NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **CONTACT:** Laurie Menyo  
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**ECRI Reports Staffing Shortages and Clinician Mental Health are Top Threats to Patient Safety**

*Annual list of patient safety concerns dominated by longstanding stressors on healthcare workers exacerbated by pandemic; report issued in conjunction with Patient Safety Awareness Week, March 13 to 21, 2022*

**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA—**Staffing shortages and healthcare workers’ mental health top [a list of patient safety concerns released today](https://www.ecri.org/top-10-patient-safety-concerns-2022/) by ECRI, the nation’s largest nonprofit patient safety organization.

While the annual list is typically dominated by clinical issues caused by device malfunctions or medical errors, ECRI researchers say the most significant concerns at present are caused by crises that have simmered, but COVID-19 exponentially worsened.

“Shortages in the healthcare workforce and mental health challenges were broadly known and well-documented for years,” said Marcus Schabacker, MD, PhD, president and CEO of ECRI. “Both physicians and nurses were at risk of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and depression prior to 2020, but the pandemic made both issues significantly worse.”

While both trends were known, their effect on patient care was not well documented. Now, ECRI researchers say inadequate staffing is actively jeopardizing patient safety. Due to staffing shortages, many patients are waiting longer for care, even in life-threatening emergencies, or simply being turned away.

With reports of more healthcare workers planning on leaving the industry, ECRI experts say patients could face even higher risks without proactive solutions. Without intervention, the chaos and understaffing in hospitals and other healthcare settings seen over the last two years could become the new normal for the foreseeable future.

“Healthcare and government leaders now must aggressively manage these challenges amidst a lingering pandemic and a weakened health system by prioritizing recruitment, retention, and clinician resilience,” Schabacker said. “As leaders, their most important job is ensuring that patient health and safety are top priorities.”

“ECRI’s report is a roadmap to help prioritize patient safety initiatives and allocate necessary resources that accelerates organizations in their total system approach to safety,” said Brigitta Mueller, MD, executive director of patient safety, risk and quality at ECRI. “We are here to help healthcare and government leaders as they finally address these longstanding issues in a comprehensive, forward-thinking way.”

To identify the most pressing patient safety threats, ECRI analyzed a wide scope of data, including scientific literature, patient safety events or concerns reported to or investigated by ECRI, client research requests and queries, and other internal and external data sources.

The top 10 patient safety concerns for 2022 are:

1. Staffing shortages
2. COVID-19 effects on healthcare workers’ mental health
3. Bias and racism in addressing patient safety
4. Vaccine coverage gaps and errors
5. Cognitive biases and diagnostic error
6. Nonventilator healthcare-associated pneumonia
7. Human factors in operationalizing telehealth
8. International supply chain disruptions
9. Products subject to emergency use authorization
10. Telemetry monitoring

ECRI’s Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns for 2022 report provides detailed steps that organizations can take to prevent adverse incidents and is [available for download](about:blank).

On March 23, ECRI is hosting a public webinar, [Navigating Staffing Shortages: How PSOs as Learning Systems can Reduce Risks](about:blank), to further explore this patient safety concern and support healthcare leaders in implementing flexible solutions across the continuum of care settings.

For further information about ECRI, visit [www.ecri.org](about:blank), contact [clientservices@ecri.org](about:blank), or call (610) 825-6000.

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[NEWS] Staffing shortages, mental health of healthcare workers are top threats to #patientsafety per @ECRI\_Org Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns for 2022 #PSAW22

Staffing shortages & healthcare workers’ mental health top a list of patient safety concerns released today by @ECRI\_Org, the nation’s largest nonprofit #patientsafety org #PSAW22

ECRI releases list of top threats to patient safety in 2022 | #staffingshortages #mentalhealth #racism #biases #vaccineerrors #telehealth #supplychain #pneumonia #euaproducts #PSAW22

**About ECRI**

ECRI is an independent, nonprofit organization improving the safety, quality, and cost-effectiveness of care across all healthcare settings. With a focus on patient safety, evidence-based medicine, and health technology decision solutions, ECRI is respected and trusted by healthcare leaders and agencies worldwide. Over the past fifty years, ECRI has built its reputation on integrity and disciplined rigor, with an unwavering commitment to independence and strict conflict-of-interest rules.

ECRI is the only organization worldwide to conduct independent medical device evaluations, with labs located in North America and Asia Pacific. ECRI is designated an Evidence-based Practice Center by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. ECRI and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices PSO is a federally certified Patient Safety Organization as designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) formally became an ECRI Affiliate in 2020. Marcus Schabacker, MD, PhD, President and CEO of ECRI, has been recognized by the Philadelphia Business Journal as a Healthcare Leader in 2021. Visit www.ecri.org and follow @ECRI\_Org.