

Statement by Lisa McGiffert
Patient Safety Action Network (PSAN)
Convening meeting for the National Patient Safety Action Alliance
November 14, 2022

PSAN is a national coalition working to end medical harm through transparency and accountability. We are patient led and patient driven. We are people who have been harmed by medical care. We are rooted in the experience of trying to get health care facilities and providers to be accountable for their actions, and to be willing to correct those actions for a safer future.

- Secrecy has not worked, in fact, safety improvement has been directly related to transparency, because you cannot know where to improve if you do not identify where preventable errors and infections are occurring. [we have seen through HAI reporting in hospitals and nursing homes] Granted, we need better ways to collect information about these events that is not a burden on health care providers and cannot be gamed by them. We have ideas on how to do that that would give us more accurate information than we now get.
- The agencies in this room have endless ways to create accountability. First, you must do your jobs and use the tools you are given to protect patients and the public. Then make the “public information” you possess more, well, public. Do this online; aggregate all of the information about each specific provider; make it easy for the average person to find, look up and understand.
- We have many ideas what agencies could do; here are a few examples:
 - Include information about errors and infections on death certificates, which would put medical harm on the list with other leading causes of death, and lead to more focus, more activity and funding.
 - Provide a publicly supported avenue for harmed patients to report these events - similar to the FDA’s adverse events reporting system for drugs and devices (MedWatch).
 - Make information in the National Practitioner Data Bank public.
 - Rethink how these harm events are treated right after they happen. We can do this collaboratively, but the patients have to be engaged as equal partners. If I had more time, I would tell you about a collaborative effort I’ve been involved in to develop a framework on infection outbreak response and disclosure with Public Health professionals. It should be implemented nationwide.
 - Measurement is important: from the public/patient POV - we want to know: was medical harm prevented or not - whatever the providers are doing, is it working?
- Whatever work is done after this meeting, and I have faith that much good work can be done, agencies must specifically measure whether health care provider activities lead to less patient harm; you must act quickly when harm occurs; & you must reveal those results in more real time to the public. Most importantly, health care providers must reveal what happened to patients and their families in actual real time without strings attached and engage them in your investigations and actions for change