

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine believes that physicians, other health care providers, and patients working together can design safety processes into the nation's health care system.

Specialist physicians strive to provide the best medical care to their patients. As in all other professions, however, adverse events can occur in the delivery of that care. Creating a health care environment that encourages the development of safety systems and eliminates the culture of blame is essential for improving patient safety.

Improvements in healthcare quality require the cooperation and participation of many individuals. Voluntary sharing of information promotes and is often a prerequisite to such improvements at all levels of our complex, interconnected health care delivery system. We believe that, under conditions of confidentiality, information on best practices can readily be shared and analyzed within local, regional and national quality improvement organizations, with demonstrable improvements in medical practice. Further, the sharing of patient safety data may enable qualified researchers to identify specific techniques and processes of care to improve outcomes. To encourage such information exchange, providers must be protected when voluntarily disclosing medical errors.

The optimal patient safety reporting system would:

- ◆ **Foster a non-punitive environment for reporting adverse outcomes, including adequate legal protections for the providers who supply information to medical error databases, patient safety committees and organizations,**
- ◆ **Establish and enforce guidelines to protect the confidentiality of patients, healthcare professionals, and healthcare organizations,**
- ◆ **Analyze reported data to identify the factors contributing to adverse events in order to minimize future risk, and**
- ◆ **Share patient safety information, to the extent possible, among healthcare organizations and healthcare reporting systems.**

We are committed to safety and quality in the nation's health care system. The above-mentioned principles would help contribute to an appropriate patient safety reporting system and improve the quality of care our patients receive.