

Overview

A preventable adverse event, also referred to as a “never event,” is a medical mistake that results in death, loss of a body part, disability or loss of bodily function. The effect of the mistake must last more than seven days or still be present at the time of discharge from an inpatient health care facility. The National Quality Forum (NQF) lists 28 incidents as preventable adverse events.

[Learn about Ohio hospitals' prevention efforts at www.ohiopatientsafety.org](http://www.ohiopatientsafety.org)

Ohio Prevention Protocol

Surgery/Procedure Verification Protocol

In 2004, Ohio was the first state to implement a statewide surgical verification protocol to ensure the right patient gets the right surgery every time. The protocol uses the Joint Commission's Universal Protocol as the foundation.

Step 1: Pre-operative verification

Step 2: Marking the operative site

Step 3: “Time-out” immediately prior to starting surgery

Preventing Anesthesia Awareness

The Ohio Patient Safety Institute (OPSI) created a template providing hospitals with a policy for preventing, identifying and reducing the risk of anesthesia awareness (alertness during surgery), as well as educating clinical staff on managing an episode. The template also provides a process to help patients cope with anesthesia awareness.

Wristbands

OPSI implemented a statewide standardization of colored wristbands in 2007 for Ohio hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory facilities, home health and hospice.

White/Clear	Patient Identification
Red	Allergy
Yellow	Fall Risk
Green	Blood Product

Preventing Harm from Blood Thinners

In 2008, OPSI and VHA, Inc. worked with 46 Ohio hospitals to create or update their individual safety protocols on blood thinners (anticoagulants) to:

1. appropriately start patients on the drug when they are in the hospital.
2. continue to monitor patients after they have returned home.

Hospital-Acquired Infections

Due to public concern, CMS is considering adding these infections, if hospital-acquired, to its nonpayment list:

***Clostridium difficile* (C. diff)** - A bacterium that causes diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions such as colitis.

methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) - A hospital-acquired staph infection that is highly resistant to certain antibiotics.

Payment Policies

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Beginning Oct. 1, 2008, Medicare will no longer reimburse hospitals for the following 10 adverse events:

Medical Errors	Number of cases/cost per hospital stay in FY 2007
Foreign object retained after surgery	750 / \$63,631
Air embolism	57 / \$71,636
Blood incompatibility	24 / \$50,455
Pressure ulcers	257,412 / \$43,180
Falls and trauma	193,566 / \$33,894
Catheter-associated urinary tract infection	12,185 / \$44,043
Vascular catheter-associated infection	29,536 / \$103,027
Surgical site infection	69 / \$299,237
Blood sugar control	16,060 / \$41,533
Deep vein thrombosis (VTE) / pulmonary embolism (PE)	140,010 / \$50,937

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Third Party Payers

Many insurance companies have also adopted policies to withhold payment for preventable adverse events. Among them are Cigna, Aetna and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. Others may do the same.

[OHA's policy on nonpayment for preventable adverse events is on the Web at www.ohanet.org/finance/billing/adversepolicy.pdf](http://www.ohanet.org/finance/billing/adversepolicy.pdf)

OHA's Policy on Nonpayment

Payment Policy

Ohio does not have a statewide payment plan; however, OHA's policy recommends:

- ⇒ the organization should not request or accept payment for care provided related to the event;
- ⇒ payment policies should not penalize subsequent providers for the care of the patient; and
- ⇒ the organization could request or accept payment for appropriate care not related to the event.

Event Criteria

For an error or event to be considered for nonpayment it must:

- ⇒ be preventable
- ⇒ be within the control of the hospital
- ⇒ be the result of a mistake made in the hospital
- ⇒ result in significant harm
- ⇒ be clearly and precisely defined in advance