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**COMPLYING WITH THE
2008 JCAHO PATIENT
SAFETY GOALS:
HOW TO RAPIDLY CROSS ONE
OFF THE LIST**



HOW TO RAPIDLY COMPLY WITH A 2008 JCAHO PATIENT SAFETY GOAL

With the Joint Commission's (JCAHO) recently revised patient safety goals for 2008 hot off the press, perhaps the biggest news is what's not news: Improving the accuracy of patient identification remains locked as the #1 goal. This begs the question—is it more a reminder of the ultimate importance of Positive Patient Identification (PPID), or a reflection of the difficulties that care delivery organizations are having in meeting this goal?

Consensus is building that RFID mobility solutions are gaining in viability here, and indeed will be the standard in the years ahead. The success of early adopters has created quite a buzz among industry analysts. Still, many care delivery organizations, while recognizing that RFID is coming, are looking for a logical pathway that enables them to deal with immediate issues—such as JCAHO demanding that two patient identifiers be in place while providing care, treatment or services—right now.

And that's where a healthcare mobility solution that uses bar coding can provide an affordable, reliable and most importantly—easily implemented way to directly address the Patient Identification goal.

The Power of a Simple Scan

As electronic medical records and computer physician order entry become standardized procedure at the point of care, hospitals can quickly implement bar coding to improve patient identification, medication administration and communication processes in tangible ways.

First of all, printing a unique bar code on every patient wristlet allows staff to accurately identify that this is indeed the correct patient. With the simple action of scanning the wristlet, hospitals can effectively meet one of their two JCAHO patient identification requirements.

Roving carts that house a laptop computer and a bar code scanner can be moved from patient to patient directly at the point of care. The bar code on the patient's wristlet is scanned in the same way an item for purchase would be scanned at a supermarket. This then enables information identifying the patient to be displayed in real time on a computer screen—including the patient's name, birth date, medical record number, diagnosis, height, weight and attending physician.

Not only is the JCAHO mandate being met in name it's providing a tangible benefit. With a more reliable and automated process for providing accurate patient identification, the administration of medications, collection of blood samples or providing any other treatment or procedure is made significantly more efficient.

Increasing the Safety of Medication Delivery

The removal of medications and solutions from their original containers has been statistically proven to be a problematic area—leading JCAHO to recommend that only oral-unit dose products and pre-mixed infusions be used in order to reduce compounding and labeling errors.

Here, bar scanning a patient's wristlet and each unit dose medication confirms the right drug, right dose, right route, right time and right patient—resulting in maximum safety. Abbreviations once commonly used in medication administration are simply not a factor with this process of delivery. In addition, pertinent information is immediately displayed to the caregiver regarding allergies, contraindications or critical lab values promoting patient safety at every step.

The Patient and Physician's Perspective

One of the most curious effects of this type of healthcare mobility solution is that, since the action of scanning a bar code is a highly visible one, patients have a tendency to express feelings of safety and security—as they actually witness measures being employed to prevent them from harm. The process also promotes active patient involvement in their own care in implementing safety strategies, another 2008 JCAHO patient safety goal.

Given the critical issues that JCAHO mandates tend to deal with, it's a rare occurrence that one actually lends itself to a straightforward and rapid answer. Which makes the case for a healthcare mobility solution that involves bar coding all the more intriguing. For many hospitals, it may simultaneously resolve part of the #1 JCAHO patient safety goal, while unlocking real time information at the point of care—to protect both the hospital and the patient.

Authors

Rick Hodge
EVP Healthcare,
InfoLogix, Inc.

Audrey Funt
RN, BSN, CCRN

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InfoLogix is a leading provider of enterprise mobility and advanced wireless asset tracking solutions for the healthcare and commercial industries. InfoLogix uses the industry's most advanced technologies to increase the efficiency, accuracy, and transparency of complex business and clinical processes.

With 19 issued patents, InfoLogix provides mobile managed solutions, on-demand software applications, mobile infrastructure products, and strategic consulting services to over 2,000 clients in North America including Kraft Foods, Merck and Company, General Electric, Kaiser Permanente, MultiCare Health System and Stanford School of Medicine. InfoLogix is a publicly-traded company (NASDAQ: IFLG).

WWW.INFOLOGIX.COM • INFO@INFOLOGIX.COM • 215.604.0691
INFOLOGIX, INC. • 101 E. COUNTY LINE ROAD, HATBORO, PA 19040