium's Safe Patient Hand Off – Transfer of Accountability initiative was to provide a structured, interactive, collaborative communication between staff and their patients to involve the patients by sharing timely, accurate information about their care plan, treatment, current condition and any recent or anticipated changes," Cecile Marville-Williams, manager of the cardiac services patient, said in a news release.

"By improving the transfer of accountability process we have seen marked improvements in efficiencies and effectiveness as well as enhanced quality of patient care and increased patient and staff satisfaction."

Feedback from nurses working in the hospital's orthopaedic unit indicates that the new process is making a difference.

For example, nurses report identifying near misses at change of shift, having the opportunity to ask questions, receiving additional information from patients and checking all aspects of each

patient's condition, all in the presence of the outgoing nurse, as significant benefits of the new process.

Trillium Health Centre has stated its commitment to expand the new process across the organization.

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