



**Patient Safety Organizations**  
**California Board of Pharmacy,**  
**Medical Error Reduction and Workforce**  
**Committee**

March 8, 2023

# Alliance for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety

- AQIPS is the nonprofit professional association for PSOs and their healthcare providers. Over half of the PSOs are members of AQIPS.
- AQIPS mission is to lead efforts to improve patient safety and the quality of patient care delivery to implement a confidential safety culture and high reliability for the benefit of patients. AQIPS leads the National Safe-Table program; the PSO Workforce Certification program, education on innovative strategies to improve patient safety and the quality of patient care delivery, PSO Best Practice Collaborative, and developing a high reliability institute (focusing on systems assessment).
- AQIPS and member PSOs develop programs drawing from FAA and Nuclear energy and other high reliability industries (safety culture, safe-tables, creating IT barriers so events can never reoccur – confidential reporting).
- Peggy Binzer, J.D. – Executive Director since 2011, served in the FDA MedWatch program for ten years, served as lead counsel for the Senate HELP Committee spearheading the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005. Served as partner in several prestigious national law firms.
- ECRI and ISMP PSO and Enterprise PSO are members of AQIPS Board. AQIPS Board has 11 members, including Hospital PSOs, specialty PSOs, physicians, safety and engineering experts and a Patient Representative from the World Health Organization (WHO) Patients for Patient Safety group.

# PSOs are the Federal Response to Medication Errors

- In 1999, the IOM published the report “To err is Human”, which found an alarming number of preventable medical errors in hospitals. One of the report’s main conclusions, is that the majority of medical errors do not result from individual recklessness rather most errors are the result of faulty systems. Therefore, mistakes can best be prevented by designing the health care systems at all levels to make it harder to do something wrong. IOM also found that a shame and blame environment causes errors to be hidden for fear of reprisal.
- Federal response to medical errors is the Patient Safety Act, which established PSOs and national peer protections for all providers (including pharmacies/pharmacists) and Patient Safety Work Product (PSWP). The statute is a disclosure statute to allow protected collaborative efforts across the continuum of care for the benefit of patients. Congress recognized that healthcare is a continuum and provided protections to follow a patient’s journey through the healthcare continuum.

# Federally Listed (“Approved”) Pharmacy PSOs

- PSOs are federally certified by an agency of HHS, AHRQ. In a report to Congress, AHRQ found ***“the work of federally listed PSOs and healthcare providers to reduce medical errors and increase patient safety in various clinical settings and specialties is highly valued, successful, and thriving.”*** A study of a sample of Medicare-participating acute-care hospitals conducted by the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2018 concluded that of hospitals that work with a PSO, nearly all (97 percent) find it valuable, and half rated it as very valuable in improving patient safety. Over 99% find the protections to be important.
- PSO are not federally funded and require significant capital and operational costs. PSOs are supported by Pharmacy leadership.

# PSO's Spurred a Revolution in Medication Safety by Community Pharmacy

- Pharmacy PSOs evaluate quality related events using causal and other analysis, systems assessments, peer to peer reviews and peer discussions (safe-tables) to facilitate change, including IT systems process changes, to minimize patient risk and prevent events from reoccurring across the nation.
- PSOs also facilitate change by coaching pharmacists –pharmacists can also share their stories and best practices within the learning system so the same events do not occur over again in different pharmacies across the country – pharmacists are part of the solution.
- PSOs encourage a culture of safety and just culture to empower pharmacists to do the right thing.
- Pharmacy PSOs create a learning system to facilitate change.

# Pharmacy PSO National Learning System

- Safety is not proprietary among pharmacies. Pharmacy PSOs began the AQIPS National Safe-table Program in 2017 to create a national learning system to solve industry-wide problems and share best practices. Evidence of widespread meaningful improvement is manifest.
- As part of the PSO Pharmacy collaboration, PSOs compiled the top four most important issues – suggesting that number counting is not necessary to know the top issues most important to Patient Safety.
- PSOs come together to improve the processes of all sectors of healthcare. For example, Hospital PSOs are conducting a national safe-table on innovative causal analysis techniques requested by the one of the pharmacy PSOs. The learning system includes sharing among different healthcare sectors, to help all sectors improve.



# Unintended Consequence to State Reporting

- Collecting events is just numbers – difficult to make meaningful improvements. Reports are a signal that require investigation of proprietary processes.
- The best prevention is changes in pharmacy IT systems and pharmacist learning system – outside organizations who do not operate the pharmacies and proprietary dispensing systems cannot facilitate meaningful change .
- Mandatory reporting to outside organizations will chill reporting by pharmacists in fear of reprisal. The proposal moves the community back to a shame and blame environment; a step backward in creating a safety culture.
- Small pharmacies may not be able to afford continuing to work with a PSO and meet state reporting requirements – loss of the learning system.
- The resources required of this proposal do not make sense given that pharmacies are already struggling with workforce shortage and poor economy.

# Take Aways

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- Pharmacy PSOs work with pharmacies and the pharmacy industry to facilitate change to improve medication safety, including making changes to IT systems, and creating learning systems for pharmacists.
- The pharmacy PSOs and other Healthcare PSOs share best practices and safety programs to improve the continuum of care. Those with great resources and expertise share with other PSOs who may not.
- Other State Boards of Pharmacy recognize the value of PSOs and have included Pharmacy PSOs in their medication safety programs.





# Questions

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