

My name is Sue Sheridan. Patient safety is important to me because my family experienced 2 separate medical errors that resulted in the permanent brain damage of my newborn son and the death of my late husband. I was so let down by the healthcare system that I once trusted implicitly. Through those experiences there were many lessons learned. Among many, I learned that no-one was in charge of patient safety at the leadership level and that patient safety was not a priority at the governance level. I learned the chilling truth - that truth telling was not mandatory and disclosing to patients and families when harm occurred was “optional”. I know of no other industry or professional where honesty was “optional”. I learned that well known evidence-based practices are often not followed or even implemented. I learned that there was no mechanism in place for me to report the harms for learning purposes to help prevent other babies and daddies from suffering the same harm.

Given the above, I write in support of the Patient Safety Structural Measure (#MUC2023-188) on the CMS list of Measures Under Consideration.

The reasons I support this measure is because it states the kinds of patient safety best practices I expect as a patient of all hospitals in the United States. I expect:

- The C-suite and the governing board to be “in charge” and held accountable for reducing harm to patients
- Absolute transparency. I ALWAYS expect to be told the truth about the events that led to harm of our loved ones and that Communication and Resolution Programs are mandatory in all institutions
- Health care systems to invite diverse patients, families, communities, and civil society into their world to help redesign equitable, safe care that aligns with what matters most to them.
- Health care systems to learn from the experiences and outcomes of patients who are harmed and there are reporting and learning systems to which patients and families can report.
- Evidence based practices known to prevent high harms are implemented and enforced.
- Reporting of harm to state, federal and accrediting bodies ....and the public

The harms that occurred to my family were 28 and 22 years respectively, however, I have not seen the robust urgent changes in our healthcare system that we all deserve. It is more than disappointing. For all these reasons I strongly support the Patient Safety Structural Measure. Thank you for this opportunity to make this public comment.

Sue Sheridan  
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