Quality and Patient Safety Directorate

Quality and Safety Walk-rounds

What is the aim of the Walk-round?
The aims in introducing Quality and Safety Walk-rounds are:

- Demonstrate senior managers’ commitment to quality and safety for patients, staff and the public;
- Increase staff engagement and develop a culture of open communication;
- Identify, acknowledge and share good practice;
- Support a proactive approach to minimising risk, timely reporting and feedback; and
- Strengthen commitment and accountability for quality and safety.

How do they fit in with the quality and safety programme?
Our aim is to minimise harm – that is, we want to ensure that all preventable harm is eliminated and this will need the help of all members of staff and of patients and the public.

Quality and Safety Walk-rounds will assist organisations in demonstrating their commitment to staff engagement, building relationships, trust and patient service quality and safety. They will also assist in working to meet the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare (2012), the Quality Framework for Mental Health Services in Ireland (2007) and preparing for the new governance arrangements within the health system.

Who is involved?
You and a member of the senior management team: CEO/GM/Service Manager, Chief Operating Officer, Head of Finance, Director of Nursing/Midwifery, Lead/Executive Clinical Director, and Head of Human Resources or ICT. A member of the senior management team will visit each area accompanied by a patient representative/advocate or patient liaison officer (where possible) as well as an administrative support to record key issues discussed.

Where does the walk-round take place?
It is useful for the walk-rounds to start with a tour of the unit/team and meeting with patients (where possible). It is better to focus on the walk-round rather than a formal meeting. The walk-round team and the staff can meet and hold the discussions in any area that suits the local team. This may be in the patient areas or in a quiet room within the main clinical area.

What happens at the Walk-round?
A member of the walk-round team will explain and introduce the process including the agreements for confidentiality and patient safety disclosures. Members of the visiting walk-round team will then ask some questions to start a dialogue. All members of staff who participate are encouraged to respond and participate in the discussion.

Issues that can be raised may include:
- Good practice and safety developments;
- Your key patient safety concerns;
- What can we do together to improve?;
- How does your local team operate?;
- Communication – within teams and with patients;
- How can the senior management team help?; and
- Incident reporting & safety culture in the organisation.

At the end of the process, we will agree the actions to be taken forward together to make the area safer for patients.

We ask staff to think of an example of good practice and a patient safety experience that they have addressed and bring this to the meeting to share with us, e.g., patients not getting their medications on time, patients not being reviewed when required, etc.

What will happen to the information we gather?
Senior managers will respond to the local team within an agreed time frame, thanking all individuals for their participation and highlighting the main areas discussed actions agreed.

References


For Information Contact: