



For Immediate Release
October 28, 2021
IHA Contact: Danny Chun
(630) 276-5558
DChun@team-iha.org

Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety PSO Presents Patient Safety Champion Awards to FHN Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital

Naperville, Ill.— The Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) Patient Safety Organization (PSO) presented two MAPS PSO Patient Safety Champion awards today in recognition of extraordinary efforts to improve patient safety in healthcare.

The individual award went to J. Steve Harweger, AGACNP-BC, a gastroenterology (GI) nurse practitioner at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport, Illinois. MAPS, an Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) company, presented staff from Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital in Lake Forest, Illinois, with the team award. Kelley Messmer, RPh, with OSF Home Care in Peoria, Illinois, received an Honorable Mention.

Harweger was honored for his lifesaving attention to detail when reviewing a patient’s medical records. A 69-year-old male patient was experiencing abdominal pain upon arrival at FHN’s emergency department, where he underwent testing. During a GI consultation, Harweger discovered new details about the patient’s condition and identified a major concern with the patient’s electrocardiogram (EKG). This significant clinical finding triggered immediate cardiac intervention and urgent surgery.

“It does not come as a surprise that Steve would receive such an honor,” said Meghan Cox, MBA, Director of Physician & Provider Services. “Steve is a thorough, quality-focused clinician who treats patients with respect, empathy and compassion.”

For the team award, the MAPS PSO committee honored the following staff members at Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital:

- Mechelle Krause, RN, WCC, OMS, Clinical Practice Specialist Wound/Ostomy;
- Karen Mahnke, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director of Operations and Associate Chief Nurse Executive;
- Denise Majeski, MSN, RN , ACM, NE-BC, Vice President of Operations and Bernthal Chief Nurse Executive;

- Laura Meller, MSN, APN, CNS-BC, NE-BC, Director of Operations;
- Kathryn Thomas, MSN, RN, CPHQ, Director of Quality and Patient Safety; and
- Lindsay Werth, MSN, RN, CMSRN, CPPS, Patient Safety Program Manager.

Working together, the team successfully reduced hospital-associated pressure injuries by 83% from 2019 to 2021. Key tactics included weekly huddles between frontline leaders and clinicians, as well as Leadership Gemba walks—a Lean Six Sigma practice where leaders spend time with frontline employees during the workday.

During the huddles and walks, it became clear that patients at risk of pressure injuries required early intervention for better outcomes. Reviewing data helped the staff identify which interventions were most effective.

“This is where real-time coaching came into play,” said Kathryn Thomas, MSN, RN, CPHQ, Director of Quality and Patient Safety for Northwestern Memorial HealthCare’s North Region. “Real-time coaching allowed for near real-time defect identifications and subsequently real-time correction.”

MAPS awarded an Honorable Mention to Messmer, an OSF Home Care team member. As a clinical home infusion pharmacist, Messmer is diligent about verifying patients’ laboratory orders before discharge. In one case, her actions unveiled lab results that, if undetected, could have resulted in irreversible kidney damage.

MAPS PSO Patient Safety Champion Program

Federally certified since 2010, MAPS PSO assists its members with the important work of reducing adverse events so they can provide a safer healthcare experience for their patients. As part of its commitment to member excellence, MAPS established the Patient Safety Champion Program to reward members’ commitment to patient safety.

“MAPS PSO has supported healthcare providers across the state for more than a decade,” said IHA President and CEO A.J. Wilhelmi. “The pandemic has underscored the urgency of quality and safety improvement efforts. Through the Patient Safety Champion Program, IHA and MAPS recognize organizations and individuals for their work to improve healthcare and individual lives. This year’s honorees embody the commitment and integrity of the Illinois healthcare community.”

MAPS PSO has a vital role in coordinating adverse event reporting and aggregating the data to drive collaboration and change. MAPS PSO members use this information to guide their efforts to improve care. MAPS PSO members include 104 Midwestern health systems, hospitals, critical access hospitals, physicians groups, long-term care and specialty outpatient clinics. Each benefits from the security of a protected PSO environment to collect, analyze and learn from adverse event data and best practices.

MAPS also works with nationally recognized leaders in patient safety on research, data mapping and data collection to simplify the data submission process. To learn more about MAPS PSO, visit www.alliance4ptsafety.org.

###

About the Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety

The [Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety](http://www.alliance4ptsafety.org) (MAPS) is a federally listed Patient Safety Organization (PSO) aligned with the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA). Since 2010, its mission has been to promote the adoption of best practices by Midwest healthcare organizations to improve the delivery of safe and quality care to all patients. As a non-profit organization, MAPS strives to position itself as the leading provider-sponsored PSO. Based in Naperville, Illinois, MAPS provides the opportunity to exceed standards of quality of care by providing expert clinical staff and strong programs and services focused on PSO education, strong patient-focused operations and performance improvement. Like MAPS on [Facebook](#). Follow MAPS on [Twitter](#).

About IHA

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Naperville, Springfield, Washington, D.C., and Chicago advocates for Illinois' more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of nonprofit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see www.team-iha.org. Like IHA on [Facebook](#). Follow IHA on [Twitter](#).