

Medication Safety Activities and Tasks Prioritization for Multi-Hospital Organizations

Introduction

Working on improving medication safety in any organization, whether it be a large health system or rural hospital, can be an overwhelming venture. In particular, organizations or health systems with limited medication safety resources may find it difficult to determine where to start and prioritize the number of tasks involved with maintaining an effective medication safety program. ASHP has developed a list of tasks that should be considered as part of any medication safety program. This tool also outlines priorities for medication safety leaders who have responsibilities over a multi-hospital organization. Differentiation is made between responsibilities for the organization-wide medication safety leader versus responsibilities for the individual facilities. In addition, this list has been prioritized for organizations with limited resources or a new medication safety program. When considering the use of this tool, it would be important to gather support from your organization’s leadership and key stakeholders. The tool is provided in multiple formats for ease of use.

Prioritization

This medication safety program tool lists tasks in order of priority using three measures:

- 1) Medication safety program priority
- 2) Medication safety impact
- 3) Time/resource allocation estimation

Medication Safety Priority

The following ratings are used to define medication safety priority.

High	These tasks are viewed as an essential foundation for a medication safety program.
Medium	These tasks are valuable to implement after the foundation for a medication safety program is established.
Low	These tasks may still be very important to complete within an organization, but they may have been rated low because they are either <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Not the primary responsibility of the medication safety program; or 2) Viewed as a medication safety program enhancement.

Medication Safety Impact

The following ratings are used to define medication safety impact.

Major	These tasks may decrease risk to patients, employees, or the organization if completed.
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Minor	These tasks may be useful to complete but may pose less risk to patients, employees, and the organization if not completed.
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Time/Resource Allocation Estimation

For this rating estimation, an assumption was made that the organization does not currently employ this task as part of its existing medication safety program and a new infrastructure would have to be developed. The following ratings are used to define time and resource allocation estimation.

1	Least amount of time and effort estimated to implement/complete the task
2	Moderate amount of time and effort estimated to implement/complete the task
3	Most amount of time and effort estimated to implement/complete the task

Resources

Resources have been provided for certain medication safety tasks where available. These resources will help to provide a foundation for medication safety knowledge. It is important to check with your own state for any policy or legislative requirements for continuous quality improvement or medication safety. In addition, it is important for you to be familiar with the standards set forth by your hospital's accrediting body.

Medication Safety Program Tasks	Medication Safety Program Priority	Medication Safety Impact	Time/Resource Allocation	System MSO	Delegate to Local Level
Monitor adverse drug events and report to national reporting programs as appropriate.	High	Major	Least	Oversight; be aware; engagement in higher severity/systemic process issues	Routine review, investigation and management
Develop a process for ISMP newsletter gap analysis review by completing the Quarterly Action Agenda.	High	Major	Least	Review with system leads as a corporation first	Anything left address at local level
Implement voluntary medication safety reporting program.	High	Major	Moderate	N/A	N/A
Develop a process for routine medication safety report review.	High	Major	Moderate	Oversight; be aware; engagement in higher severity/systemic process issues	Routine review, investigation and management
Form a Medication Safety Committee to review medication safety practices, safety reporting program information, and discuss systems changes.	High	Major	Moderate	Lead system wide medication safety committee	There should be a med safety committee at the local level led by a pharmacist at the facility
Review external sources of medication safety FDA alerts, conduct gap analyses and develop action plans	High	Major	Moderate	Engagement as needed by system MSO dependent upon local resource availability	Primarily at the local level with some assistance from system MSO; depends on local level capabilities
Review medication use process for high alert medications (including look-alike/sound-alike medications) and develop policies and procedures to minimize risks with the use of high alert medications.	High	Major	Moderate	Responsibility of this person to develop process	Responsibility of local level to enforce policy
Education staff about medication safety principles	High	Major	Moderate	Periodic information from system as needed; help develop education for onboarding	Led by local level; may have different areas of focus specific to their location
Understand and promote Just Culture in the organization.	High	Major	Most	Work in conjunction with system safety/quality team to promote system wide	Local level to support concept

Prioritize and review ASHP and ISMP best practice guidelines, conduct gap analyses, and develop action plans. (Link to ASHP and ISMP websites).	High	Major	Most	Review with system leads as a corporation first. May need more involvement in creating action plans, that the facilities then implement	Anything left address at local level
Review use of medication safety-related automation and technology (e.g. bar-code scanning, infusion pumps, clinical decision support, automated dispensing cabinets).	High	Major	Most	Be involved in system-roll up metric review	Managed at local level; must own action items to improve data
Disseminate the ISMP newsletter to all clinical staff.	High	Minor	Least	Originates from MSO to facility based "lead" who then distributes to local staff	
Serve as a liaison to other patient safety committees (e.g. Patient Safety Committee, Risk Management, etc.)	High	Minor	Moderate	Yes	Yes
Review and ensure compliance with medication safety-related National Patient Safety Goals.	Medium	Major	Least	Oversight and resource; system "owner" but owned locally; share best practices	Local owners are ultimately responsible
Incorporate medication safety into organization's strategic plan.	Medium	Major	Moderate	Yes, in conjunction with senior leaders	
Identify and engage a medical staff/provider and nursing champion for medication safety.	Medium	Major	Moderate	Yes; need system wide MD/RN counterpart	Also need same at the local level to support local initiatives
Develop a prioritized action plan using gaps identified from the ISMP Medication Safety Self-Assessment.	Medium	Major	Moderate	Assist with prioritization and development of action plans (thinking from a system perspective)	Local team to own action plan implementation
Determine organization's metrics for medication safety	Medium	Minor	Moderate	Yes	
Complete the ISMP Medication Safety Self-Assessment with a multidisciplinary team.	Medium	Minor	Most	MSO oversee completion of action plan	Completed by local team

Ensure compliance with medication management standards (TJC, NIAHO, state-specific standards, if applicable).	Low	Major	Least	Oversight and resource; system "owner" but owned locally; share best practices	Local owners are ultimately responsible
Review and ensure compliance with sterile compounding and outsourcing regulations (i.e., USP chapters).	Low	Major	Least	Oversight and resource; system "owner" but owned locally; share best practices	Local owners are ultimately responsible
Ensure compliance with REMS programs.	Low	Major	Least	Possible consultant role	Local level to implement
Oversee medication use process for safe handling hazardous medications.	Low	Major	Moderate	Possible consultant role	Local level to implement
Oversee medication use process for security of controlled medications.	Low	Major	Moderate	Possible consultant role	Local level to implement
Publish an organization-specific medication safety newsletter.	Low	Minor	Moderate	Yes	