

Upgrading Incident Reporting:

The New Tool for Quality Improvement

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Incident reporting is the backbone of quality management and patient safety for any medical facility. Recently, however, the term “safety event reporting” has begun to replace “incident reporting,” a change that reflects a shift from an external reporting obligation to an internal process that can have a direct impact on improving safety and quality.

Let’s take a look at some of the limitations of traditional event reporting and how to upgrade your event reporting system to help track and spot trends and dramatically improve patient care and safety.

| From Reactive to Proactive

Traditionally, event reporting has been an “after-the-fact” activity, recording problems after they’ve already occurred. In most medical facilities, reporting is still done with paper forms, compounding the problem as reports get lost or stuck in a filing cabinet never to be seen again.

While electronic event reporting is an improvement over paper systems, most popular commercial software restricts reporting to a limited list of prescribed events and solutions. Medical facilities are forced to use a “one-size-fits all” system that inaccurately represents a wider range of events that are happening and need to be recorded and resolved every day.

Upgrading event reporting allows users to set which events they want to track relative to their facility’s care model. Paper systems are being tossed in favor of software that can identify and track issues which can be fixed before they become incidents.

| Missing the Big Picture

In addition to clinical staff, risk and quality managers suffer the most from the old model of incident reporting. First is the investment in time. Paper incident reports need to be tracked down, sorted and all relevant

information copied and organized into a spreadsheet. That’s time that could be spent addressing other quality issues and actions that can make a real impact on improving patient safety.

While electronic reporting makes it faster to compile reports for external agencies, many risk and quality managers don’t feel good about what they’re handing over. Traditional agency reports are little more than a list of “mistakes,” a report of errors and “failures” in patient safety. How can any risk and quality manager feel good about delivering such a one-sided picture to an agency responsible for evaluating the quality of patient care being delivered on their watch?

In order to be a real tool for change, event reporting needs to deliver insights, not just data, and trends rather than a static list of incidents repeating month after month. New event reporting tools are improving quality management by recording valuable data in real-time that anyone can see and use anywhere and anytime.

By shifting from recording past events to tracking current events, quality managers can use event reports to identify quality issues and create action plans to address them before they become problems. Reports handed over to agencies won’t be the same disappointing account of mistakes, but a report of improvements showcasing the effectiveness of the quality manager’s role.

From Tracking to Insights to Plans

The first step to upgrading your event reporting system is expanding what needs to be reported and tracked. Older systems (especially paper-based ones) inherently limit what is reported because there is no support system that can efficiently analyze the huge amount of data and turn it into easy-to-see trends and insights.

Some useful events to track that can provide real insights and improvements in quality include:

- **Abuse**
- **Blood Administration**
- **Complaint/Grievance**
- **Confirmed Infections**
- **Emergent/Unplanned Transfer**
- **Work Related Injury**
- **Fall**
- **HIPAA Event**
- **Medication Variance**
- **Surgical Events**
- **Facility/Plant/EOC**
- **Treatments/Tests**
- **Practices/Protocols**
- **Skin Integrity Change**
- **Perinatal Care**



An upgraded event reporting system can record each and every one of these events, track them over time and alert you in real-time when a troubling trend seems to be emerging. Such a system allows you to not only create a plan to address potential issues before they become problems, it also gets everyone involved in the reporting process to be a part of the solution.

In order to make this huge amount of data truly useful, users need to be able to search and filter across event reports to gain meaningful insights. This needs to be done efficiently and in real time, not through complicated charts and spreadsheets. Insights and discoveries that lead to plans and improvement can only come from looking at what is being reported from a variety of angles.

Then, and only then, can quality managers and executives focus their time and resources less on data analysis and more on plans that will improve performance and quality.

| Solutions, Not Problems

The real limit of old incident reports is that they simply report problems and don't do anything to offer solutions. They can give you a snapshot of a single event that occurred, but not why or how often this event occurs or any other factors about it happened in the first place. There's just simply not enough information, just static data without any insights.

An upgraded event reporting system allows you to:

- **Empower everyone** involved in event reporting to be a part of improving quality and patient care instead of just entering data
- **Encourage clinical staff** to fill out event reports because they no longer fear being called out, or worse, don't believe that it will do anything to help improve patient care
- **Give reporters notifications** when an issue is resolved or moved to the appropriate department
- **Deliver real-time data** to help spot troubling trends so the appropriate parties can be proactive about addressing potential issues before they become problems or events
- **Present insights** instead of numbers that show changing trends and what's being done to improve quality and patient care

Creating a Culture of Quality

The newer model of event reporting doesn't just shift the focus from reporting events to taking actions that can help preventing them, it also creates a "culture of quality"

across the organization.

An event reporting tool that does the number crunching and turns data into insights allows everyone involved to be truly engaged in their profession. Instead of getting bogged down in mechanics and analysis, everyone is freed to work on tasks that make a difference they can actually see.

Here's what a culture of quality in a clinical setting can do:

- **Clinical staff view event reports not as a dreadful obligation, but a real tool that will make their jobs easier and improve the safety of the patients under their care.**

- **Quality managers have staff motivated to create reports and attend meetings where real plans of action can be discussed and implemented.**
- **Executives can see the results of the combined efforts of each department in improving the safety and quality of care the entire facility is delivering.**

Upgrading your event reporting system creates a culture of quality that improves accountability, reduces events, uses limited time and resources to make a difference and improves patient care and a medical facility's reputation and rating.

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ActionCue Clinical Intelligence

Ready to upgrade your event reporting system? ActionCue CI offers event reporting, quality management and performance improvement tracking integrated in one easy-to-use online platform.

This innovative software has helped hospitals in 24 states identify event trends and accurately track all clinical operating performance measures, leading to more effective performance improvement plans, reduced organization workload and better patient care.

Here are just a few ActionCue CI features risk and quality managers enjoy:

- **View reports in real time and spot issues instantly**
- **Easily monitor performance measures and create action plans**
- **Delegate performance measures to the right people**
- **Create fast reports for monthly and quarterly meetings**
- **Real time and online; no waiting for end-of-month reports**



To learn more about ActionCue CI, visit [pristacorp.com](https://www.pristacorp.com) or call **512-266-7126** to schedule a no-obligation 30-minute demo.