Hospital Safety

Improving hospital quality and safety are important national goals. Efforts to improve hospital safety include having computers to check for medication errors; having staff member with experience and proper training; and laws for patient's rights.

Patient's rights include:

- To be treated with respect, consideration, and dignity no matter what your race, religion, color, age, sex, health condition, familial status, height, weight, disability, or veteran's status
- To receive information about all health services including a clear explanation of how to obtain services.
- To file a grievance or appeal, to request a fair hearing, or have an external review, under the Patient's Right to Independent Review Act.
- To expect that your medical records and communications will be treated in a confidential manner as required by law.

For more information on Patient's rights, review the member handbook at: www.uhccommunityplan.com

For information on how well your neighborhood hospital scores, go to the Leapfrog Group's website at: www.leapfroggroup.org/for_consumers.

Want to find information on how well hospitals provide care to their patients? The federal government collects data from hospitals to give to you their quality of care. For a specific hospital or to search hospitals all over Michigan and the United States go to www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov.

Help Prevent Medical Errors

Medical errors are one of the nation's leading causes of death and injury. A report by the Institute of Medicine estimates that as many as 98,000 people die in U.S. hospitals each year as the result of medical errors.

Medical errors happen when something that was planned as a part of medical care doesn't work out, or when the wrong plan was used. Theses errors can occur in hospitals, doctor's offices, pharmacies and in other health care areas. Errors can include medications, diagnosis, test results, etc.

They can happen during even the most routine tasks, such as a patient on a salt-free diet is given a high-salt meal. This may not be a big deal for some, but if you had a condition such as kidney disease, this would be a huge matter to correct.

What can I do?

The <u>most</u> important way you can help to prevent errors is to be an <u>active</u> member of your health care team (***doctors, nurses, etc***.). That means taking part in every decision about your health care. Research shows that patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results.

Let your health care team know the following:

- All medications, including vitamins and herbs
- All allergies, including drug and foods
- All health care team members should know any important health information about yourself, any questions you have regarding diagnosis and treatments

For more information, go to Family Doctor.org website at www.familydoctor.org .