

ACP says patient safety must be improved in office-based practice setting

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More needs to be done to improve patient safety in the outpatient setting, said the American College of Physicians (ACP) in a new policy paper released today. [Patient Safety in the Office-Based Practice Setting](#) offers a set of recommendations aimed at improving patient care in office-based practices.

"In recent years, much attention has been focused on improving [patient safety](#) in hospitals," said Jack Ende, MD, MACP, president, ACP. "We now must extend that focus to include the ambulatory setting. Medical errors that happen outside of the hospital are just as important to prevent."

The paper outlines the following principles:

1. ACP believes that physicians and [health care](#) organizations have a responsibility to promote a culture of patient [safety](#) within their practices and among colleagues with whom they collaborate.
2. ACP recommends that physicians and other [health care professionals](#), payers, government, and other relevant stakeholders should conduct research and work to address physician stress, burnout, and organizational culture that may impact [medical errors](#).
3. Patient and family education, engagement, and health literacy efforts are needed to educate the public about asking the right questions and providing the necessary information to their physician or other health

care professional. Materials should reflect the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the audience.

4. ACP supports the continued research into and development of a comprehensive collection of standardized patient safety metrics and strategies, with particular attention to primary care and other ambulatory settings. Domains could include medication safety, diagnosis, transitions, referrals, and testing issues. ACP recommends expanded patient safety research efforts to better understand the ambulatory medical errors and the efficacy of patient safety practices.

5. Team-based care models, such as the patient-centered medical home, should be encouraged and optimized to improve patient safety and facilitate communication, cooperation, and information sharing among team members.

6. Health information technology systems should be tailored to emphasize patient safety improvement.

7. ACP supports the establishment of a national effort to prevent patient harm across the health care sector. A national entity could be charged with coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders, defining the problem, setting national goals, and developing and assisting in the implementation of a patient safety action plan with attention given to the ambulatory setting.

"Patient safety is an issue of critical importance across health care settings," concluded Dr. Ende. "It is essential for physicians and other clinicians and policymakers to embrace and facilitate a culture of safety. Physicians and other members of the health care team, including [patients](#) and their families, must work together to create an environment where safety can be discussed in an open and respectful manner."

Provided by American College of Physicians

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