



Using Risk Assessment to Prevent Patient Falls
Independent Dialysis Foundation, Arundel Center
Glen Burnie, MD

Contact Information

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Category:	Patient falls
Type of Facility:	Non-profit dialysis facility
Number of Patients:	104
Number of Physicians:	5

Background

After being impressed by the Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition (MARC) 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program, IDF Arundel Center was inspired to heighten patient safety awareness among patients and staff. They designated Heather Weirich, RN, as the project manager who conducted the research and engaged staff to make the program a success. The 5-Diamond Program was developed by the ESRD Network of New England (Network 1) and the Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition (Network 5) to assist dialysis facilities with the improvement of both staff and patient awareness of specific patient safety areas. The 5-Diamond Patient Safety program consists of 8 components. For each component completed, each facility will be tiered as a 1-Diamond, 2-Diamond, 3-Diamond, 4-Diamond, or 5-Diamond facility. The 5-Diamond Program has been endorsed by RPA and fulfills the Keeping Kidney Patients Safe Patient Safety Events in several areas including patient falls, medication errors and omission and hand hygiene. IDF Arundel Center has completed 7 modules, thereby extending their 5-Diamond status a second term, until March 1, 2011. With the help of their 24-person staff, they completed the following modules: Patient Safety Principles; Decreasing Patient-Provider Conflict; Emergency Preparedness; Hand Hygiene; Medication Reconciliation; Sharps Safety; and Slips, Trips, and Falls. Modules were offered at different times so that staff were able to attend. Ms. Weirich met individually with staff unable to make the scheduled modules to ensure complete participation.

Policies and activities implemented

Utilizing the lessons learned through the 5-Diamond Program, Arundel Center has improved the quality of care provided at the facility. They have improved and emphasized existing policies and procedures for medication reconciliation, sharps safety and hand hygiene, among others.



The “Slips, Trips and Falls” module had a particular impact on center policies and had led to the development of the following changes:

- A [fall risk assessment](#) is done on all new patients by the RN on duty.
- The RN also reviews the [Patient Fall Prevention Education form](#) with new patients and asks them to sign it.
- The fall risk assessment will be conducted annually for all patients.
- Those patients assessed as having a high risk for falling are put on the fall precautions list and are escorted to and from their dialysis sessions by staff.
- Patients at high risk for falls are reassessed quarterly.

Patients are also advised to speak to their physician about whether physical therapy may reduce their fall risk. Additionally, patients are reminded to use their assistive devices or to have their needs evaluated.

Arundel Center trends falls based on incidents and has seen a decrease in falls since undertaking the new policies.

Recommendations

Arundel Center recommends identifying a designated point person to lead the patient safety improvement effort. They noted that the 5-Diamond Program has provided a user-friendly compilation of resources to enable facilities to succeed in their efforts to improve patient safety.