

Medication Safety Self-Assessment

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) recently launched a new medication safety self-assessment to help hospitals, long-term care facilities, and outpatient facilities evaluate their best practices related to high-alert medications. Organizations that participate in this program will have an opportunity to assess how they are meeting requirements for managing high-alert medications from regulatory and accrediting agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and The Joint Commission. The program will also help to identify areas for improvement and help track progress over time.

High-alert medications are drugs that may cause more significant harm to a patient if administered in error. High-alert medication categories include:

- Neuromuscular Blocking Agents
- Concentrated Electrolyte Injection
- Magnesium Sulfate Injection
- Moderate Sedation in Adults and Children, Minimal Sedation in Children
- Insulin, Subcutaneous and Intravenous
- Lipid-Based Medications and Conventional Counterparts
- Methotrexate for Non-Oncologic Use
- Chemotherapy, Oral and Parenteral
- Anticoagulants
- Neuraxial Opioids and/or Local Anesthetics
- Opioids

Organizations that may benefit from this program include hospitals, health systems, long-term care facilities, and some outpatient facilities such as ambulatory surgery centers, emergency/urgent care facilities, oncology clinics, treatment centers, dental surgery centers, endoscopy centers, and diagnostic testing centers. Questions will differ for inpatient and outpatient facilities. An advisory group reviewed all recommendations to ensure that the most critical patient safety practices were included and that these could be implemented in a variety of health care settings. The self-assessment however, is not a minimum standard of practice. Instead, these are innovative, research-based strategies that are not in widespread use today.

The tool may be used independently or organizations may submit their information to ISMP anonymously to receive weighted scores and compare themselves to similar facilities nationally. Scores can be calculated in some instances only if there is full implementation of the item throughout the organization. All information submitted to ISMP is protected, confidential and not shared with any other party, including the federal government.

The assessment is available and can be downloaded from the ISMP website at: www.ismp.org/selfassessments/saham. Demographic information is collected and organizations must complete the first section of the assessment which covers general high-alert medications. Then, they may focus on sections to evaluate their practices associated with specific high-alert medications.

References

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices. (2017). *Nurse Advise-ERR*. Retrieved from Institute for Safe Medication Practices: <http://www.ismp.org/newsletters/nursing/issues/NurseAdviseERR201710.pdf>

Interdisciplinary teams should work together on the assessment, including staff nurses, physicians, pharmacists, information technology (IT) staff, medication/patient safety officers and risk management or quality improvement staff. If your facility is part of a larger health system, each facility should complete the assessment independently. ISMP will provide comparative reports of the safety practices in US facilities based on data submitted. ISMP will also use the findings to plan educational curriculums, tools, and resources to improve safety when using high-alert medications.

References

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices. (2017). *Nurse Advise-ERR*. Retrieved from Institute for Safe Medication Practices: <http://www.ismp.org/newsletters/nursing/issues/NurseAdviseERR201710.pdf>