

NEWS RELEASE

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During Pandemic, ISMP is Calling for Greater Attention to Medication Safety Challenges and Avoiding Culture of Blame

One Nurse's Experience Highlights Need to Focus on Error Identification and Prevention

Horsham, Pa. - The rushed, overwhelming, and emotionally and physically draining nature of patient care during pandemic may be creating a greater risk for medication errors. The most recent Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) *Medication Safety Alert!*[®] Acute Care newsletter presents one intensive care unit nurse's perspective on the challenges involved during this unique period in healthcare, and provides ISMP error prevention recommendations.

The nurse's story illustrates how hospitals experiencing surges of COVID-19 patients may be facing unique medication safety challenges, including:

- Constantly under-resourced healthcare environment
- High nurse-to-patient ratios during staffing shortages
- Influx of critical patients requiring multiple high-alert medication infusions
- Medications stored in patient isolation rooms to conserve personal protective equipment by reducing need to retrieve items

The article provides ISMP strategies for anticipating risks due to altered workflow, especially those that might lead to concentration, programming, and other intravenous infusion-related errors. ISMP also recommends creating a streamlined reporting process that helps promote timely feedback and avoiding a recurring cycle of blame surrounding errors. Leaders and managers should support workers through the turmoil of the pandemic, and act as effective listeners and transparent communicators.

For a copy of the newsletter article, visit: <https://ismp.org/resources/during-pandemic-aspire-identify-and-prevent-medication-errors-and-avoid-blaming-attitudes>. Access may require free registration.

About the Institute for Safe Medication Practices

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) is the only 501c (3) nonprofit organization devoted entirely to preventing medication errors. ISMP is known and respected as the gold standard for medication safety information. For more than 25 years, it also has served as a vital force for progress. ISMP's advocacy work alone has resulted in numerous necessary changes in clinical practice, public policy, and drug labeling and packaging. Among its many initiatives, ISMP runs the only national voluntary practitioner medication error reporting program, publishes newsletters with real-time error information read and trusted throughout the global healthcare community, and offers a wide range of unique educational programs, tools, and guidelines. In 2020, ISMP formally affiliated with ECRI to create one of the largest healthcare quality and safety entities in the world, and ECRI and the ISMP PSO is a federally certified patient safety organization by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As an independent watchdog organization, ISMP receives no advertising revenue and depends entirely on charitable donations, educational grants, newsletter subscriptions, and volunteer efforts to pursue its life-saving work. Visit www.ismp.org and follow @ismp1 to learn more.