

Clemson researcher touts surgical safety checklist to save lives

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Clemson University research assistant professor Ashley Kay Childers has been selected to participate in a forum to discuss quality improvement programs in U.S. hospitals that reduce preventable readmissions, prevent medical errors, improve patient outcomes and cut costs.

Childers, who also is a member of the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) Quality and Patient Safety team, will participate in the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Surgical Health Care Quality Forum South Carolina in Columbia April 1.

The forum will focus on Childers' work with the Safe Surgery 2015 initiative and the implementation of the surgical safety checklist in every South Carolina hospital. Effective use of the checklist can help transform organizational culture and improve patient safety in the operating room.

Presenters from the Safe Surgery 2015 team, including Childers and the forum's keynote speaker, Atul Gawande, will discuss the development and implementation of the surgical [safety checklist](#) and reveal how lessons learned during the statewide pilot study will serve as a model to improve surgical safety across the nation.

Over the last three years, Childers has been traveling to hospitals across South Carolina to learn more about how checklists are being implemented in different operating rooms. She works directly with clinicians and checklist implementation teams to better understand their

needs, strengths and challenges and determine possible improvement opportunities associated with meaningful checklist use.

"The collaboration between SCHA and the Harvard School of Public Health Safe Surgery 2015 team, as well as the education and support provided to our member hospitals, is unprecedented," said Childers. "We know that a number of patients in South Carolina have already benefited from this work."

In addition to her research responsibilities for Clemson's industrial engineering department, Childers engages health care providers in identifying solutions to the traditional systems of care delivery for SCHA initiatives. She also teaches engineering courses through Clemson's General Engineering Program.

Childers works with the Preventing Avoidable Readmissions Together (PART) initiative, a statewide collaborative effort to reduce avoidable re-hospitalizations that is sponsored by the South Carolina Partnership for Health. Her research for PART focuses on patient and provider needs related to the hospital discharge process. In addition, she mentors a team of Clemson undergraduate students through the Creative Inquiry program. The students help support the PART initiative by providing hospitals with feedback regarding the usability and content of their patient discharge instructions.

Provided by Clemson University

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