

# 2010 Patient Safety Tip Sheet

## ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

The recently enacted American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly referred to as the “stimulus plan,” includes more than \$19 billion in incentives for physicians to adopt electronic health record (EHR) technology. Under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) provisions in ARRA, physicians can qualify for these incentives if they demonstrate “meaningful use” of an electronic health record by 2011.

For more information, visit [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) or [www.medicalsoftwaretools.com/soapware/ARRA\\_Incentives\\_Stimulus\\_Money.html](http://www.medicalsoftwaretools.com/soapware/ARRA_Incentives_Stimulus_Money.html).

## COMMUNICATION

How can I improve communication with Spanish-speaking patients?

- Use an interpreter.
- Use hand gestures.
- Learn some Spanish phrases.
- Keep a Spanish medical dictionary on hand.
- Use visual aids such as posters or sculptures.
- Speak slowly and use simple words.

## CONTINUITY AND COORDINATION OF CARE

- Ensure your discharge planning process includes the scheduling of follow-up appointments.
- Ensure discharge summaries and lab results are sent to the Primary Care Provider (PCP).
- Ask your patient whether he or she has seen another practitioner.

## POSTOPERATIVE INFECTIONS

The best way to avoid postoperative complications is to anticipate them.

- Wash your hands and wear gloves.
- Educate your patients on how to prevent infections.
- Utilize waterless hand rubs.
- Ensure surgical equipment is properly sanitized.
- Dispense antibiotics before and after surgery.
- Use electronic clippers to remove hair.
- Cover your mouth and nose.
- Provide thorough instructions for care following a procedure.



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