Quality Assurance Committee

Chair: Cynthia Davies, Board

Members: Ron Philip, Board
Michael Pontus, Board
Chris Kelsey, Board
Patti Fletcher, Board
Don Tait, Staff
Sandy Dreger, Staff
Nancy Jütte, Staff
Jessica Giesbrecht, Staff


Don Tait, Director of Human Resources Services, reported to each meeting on Employee and Labour relations, Occupational Health and Safety and Attendance Management.

Jessica Giesbrecht, Director of Quality Management, Patient Safety, and Decision Support, gave the committee a regular update on the accreditation process and reported on Quality Management, Patient Safety Initiatives, Policies and Procedures, Infection Control, the Incident Review process and Risk Management which included Compliments and Complaints.

Nancy Jütte has replaced Barb Kinnon as Vice President of Patient Services and has brought an experienced eye to the committee which is most welcome.

Occupational Health and Safety has been a focus for the committee this year. With the assistance of Worksafe BC a program has been developed to inform and educate staff on the prime importance of good safety practices in the workplace. The program is committed to enhancing worker protection, building a strong safety culture and implementing an appropriate safety management system. The program is being implemented throughout the hospital and will continue to be a focus during the coming months. The Clinical Nurse Leaders are being trained to notice unsafe practices and take the initiative to rectify them.

The hospital security program continues to be effective and with the assistance of the physical plant staff it was augmented with a software upgrade to ensure the integrity of the program.
The annual influenza campaign continues to be a focus. This year showed a slight improvement in staff numbers vaccinated but there was decrease in the number of Residential Care Staff who declined the preventative injection and this is a concern as they care for our most vulnerable patients.

The development of new policies and the revision of existing ones is an on-going process. A new policy this year has been the development of a process whereby patients can access alternative therapies while they are in-patients e.g. acupuncture. The policy forms are designed to protect our patients, staff and hospital.

The success of the new incident review process has made it easier to identify areas of concern in Patient Safety and as a result several patient safety initiatives have been created by our staff. One of the main concerns for the committee has been the number of patient falls which occur and which occasionally result in injury to patient or staff. A multi-disciplinary falls prevention working group has been formed consisting of members from the Views, Rehabilitation Services, Pharmacy and others. They will be reviewing bed alarms, elder friendly call bells, risk assessments environmental issues etc.

Another area of concern revealed by the incident review process has been the number of medication errors. Pharmacy has begun work on several protocols to improve the safety of medication delivery e.g. medication reconciliation records which follow patients on admission and discharge, eliminating dangerous abbreviations in medication prescriptions, the assignment of a specific nurse on each shift to administer medications.

A team has also been formed to do a medication self assessment survey. This team includes a nurse from acute care and from The Views, a doctor, Jessica Giesbrecht and possibly others who have an interest in tracking and preventing medication errors. The survey is thorough and time-consuming to complete but will be of benefit to patient safety.

The hospital has begun a system of hand-washing audits to track this most basic but effective method of infection control and will gradually collect statistics which will help to identify and remediate shortfalls in this area.

A Patient Quality Care Office has been established to deal more formally and effectively with the compliments and complaints which the hospital receives. Posters will be placed in most areas to direct people to the web site and e-mail address. We look forward to the time when we receive more compliments than complaints though at the moment both are very few.
The members of the Quality Assurance Committee need to be well organized, committed and experts in their field in order to achieve the standards that St. Joseph’s has come to expect in the delivery of care in the hospital. We are fortunate to have staff that meet these criteria.

The work of this committee could not be accomplished without the dedication of the staff especially Don Tait and Jessica Giesbrecht whose commitment to detailed and accurate reporting make meetings a productive use of time and energy. Their efforts are sincerely appreciated. Don has devoted many years of his working life to St. Joseph’s Hospital and he will be very much missed when he retires in June. A special vote of thanks goes out to him for his commitment and excellent service to the organization.

A special thanks also to our recording secretary Corrie Marles who makes remarkable good sense of our deliberations and discussions and manages to draw all the members of the committee together in a timely fashion.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Davies
Chair