

Lessons from Implementation of a Network-Wide Safety Huddle in Behavioral Health

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Abstract : The model of care delivery in the Behavioral Health Network (BHN) is integrated across all five regions of Hartford Healthcare and thus spans the entirety of the state of Connecticut, with care provided in seven inpatient settings and over 30 ambulatory outpatient locations. While safety has been a core priority of the BHN in alignment with High Reliability practices, safety initiatives have historically been facilitated locally in each region or within each entity, with interventions implemented locally as opposed to throughout the network. To address this, the BHN introduced a network wide Safety Huddle during 2022. Launched in January, the BHN Safety Huddle brought together internal stakeholders, including medical and administrative leaders, along with executive institute leadership, quality, and risk management. By bringing leaders together and introducing a network-wide safety huddle into the way we work, the benefit has been an increase in awareness of safety events occurring in behavioral health areas as well as increased systemization of countermeasures to prevent future events. One significant discussion topic presented in huddles has pertained to environmental design and patient access to potentially dangerous items, addressing some of the most relevant factors resulting in harm to patients in inpatient and emergency settings for behavioral health patients. The safety huddle has improved visibility of potential environmental safety risks through the generation of over 15 safety alerts cascaded throughout the BHN and also spurred a rapid improvement project focused on standardization of patient belonging searches to reduce patient access to potentially dangerous items on inpatient units. Safety events pertaining to potentially dangerous items decreased by 31% as a result of standardized interventions implemented across the network and as a result of increased awareness. A second positive outcome originating from the BHN Safety Huddle was implementation of a recommendation to increase the emergency Narcan® (naloxone) supply on hand in ambulatory settings of the BHN after incidents involving accidental overdose resulted in higher doses of naloxone administration. By increasing the emergency supply of naloxone on hand in all ambulatory and residential settings, colleagues are better prepared to respond in an emergency situation should a patient experience an overdose while on site. Lastly, discussions in safety huddle spurred a new initiative within the BHN to improve responsiveness to assaultive incidents through a consultation service. This consult service, aligned with one of the network's improvement priorities to reduce harm events related to assaultive incidents, was borne out of discussion in huddle in which it was identified that additional interventions may be needed in providing clinical care to patients who are experiencing multiple and/ or frequent safety events.

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