National Patient Safety Goals®
Effective January 2025 for the Critical Access Hospital Program

Goal 1

Improve the accuracy of patient identification.

NPSG.01.01.01

Use at least two patient identifiers when providing care, treatment, and services.

--Rationale for NPSG.01.01.01--

Wrong-patient errors occur in virtually all stages of diagnosis and treatment. The intent for this goal is two-fold: first, to reliably identify the individual as the person for whom the service or treatment is intended; second, to match the service or treatment to that individual. Acceptable identifiers may be the individual's name, an assigned identification number, telephone number, or other person-specific identifier.

Newborns are at higher risk of misidentification due to their inability to speak and lack of distinguishable features. In addition to well-known misidentification errors such as wrong patient/wrong procedure, misidentification has also resulted in feeding a mother's expressed breastmilk to the wrong newborn, which poses a risk of passing bodily fluids and potential pathogens to the newborn. A reliable identification system among all staff is necessary to prevent errors.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.01.01.01

EP 1 Use at least two patient identifiers when administering medications, blood, or blood components; when collecting blood samples and other specimens for clinical testing; and when providing treatments or procedures. The patient's room number or physical location is not used as an identifier. (See also PC.02.01.01, EP 10)

EP 2 Label containers used for blood and other specimens in the presence of the patient. (See also PC.02.01.01, EP 10)

EP 3 Use distinct methods of identification for newborn patients.

Note: Examples of methods to prevent misidentification may include the following:

- Distinct naming systems could include using the mother's first and last names and the newborn's gender (for example: "Smith, Judy Girl" or "Smith, Judy Girl A" and "Smith, Judy Girl B" for multiples).
- Standardized practices for identification banding (for example, using two body sites and/or bar coding for identification).
- Establish communication tools among staff (for example, visually alerting staff with signage noting newborns with similar names).

Goal 2

Improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers.

NPSG.02.03.01

Report critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures on a timely basis.

--Rationale for NPSG.02.03.01--

Critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures fall significantly outside the normal range and may indicate a life-threatening situation. The objective is to provide the responsible licensed caregiver these results within an established time frame so that the patient can be promptly treated.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.02.03.01

EP 1 Develop and implement written procedures for managing the critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures that address the following:

- The definition of critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures
- By whom and to whom critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures are reported
- The acceptable length of time between the availability and reporting of critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 3 Evaluate the timeliness of reporting the critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures.

Goal 3

Improve the safety of using medications.

NPSG.03.04.01

Label all medications, medication containers, and other solutions on and off the sterile field in perioperative and other procedural settings.

Note: Medication containers include syringes, medicine cups, and basins.

--Rationale for NPSG.03.04.01--

Medications or other solutions in unlabeled containers are unidentifiable. Errors, sometimes tragic, have resulted from medications and other solutions removed from their original containers and placed into unlabeled containers. This unsafe practice neglects basic principles of safe medication management, yet it is routine in many organizations.

The labeling of all medications, medication containers, and other solutions is a risk-reduction activity consistent with safe medication management. This practice addresses a recognized risk point in the administration of medications in perioperative and other procedural settings. Labels for medications and medication containers are also addressed at Standard MM.05.01.09.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.03.04.01

EP 1 In perioperative and other procedural settings both on and off the sterile field, label medications and solutions that are not immediately administered. This applies even if there is only one medication being used.

Note: An immediately administered medication is one that an authorized staff member prepares or obtains, takes directly to a patient, and administers to that patient without any break in the process.

EP 2 In perioperative and other procedural settings both on and off the sterile field, labeling occurs when any medication or solution is transferred from the original packaging to another container.

EP 3 In perioperative and other procedural settings both on and off the sterile field, medication or solution labels include the following:

- Medication or solution name
- Strength
- Amount of medication or solution containing medication (if not apparent from the container)
- Diluent name and volume (if not apparent from the container)
- Expiration date and time

Note: The date and time are not necessary for short procedures, as defined by the critical access hospital.

EP 4 Verify all medication or solution labels both verbally and visually. Verification is done by two individuals qualified to participate in the procedure whenever the person preparing the medication or solution is not the person who will be administering it.

EP 5 Label each medication or solution as soon as it is prepared, unless it is immediately administered.

Note: An immediately administered medication is one that an authorized staff member prepares or obtains, takes directly to a patient, and administers to that patient without any break in the process.

NPSG.03.05.01

Reduce the likelihood of patient harm associated with the use of anticoagulant therapy.

Note: This requirement does not apply to routine situations in which short-term prophylactic anticoagulation is used for preventing venous thromboembolism (for example, related to procedures or hospitalization).

--Rationale for NPSG.03.05.01--

Anticoagulation therapy can be used as therapeutic treatment for several conditions, the most common of which are atrial fibrillation, deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and mechanical heart valve implant. However, it is important to note that anticoagulant medications are more likely than others to cause harm due to complex dosing, insufficient monitoring, and inconsistent patient compliance.

To achieve better patient outcomes, patient education is a vital component of an anticoagulation therapy program. The use of standardized practices for anticoagulation therapy that include patient involvement can reduce the risk of adverse drug events associated with heparin (unfractionated), low molecular weight heparin, warfarin, and direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs).

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.03.05.01

EP 2 The critical access hospital uses approved protocols and evidence-based practice guidelines for reversal of anticoagulation and management of bleeding events related to each anticoagulant medication.

EP 3 The critical access hospital uses approved protocols and evidence-based practice guidelines for perioperative management of all patients on oral anticoagulants.

Note: Perioperative management may address the use of bridging medications, timing for stopping an anticoagulant, and timing and dosing for restarting an anticoagulant.

EP 7 The critical access hospital uses only oral unit-dose products, prefilled syringes, or premixed infusion bags when these types of products are available.

Note: For pediatric patients, prefilled syringe products should be used only if specifically designed for children.

Introduction to Reconciling Medication Information

The large number of people receiving health care who take multiple medications and the complexity of managing those medications make medication reconciliation an important safety issue. In medication reconciliation, a physician or other licensed practitioner compares the medications a patient should be using (and is actually using) to the new medications that are ordered for the patient and resolves any discrepancies.

The Joint Commission recognizes that organizations face challenges with medication reconciliation. The best medication reconciliation requires a complete understanding of what the patient was prescribed and what medications the patient is actually taking. It can be difficult to obtain a complete list from every patient in an encounter, and accuracy is dependent on the patient's ability and willingness to provide this information. A good faith effort to collect this information is recognized as meeting the intent of the requirement. As health care evolves with the adoption of more sophisticated systems (such as centralized databases for prescribing and collecting medication information), the effectiveness of these processes will grow.

This National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) focuses on the risk points of medication reconciliation. The elements of performance in this NPSG are designed to help organizations reduce negative patient outcomes associated with medication discrepancies. Some aspects of the care process that involve the management of medications are addressed in the standards rather than in this goal. These include coordinating information during transitions in care both within and outside of the organization (PC.02.02.01), patient education on safe medication use (PC.02.03.01), and communications with other providers (PC.04.02.01).

In settings where medications are not routinely prescribed or administered, this NPSG provides organizations with the flexibility to decide what medication information they need to collect based on the services they provide to patients. It is often important for physicians and other licensed practitioners to know what medications the patient is taking when planning care, treatment, and services, even in situations where medications are not used.

NPSG.03.06.01

Maintain and communicate accurate patient medication information.

--Rationale for NPSG.03.06.01--

There is evidence that medication discrepancies can affect patient outcomes. Medication reconciliation is intended to identify and resolve discrepancies—it is a process of comparing the medications a patient is taking (or should be taking) with newly ordered medications. The comparison addresses duplications, omissions, and interactions, and the need to continue current medications. The types of information that physicians and other licensed practitioners use to reconcile medications include (among others) medication name, dose, frequency, route, and purpose. Organizations should identify the information that needs to be collected in order to reconcile current and newly ordered medications and to safely prescribe medications in the future.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.03.06.01

EP 1 Obtain information on the medications the patient is currently taking when they are admitted to the critical access hospital or is seen in an outpatient setting. This information is documented in a list or other format that is useful to those who manage medications.

Note 1: Current medications include those taken at scheduled times and those taken on an as-needed basis. See the Glossary for a definition of medications.

Note 2: It is often difficult to obtain complete information on current medications from a patient. A good faith effort to obtain this information from the patient and/or other sources will be considered as meeting the intent of the EP.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 2 Define the types of medication information (for example, name, dose, route, frequency, purpose) to be collected in non-24-hour settings.

Note: Examples of non-24-hour settings include the emergency department, primary care, outpatient radiology, ambulatory surgery, and diagnostic settings.

EP 3 Compare the medication information the patient brought to the critical access hospital with the medications ordered for the patient by the critical access hospital in order to identify and resolve discrepancies.

Note: Discrepancies include omissions, duplications, contraindications, unclear information, and changes. A qualified individual, identified by the critical access hospital, does the comparison.

EP 4 Provide the patient (or family as needed) with written information on the medications the patient should be taking when they are discharged from the critical access hospital or at the end of an outpatient encounter (for example, name, dose, route, frequency, purpose).

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 5 Explain the importance of managing medication information to the patient when they are discharged from the critical access hospital or at the end of an outpatient encounter.

Note: Examples include instructing the patient to give a list to their primary care provider; to update the information when medications are discontinued, doses are changed, or new medications (including over-the-counter products) are added; and to carry medication information at all times in the event of emergency situations. (For information on patient education on medications, refer to Standards MM.06.01.03, PC.02.03.01, and PC.04.01.05.)

Goal 6

Reduce patient harm associated with clinical alarm systems.

NPSG.06.01.01

Improve the safety of clinical alarm systems.

--Rationale for NPSG.06.01.01--

Clinical alarm systems are intended to alert caregivers of potential patient problems, but if they are not properly managed, they can compromise patient safety. This is a multifaceted problem. In some situations, individual alarm signals are difficult to detect. At the same time, many patient care areas have numerous alarm signals and the resulting noise and displayed information tends to desensitize staff and cause them to miss or ignore alarm signals or even disable them. Other issues associated with effective clinical alarm system management include too many devices with alarms, default settings that are not at an actionable level, and alarm limits that are too narrow. These issues vary greatly among critical access hospitals and even within different units in a single critical access hospital.

There is general agreement that this is an important safety issue. Universal solutions have yet to be identified, but it is important for a critical access hospital to understand its own situation and to develop a systematic, coordinated approach to clinical alarm system management. Standardization contributes to safe alarm system management, but it is recognized that solutions may have to be customized for specific clinical units, groups of patients, or individual patients. This NPSG focuses on managing clinical alarm systems that have the most direct relationship to patient safety.

Note: Additional information on alarm safety can be found on the AAMI website.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.06.01.01

EP 1 Leaders establish alarm system safety as a critical access hospital priority.

EP 2 Identify the most important alarm signals to manage based on the following:

- Input from the medical staff and clinical departments
- Risk to patients if the alarm signal is not attended to or if it malfunctions
- Whether specific alarm signals are needed or unnecessarily contribute to alarm noise and alarm fatigue
- Potential for patient harm based on internal incident history
- Published best practices and guidelines

(For more information on managing medical equipment risks, refer to Standard EC.02.04.01)

EP 3 Establish policies and procedures for managing the alarms identified in EP 2 above that, at a minimum, address the following:

- Clinically appropriate settings for alarm signals
- When alarm signals can be disabled
- When alarm parameters can be changed
- Who in the organization has the authority to set alarm parameters
- Who in the organization has the authority to change alarm parameters
- Who in the organization has the authority to set alarm parameters to “off”
- Monitoring and responding to alarm signals
- Checking individual alarm signals for accurate settings, proper operation, and detectability

(For more information, refer to Standard EC.02.04.03)

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

Goal 7

Reduce the risk of health care–associated infections.

NPSG.07.01.01

Comply with either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines and/or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines.

--Rationale for NPSG.07.01.01--

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year, millions of people acquire an infection while receiving care, treatment, and services in a health care organization. Consequently, health care–associated infections (HAIs) are a patient safety issue affecting all types of health care organizations. One of the most important ways to address HAIs is by improving the hand hygiene of health care staff. Compliance with the World Health Organization (WHO) and/or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines will reduce the transmission of infectious agents by staff to patients, thereby decreasing the incidence of HAIs. To ensure compliance with this National Patient Safety Goal, an organization should assess its compliance with the CDC and/or WHO guidelines through a comprehensive program that provides a hand hygiene policy, fosters a culture of hand hygiene, monitors compliance, and provides feedback.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.07.01.01

EP 1 Implement a program that follows categories IA, IB, and IC of either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines. (See also IC.06.01.01, EP 3)

EP 2 Set goals for improving compliance with hand hygiene guidelines.

EP 3 Improve compliance with hand hygiene guidelines based on established goals.

Goal 15

The critical access hospital identifies safety risks inherent in its patient population.

NPSG.15.01.01

Reduce the risk for suicide.

Note: EPs 2–7 apply to patients in psychiatric distinct part units in critical access hospitals or patients being evaluated or treated for behavioral health conditions as their primary reason for care in critical access hospitals. In addition, EPs 3–7 apply to all patients who express suicidal ideation during the course of care.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.15.01.01

EP 1 For psychiatric distinct part units in critical access hospitals: The critical access hospital conducts an environmental risk assessment that identifies features in the physical environment that could be used to attempt suicide; the critical access hospital takes necessary action to minimize the risk(s) (for example, removal of anchor points, door hinges, and hooks that can be used for hanging).

For nonpsychiatric units in critical access hospitals: The organization implements procedures to mitigate the risk of suicide for patients at high risk for suicide, such as one-to-one monitoring, removing objects that pose a risk for self-harm if they can be removed without adversely affecting the patient's medical care, assessing objects brought into a room by visitors, and using safe transportation procedures when moving patients to other parts of the critical access hospital.

Note: Nonpsychiatric units in critical access hospitals do not need to be ligature resistant. Nevertheless, these facilities should routinely assess clinical areas to identify objects that could be used for self-harm and remove those objects, when possible, from the area around a patient who has been identified as high risk for suicide. This information can be used for training staff who monitor high-risk patients (for example, developing checklists to help staff remember which equipment should be removed when possible).

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 2 Screen all patients for suicidal ideation who are being evaluated or treated for behavioral health conditions as their primary reason for care using a validated screening tool.

Note: The Joint Commission requires screening for suicidal ideation using a validated tool starting at age 12 and above.

EP 3 Use an evidence-based process to conduct a suicide assessment of patients who have screened positive for suicidal ideation. The assessment directly asks about suicidal ideation, plan, intent, suicidal or self-harm behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors.

Note: EPs 2 and 3 can be satisfied through the use of a single process or instrument that simultaneously screens patients for suicidal ideation and assesses the severity of suicidal ideation.

EP 4 Document patients' overall level of risk for suicide and the plan to mitigate the risk for suicide.

EP 5 Follow written policies and procedures addressing the care of patients identified as at risk for suicide. At a minimum, these should include the following:

- Training and competence assessment of staff who care for patients at risk for suicide
- Guidelines for reassessment
- Monitoring patients who are at high risk for suicide

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 6 Follow written policies and procedures for counseling and follow-up care at discharge for patients identified as at risk for suicide.

EP 7 Monitor implementation and effectiveness of policies and procedures for screening, assessment, and management of patients at risk for suicide and take action as needed to improve compliance.

Goal 16

Improve health care equity.

Introduction to NPSG.16.01.01

Although health care disparities are often viewed through the lens of social injustice, they are first and foremost a quality of care problem. Like medication errors, health care–acquired infections, and falls, health care disparities must be examined, the root causes understood, and the causes addressed with targeted interventions. Organizations need established leaders and standardized structures and processes in place to detect and address health care disparities. These efforts should be fully integrated with existing quality improvement activities within the organization, such as activities related to infection prevention and control, antibiotic stewardship, and workplace violence.

The elements of performance (EPs) in National Patient Safety Goal NPSG.16.01.01 focus on fundamental processes that will help organizations address health care equity as a quality and safety issue (that is, identifying a leader, understanding patients' health-related social needs [HRSNs], stratifying key measures, and developing a plan to address one or more target). The EPs provide flexibility in their scope to accommodate organizations at different stages on the path forward and serve as a foundation for future work to address health care disparities and achieve equity.

NPSG.16.01.01

Improving health care equity for the critical access hospital's patients is a quality and safety priority.

--Rationale for NPSG.16.01.01--

Health-related social needs (HRSNs) are frequently identified as root causes of disparities in health outcomes. Understanding individual patients' HRSNs can be critical for designing practical, patient-centered care plans; however, organizations vary in their capacity to do this. Due to differences in patient populations served, the availability of community resources, and health care organization capacity, it is acceptable for each organization to focus on the social needs that are most practical and relevant for its unique situation. Similarly, the organization may determine what information about the potential interventions, services, and resources in its community is needed to address the HRSNs of its patients. EP 2 allows organizations the flexibility to determine which patients to target for assessment of HRSNs and which HRSNs to assess and connect to resources.

It is essential for organizations to understand the specific disparities that may exist at their institution. This process begins with stratifying existing measures. Organizations may differ in the patient information they collect, the quality and safety measures they use, and their ability to perform data analyses. Organizations may focus their analyses on measures that affect all patients (for example, experience of care, readmissions) or concentrate on a well-known area of persistent disparity (for example, diabetes, blood pressure control). Understanding which processes and outcomes vary by sociodemographic characteristics allows an organization to explore the possible root causes of a health care disparity and to tailor interventions to improve care. If stratified analyses show differences across groups, organizations should work to understand the root causes of the differences and develop actions to address disparities when they are identified.

Organizations are required to address one topic, even if they identify multiple disparities. The organization should develop an action plan that defines the health care disparity and the specific population(s) of focus, the organization's improvement goal, the strategies and resources needed to achieve the goal, and the process that will be used to monitor and report progress. Assessing progress and evaluating whether an organization's efforts to improve health care equity are successful can also inform the organization if it should revise its action plan or provide additional resources. Leaders, practitioners, and staff need to be aware of the organization's initiatives to improve health care equity and be informed of their potential role in those initiatives. It is also important to update leaders, practitioners, and staff about the challenges and successes of the organization's efforts to improve care for all patients.

Element(s) of performance for NPSG.16.01.01

EP 1 The critical access hospital designates an individual(s) to lead activities to improve health care equity for the critical access hospital's patients.

Note: Leading the critical access hospital's activities to improve health care equity may be an individual's primary role or part of a broader set of responsibilities.

EP 2 The critical access hospital assesses the patient's health-related social needs (HRSNs) and provides information about community resources and support services.

Note 1: Critical access hospitals determine which HRSNs to include in the patient assessment. Examples of a patient's HRSNs may include the following:

- Access to transportation
- Difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills
- Education and literacy
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity

Note 2: HRSNs may be identified for a representative sample of the critical access hospital's patients or for all the critical access hospital's patients.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 3 The critical access hospital identifies health care disparities in its patient population by stratifying quality and safety data using the sociodemographic characteristics of the critical access hospital's patients.

Note 1: Critical access hospitals may focus on areas with known health care disparities identified in the scientific literature (for example, organ transplantation, maternal care, diabetes management) or select measures that affect all patients (for example, experience of care and communication).

Note 2: Critical access hospitals determine which sociodemographic characteristics to use for stratification analyses. Examples of sociodemographic characteristics may include the following:

- Age
- Gender
- Preferred language
- Race and ethnicity

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 4 The critical access hospital develops a written action plan that describes how it will improve health care equity by addressing at least one of the health care disparities identified in its patient population.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 5 The critical access hospital acts when it does not achieve or sustain the goal(s) in its action plan to improve health care equity.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

EP 6 At least annually, the critical access hospital informs key stakeholders, including leaders, licensed practitioners, and staff, about its progress to improve health care equity.

Introduction to the Universal Protocol for Preventing Wrong Site, Wrong Procedure, and Wrong Person Surgery™

The Universal Protocol applies to all surgical and nonsurgical invasive procedures. Evidence indicates that procedures that place the patient at the most risk include those that involve general anesthesia or deep sedation, although other procedures may also affect patient safety. Critical access hospitals can enhance safety by correctly identifying the patient, the appropriate procedure, and the correct site of the procedure.

The Universal Protocol is based on the following principles:

- Wrong-person, wrong-site, and wrong-procedure surgery can and must be prevented.
- A robust approach using multiple, complementary strategies is necessary to achieve the goal of always conducting the correct procedure on the correct person, at the correct site.
- Active involvement and use of effective methods to improve communication among all members of the procedure team are important for success.
- To the extent possible, the patient and, as needed, the family are involved in the process.
- Consistent implementation of a standardized protocol is most effective in achieving safety.

The Universal Protocol is implemented most successfully in critical access hospitals with a culture that promotes teamwork and where all individuals feel empowered to protect patient safety. A critical access hospital should consider its culture when designing processes to meet the Universal Protocol. In some critical access hospitals, it may be necessary to be more prescriptive on certain elements of the Universal Protocol or to create processes that are not specifically addressed within these requirements.

Critical access hospitals should identify the timing and location of the preprocedure verification and site marking based on what works best for their own unique circumstances. The frequency and scope of the preprocedure verification will depend on the type and complexity of the procedure. The three components of the Universal Protocol are not necessarily presented in chronological order (although the preprocedure verification and site marking precede the final verification in the time-out). Preprocedure verification, site marking, and the time-out procedures should be as consistent as possible throughout the critical access hospital.

Note: Site marking is not required when the individual doing the procedure is continuously with the patient from the time of the decision to do the procedure through to the performance of the procedure.

UP.01.01.01

Conduct a preprocedure verification process.

--Rationale for UP.01.01.01--

Critical access hospitals should always make sure that any procedure is what the patient needs and is performed on the right person. The frequency and scope of the verification process will depend on the type and complexity of the procedure.

The preprocedure verification is an ongoing process of information gathering and confirmation. The purpose of the preprocedure verification process is to make sure that all relevant documents and related information or equipment are as follows:

- Available prior to the start of the procedure
- Correctly identified, labeled, and matched to the patient’s identifiers
- Reviewed and are consistent with the patient’s expectations and with the team’s understanding of the intended patient, procedure, and site

Preprocedure verification may occur at more than one time and place before the procedure. It is up to the critical access hospital to decide when this information is collected and by which team member, but it is best to do it when the patient can be involved. Possibilities include the following:

- When the procedure is scheduled
- At the time of preadmission testing and assessment
- At the time of admission or entry into the facility for a procedure
- Before the patient leaves the preprocedure area or enters the procedure room

Missing information or discrepancies are addressed before starting the procedure.

Element(s) of performance for UP.01.01.01

EP 1 Implement a preprocedure process to verify the correct procedure, for the correct patient, at the correct site.

Note: The patient is involved in the verification process when possible.

EP 2 Identify the items that must be available for the procedure and use a standardized list to verify their availability. At a minimum, these items include the following:

- Relevant documentation (for example, history and physical, signed procedure consent form, nursing assessment, and preanesthesia assessment)
- Labeled diagnostic and radiology test results (for example, radiology images and scans, or pathology and biopsy reports) that are properly displayed
- Any required blood products, implants, devices, and/or special equipment for the procedure

Note: The expectation of this element of performance is that the standardized list is available and is used consistently during the preprocedure verification. It is not necessary to document that the standardized list was used for each patient.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

Introduction to UP.01.02.01

Wrong-site surgery should never happen, yet it is an ongoing problem in health care that compromises patient safety. Marking the procedure site is one way to protect patients; patient safety is enhanced when a consistent marking process is used throughout the critical access hospital. Site marking is done to prevent errors when there is more than one possible location for a procedure. Examples include different limbs, fingers and toes, lesions, level of the spine, and organs. In cases where bilateral structures are removed (such as tonsils or ovaries) the site does not need to be marked.

UP.01.02.01

Mark the procedure site.

Element(s) of performance for UP.01.02.01

EP 1 Identify those procedures that require marking of the incision or insertion site. At a minimum, sites are marked when there is more than one possible location for the procedure and when performing the procedure in a different location would negatively affect quality or safety.

Note: For spinal procedures, in addition to preoperative skin marking of the general spinal region, special intraoperative imaging techniques may be used for locating and marking the exact vertebral level.

EP 2 Mark the procedure site before the procedure is performed and, if possible, with the patient involved.

EP 3 The procedure site is marked by a licensed practitioner who is ultimately accountable for the procedure and will be present when the procedure is performed. In limited circumstances, the licensed practitioner may delegate site marking to an individual who is permitted by the organization to participate in the procedure and has the following qualifications:

- An individual in a medical postgraduate education program who is being supervised by the licensed practitioner performing the procedure; who is familiar with the patient; and who will be present when the procedure is performed
- A licensed individual who performs duties requiring a collaborative agreement or supervisory agreement with the licensed practitioner performing the procedure (that is, an advanced practice registered nurse [APRN] or physician assistant [PA]); who is familiar with the patient; and who will be present when the procedure is performed.

Note: The critical access hospital's leaders define the limited circumstances (if any) in which site marking may be delegated to an individual meeting these qualifications.

EP 4 The method of marking the site and the type of mark is unambiguous and is used consistently throughout the critical access hospital.

Note: The mark is made at or near the procedure site and is sufficiently permanent to be visible after skin preparation and draping. Adhesive markers are not the sole means of marking the site.

EP 5 A written, alternative process is in place for patients who refuse site marking or when it is technically or anatomically impossible or impractical to mark the site (for example, mucosal surfaces or perineum).

Note: Examples of other situations that involve alternative processes include:

- Minimal access procedures treating a lateralized internal organ, whether percutaneous or through a natural orifice
- Teeth
- Premature infants, for whom the mark may cause a permanent tattoo

Ⓓ Documentation is required.

UP.01.03.01

A time-out is performed before the procedure.

--Rationale for UP.01.03.01--

The purpose of the time-out is to conduct a final assessment that the correct patient, site, and procedure are identified. This requirement focuses on those minimum features of the time-out. Some believe that it is important to conduct the time-out before anesthesia for several reasons, including involvement of the patient. A critical access hospital may conduct the time-out before anesthesia or may add another time-out at that time. During a time-out, activities are suspended to the extent possible so that team members can focus on active confirmation of the patient, site, and procedure.

A designated member of the team initiates the time-out and it includes active communication among all relevant members of the procedure team. The procedure is not started until all questions or concerns are resolved. The time-out is most effective when it is conducted consistently across the critical access hospital.

Element(s) of performance for UP.01.03.01

EP 1 Conduct a time-out immediately before starting the invasive procedure or making the incision.

EP 2 The time-out has the following characteristics:

- It is standardized, as defined by the critical access hospital.
- It is initiated by a designated member of the team.
- It involves the immediate members of the procedure team, including the individual performing the procedure, the anesthesia providers, the circulating nurse, the operating room technician, and other active participants who will be participating in the procedure from the beginning.

EP 3 When two or more procedures are being performed on the same patient, and the person performing the procedure changes, perform a time-out before each procedure is initiated.

EP 4 During the time-out, the team members agree, at a minimum, on the following:

- Correct patient identity
- The correct site
- The procedure to be done

EP 5 Document the completion of the time-out.

Note: The critical access hospital determines the amount and type of documentation.

Ⓓ Documentation is required.