

# PICture This

Programs and Policies  
Affecting Today's Families



**T**he Institute of Medicine report entitled *To Err is Human* (1999) cited numerous instances of medical errors causing death, disability and suffering to the nation's population. Medical errors are the result of basic flaws in the way health care is organized, the report said, and occur in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and at home. View the whole document online at [www.nap.edu/books/0309068371/html/](http://www.nap.edu/books/0309068371/html/)

The report recommended a 4-part plan to create a safer health care system, with the aim of reducing medical errors by 50% in the next 5 years. The four components are: to create a National Center for Patient Safety; to develop mandatory and voluntary reporting systems for medical errors; to enhance and create active roles for consumers, professionals, and accreditation groups; and lastly, to build a "culture of safety."

### Insuring Patient Safety

In response to the report, many health care initiatives have been undertaken to reduce medical errors, including the two described below.

**Color-coding pediatric equipment** is a new practice in some medical settings. In pediatric care, patients vary from small premature babies to large adolescents. Therefore, various sizes in equipment, tubes and tools come into play. A color-coded system of equipment and medication dosages was developed based on a child's length. A particular length is assigned a specific color. In this color-coded system, providers only need to figure out the color that matches their patient's length and therefore spend more time on caring for the patient. For more information see Luten R, Broselow J., Volume: Issue: Rainbow care: the Broselow-Luten system. Implications for pediatric patient safety. *Ambulatory Outreach* Fall 1999: 14-16

**Computer Physician Order Entry (CPOE)** is a computer program that detects potential prescriptions errors at the time they are being ordered. With specific patient information, laboratory results and prescription history, it catches possible drug interactions, clarifies drug names, and provides up-to-date information on new products in the market. A study at Boston's Brigham and Women's

Hospital demonstrated an 88% reduction in serious medication errors. CPOE is slowly being introduced to hospitals. For more information visit [www.leapfroggroup.org/CPOE%20Reports.htm](http://www.leapfroggroup.org/CPOE%20Reports.htm)

For more information on patient safety and what is being done to provide quality and safe care visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at [www.ahrq.org](http://www.ahrq.org). AHRQ can provide families with information on the quality of child health, consumer guidelines/fact sheets on quality health care, and research activities. This information can help families make informed health care decisions and improve the quality of health care services.

### Family Involvement

Families are their children's first and best advocates! Families play a strong role in ensuring quality and safe health care for their children.

To ensure quality care families can get involved and informed about a child's condition and treatment.

- Having a good relationship with health care providers encourages good communication between the families and providers. Continuously exchanging information and observations helps in diagnosis and treatment. Ask questions about treatment. Share developmental observations or reactions to medications.
- Know the types of medications your child is taking. Ask your child's health care provider and the pharmacist about new medications and changes in dosage.
- Keep track of your child's medical history (see PICture This Fall 2001(6) issue for more information). Sharing this information with new health care providers can help ensure appropriate and quality care.



For more information on preventing medical errors, view the AHRQ fact sheet at [www.ahrq.gov/consumer/20tips.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/20tips.htm). En español vaya a [www.ahrq.gov/consumer/20recom.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/20recom.htm) ■

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With a Partners in Information and Communication (PIC) Cooperative Agreement from the MCH Bureau - DHHS, Family Voices is working to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

*PICture This* is a digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners to offer a flavor of activities going on in the maternal and child health (mch) community. We hope to encourage flourishing partnerships! ■

## Partners...



### Washington Business Group on Health

WBGH ♦ 50 F Street, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20001 ♦ (202) 628-9320 ♦

Fax: (202) 628-9244 ♦ Web site: [www.wbgh.org](http://www.wbgh.org)

#### Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH)

is a national non-profit organization representing the perspectives of large employers and providing practical solutions to their most important health care concerns. WBGH represents 160 members, mostly Fortune 500 and public sector employers.

WBGH addresses areas such as prevention, disease and disability management, health disparities, maternal and child health, mental health, and substance abuse. In addition, WBGH works with other organizations to promote patient safety and identify solutions to escalating health care costs.

*Business, Babies & the Bottom Line* is a WBGH publication highlighting corporate workplace initiatives to improve the health of mothers and children. Work-sponsored activities include prenatal classes, beepers for expectant fathers, child care resources, breastfeeding support in the workplace, etc. To view this report visit [www.wbgh.org/cphs/Maternal\\_and\\_Child/MCH\\_General\\_Resources/BBBL/bbblhtml](http://www.wbgh.org/cphs/Maternal_and_Child/MCH_General_Resources/BBBL/bbblhtml) Other publications in the MCH arena include the series Family Health in Brief, with issues on general maternal and child health issues, and the role of contraception in ensuring healthy pregnancies. For more information on these publications or WBGH activities, visit their web site or email Julianna Gonen Gonen@wbgh.org

#### Family Resource Corner

\* **Child care safety** The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care offers numerous tips on sun safety, hand washing, preventing lead poisoning, asthma, and more. The center provides data on individual states' child care health regulations, and their safety performance standards. Call 1-800-598-KIDS or visit <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/index.htm#TOP> for more information.



\* **Parenting web site** The National Parent Information Network, a project of ERIC (Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse), provides a family-friendly database of resources and articles on health, community, and school, with many articles available in Spanish. Families can also use their forum to ask questions about parenting, child development, child care and education. Visit [www.npin.org](http://www.npin.org).

\* **Talking to children about doctor visits** A trip to the doctor's office can bring about apprehension, fear and worry. Easing the visit to the pediatrician or specialist--for a routine exam, or due to chronic illness or special needs--can happen through talking about it beforehand using positive language that the child understands. KidsHealth, a project of the Nemours Foundation, offers strategies on helping children cope with doctor visits, at [www.kidshealth.org/parent/system/doctor/dr\\_visits.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/system/doctor/dr_visits.html). For the FV healthcare checklist visit [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org)

## What's new in research?



### Family Program Effective in Reducing Adolescent Tobacco Use

1,316 parent-adolescent pairs from various ethnic groups participated in a family-directed intervention program to prevent adolescent initiation of tobacco use. The program involved booklets mailed to homes and phone conversations with a health educator. The study found the family intervention helped prevent some adolescents from initiating tobacco use. See Bauman KE, Foshee VA, Ennet ST, et al. 2001 The influence of a family program on adolescent tobacco and alcohol use. *American Journal of Public Health* 91(4):604-610. ■



## Tidbits for the Month

### Jan 21-27 is Healthy Weight Week

Ever wonder how to read a food label or where to go for a healthy recipe?

Check out [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov). It's a new federal web site that provides easy access to all online federal government information on nutrition. Click on children under lifecycles to uncover web resources on breastfeeding, infant nutrition, nutrition and fitness for older children. To find out how ways to celebrate and promote Healthy Weight Week in your community, visit [www.healthyweightnetwork.com/hwww.htm#Educational](http://www.healthyweightnetwork.com/hwww.htm#Educational).

**Expectant Mothers** January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month. New mothers can call the March of Dimes with pregnancy questions or for materials to help them have a healthy pregnancy. Call (888)MO DIMES or (888) 663-4637 or visit their web site [www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org).

The National Alliance for Hispanic Health provides a National Hispanic Prenatal Helpline. The bilingual helpline answers pregnancy questions, gives referrals to prenatal services and mails out written information in English and Spanish. Call (800) 504-7081. Llamada gratuita dentro de Estados Unidos (800) 504-7081.■

### Highlights for the next PICTURE This...

- Adolescent Health
- February is National Children's Dental Health Month



## Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Kathy Cruz Fernandez at [kcruz@fcsn.org](mailto:kcruz@fcsn.org) or fax at (617) 572-2094 with your tidbits. To subscribe to the newsletter, email or call Kathy at (617) 236-7210 ■