

**Drug Safety Initiative
Fallon Clinic
2001 Acclaim Award Honoree**

Recognizing a lack of a true best practice model for identifying and preventing medical errors in the outpatient setting, Fallon Clinic instituted a drug safety initiative that raised awareness of potential medical errors leading to preventable adverse drug events. The program was deliberately designed to shift the focus from blaming individuals for errors to preventing future errors by designing safety into the system.

Goal

To nurture a culture of patient safety across the organization with a special focus on preventing adverse drug events due to medical error

Intervention

Reporting of adverse drug events on-line or via a dedicated adverse drug event hotline; provider education on potential adverse drug events; development of adverse drug event signals which can be automated to intercept the event and/or serve as an early warning system to the provider

Highlights

- Posters with examples of case studies worth reporting were placed in all clinical sites
- Introduced two new paths for reporting adverse events: an adverse event hotline and reporting via the Intranet
- Information system automated to examine drug data, lab information and diagnostic codes to identify unreported adverse drug events. This is used to identify system failures and plan new interventions
- Warfarin identified as the leading cause of preventable adverse drug events in the elderly. The clinic pharmacy has now implemented new policies for the dispensing of drugs with established interactions with warfarin. In some instances the physician must be contacted before drug is dispensed and in others the drug is dispensed but the physician is prompted to increase patient monitoring
- Individual provider information was not provided to the Drug Safety Quality Team
- Patient adverse drug history highlighted in medical record using stickers and also available on electronic medical record

Results

- Adverse drug reporting increased from 52 events during the period January 1996 – June 1999 to 1080 reported events during July 1999 - July 2000
- Automated computer analysis identified an additional 184 confirmed adverse drug events that were not reported; over a third of these were deemed preventable

Fallon Clinic, located in Worcester, MA, is a multispecialty group practice with over 200 physicians practicing across 30 ambulatory clinical sites. The clinic provides care to 140,652 members, including 25,581 seniors.