

ECRI Institute Reveals Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns of 2018

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Each year, ECRI Institute – a nonprofit organization that researches approaches to improving patient care – identifies TOP 10 Patient Safety Concerns. This list identifies key areas to “support health care organizations in their efforts to proactively identify and respond to threats to patient safety.” The 2018 list is as follows (items in **bold** are new to the annual list):

1. Diagnostic errors
2. Opioid safety across the continuum of care
3. Internal care coordination
4. **Workarounds**
5. **Incorporating health IT into patient safety programs**
6. Management of behavioral health needs in acute care settings
7. **All-hazards emergency preparedness**
8. Device cleaning/disinfection/sterilization
9. **Patient engagement and health literacy**
10. **Leadership engagement in patient safety**

According to ECRI’s executive brief, in selecting this year’s list, ECRI Institute relied on both data regarding events and concerns and on expert judgment. Since 2009 when the ECRI Institute Patient Safety Organization (PSO) began, ECRI and its partner PSOs have received more than 2 million event reports. The list does not necessarily represent the issues that occur most frequently or are most severe as the process synthesized data from these varied sources:

- Review of events in the ECRI Institute PSO database
- PSO members’ root-cause analyses and research requests
- Topics reflected in weekly *Healthcare Risk Control Alerts (HRC)*
- Voting by a panel of experts from inside and outside ECRI Institute

This list identifies concerns that might be high priorities for reasons such as new risks, existing concerns that are changing because of new technology or care delivery models, and persistent issues that need focused attention or pose new opportunities for intervention.

Medical offices should be consistently assessing these targeted areas for improvement while also developing strategies to address concerns. For example, diagnostic errors are often related to systems errors such as inappropriate and ineffective usage of electronic health records (selecting the wrong template, workarounds), and failing to track lab, diagnostic imaging, and referrals. Medication safety continues to be a top concern even in offices with advanced technology. Medical offices have the opportunity to make a significant impact in improving communication by incorporating some simple strategies including huddles, updating flow sheets and checklists, utilizing the teach back method for ensuring patient understanding of instructions, and effective use of patient portals for improved communication.

SVMIC encourages you to download ECRI Institute's [executive brief](#) for more detailed information and strategies to mitigate these risks. Please visit svmic.com for additional risk management resources.

Adapted from: *Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns for Healthcare Organizations 2018*. ©ECRI Institute | www.ecri.org.

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