



# TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Mar. 20, 2007

## Tripler goes national with Patient Safety Tool

Although fully accredited by the Joint Commission, Tripler Army Medical Center is always looking for ways to enhance health care services and improve patient safety to benefit military members and their family members. One of the most recent

improvements has come with the creation of a patient hand-off tool -- an improvement that will benefit healthcare nationwide.

"We wanted to show beneficiaries how important patient safety is in providing them with the best care possible by appointing a Patient Safety Officer," said Col. Julia A. Adams, operating room chief, TAMC.

"Due to her experience and background in research Maj. [Laura D.] Desnoo was appointed to this critical position."

Desnoo, patient safety officer, TAMC Operating Room, developed a simple, visual tool to trigger key communication points with patient hand-offs from Pre-Operation to Operating Room; Operating Room to Operating Room; and Operating Room Team to Patient Acute Care Unit. The communication points are listed on a series of three slides that are posted throughout the operating room (OR).



Maj. Gen. Carla Hawley-Bowland, Tripler Commander recognizes Maj. Laura DeSnoo, Patient Safety Officer, during the Evidence-Based Nursing Recognition Luncheon in the Anuenue Café March 14.

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## TOOLS 2-2-2

“In the OR there are multiple processes to get a patient through the surgical process,” said Desnoo. Through research Desnoo improved upon existing best practices to come up with a tool that would make meet national and military medicine regulations while making patient hand-offs safer for patients and healthcare professionals.

For example, during patient hand-off from OR to OR, Desnoo came-up with the following guidance:

- When beginning or relieving a surgical case, the scrub and circulator must verify:
- Procedure
  - Surgeon Plan/Preferences (where are we in the case)
  - Anesthesia type
  - Allergies
  - Significant Medical History
  - Count
  - Irrigation
  - Medications
  - Instrumentation on & off field
  - Specimens on and off field
  - Equipment needs
  - Tubes, Lines, Hoses

Col. Arthur P. Wallace, Tripler Deputy Commander for Nursing said the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals are designed to promote specific improvements in patient safety.

“The value of a standardized approach to ‘hand-off’ communications between health care providers gives an opportunity to ask and respond to questions which are fundamental elements in ensuring that essential facts regarding the patient's care, treatment, and condition are known by key personnel,” Wallace said.

As a result of the effectiveness of the tool, it was requested by Col. Linda J. Wanzer, Perioperative Consultant to the Surgeon General Graduate School of Nursing Uniformed Services for use nationally by the Association for PeriOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Presidential Commission for Patient Safety’s patient handoff toolkit.

“This is important because it facilitates a knowledgeable staff, who are familiar with the patient's current plan of care and, in turn, a satisfied patient who has trust in our staff communication and care plan process,” Wallace said.