h1. Eight Key Steps to building a Patient Safety Program in your hospital

It is now commonplace for hospitals to have a patient safety program. 12 years on from "To err is human" the web is awash with many experts (both from behind a desk and at the frontline). However, the health environment is unique in New Zealand with lots of good points and some that are not so good. Whatever the culture, you need to make a start somewhere...

1. Initiate a general survey of the local environment, existing quality programs, existing reporting systems, patient feedback data, the medicolegal environment and the culture of the hospital.
2. Work out a timeline to get the following things up and running.
3. Get official backing from the Chief Executive Officer and/or Board and executive. Discuss the program with key Medical leaders, Clinical Directors and Heads of Department, nursing and Allied Health leaders. The hospital pharmacist/s will be only too keen to support such a program.
4.Plan, and give plenty of notification of, a series of Hospital wide meetings open to all. Ask attendees to contribute what they perceive to be the biggest threats to patient safety. Engage doctors(physicians) It is better to have a good facilitator. From these meetings, identify the five biggest areas where harm has occurred. E.g. falls, pressure sores, surgical site infections, communication issues, or medication errors.
5. Elect or form a Patient Safety Committee with adequate Clinica l and nonclinical representation. Ensure that there are at least two lay representatives who may come from a patient representative group, or be a past patient or family member of one. It is important to get the right people on the committee.
6. Choose from one to three of the five biggest risks areas, and identify leaders who are interested and engaged to develop and lead a project on each of these. Consider a failure mode effects analysis.
7. Hold monthly meetings with regular updates on the projects. Success will be determined by outcome data, and engagement of staff to attend training programs as determined by the project scopes.
8. When one of these projects is finished, initiate the next, but keep tabs on what has been achieved.