



Patient Safety Beat

Patient safety news and progress in Massachusetts.

New research highlights Massachusetts home care workers' challenges during COVID-19 and ideas for safer care

COVID-19 has exposed gaps in information, policies and protections that can lead to increased risk for members of the home care workforce and their clients, according to a new report from the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety.



The report, "From the Frontlines: Home care workers voice COVID-19 challenges and ideas for change," outlines key themes from focus group research with more than 80 members of the Massachusetts home care workforce. Workers describe pandemic-related challenges to safety and suggest ways to add stability to this vital sector of the health care continuum well beyond the pandemic. They urge greater attention to allocation of scarce resources, such as personal protective equipment and COVID-19 testing; information about infection control practices and COVID-19 exposure; workforce wellness and compensation; and more.

[Read the story](#)

COVID innovations become permanent fixtures at this physician practice

Like many medical office practices, Middleton Family Medicine needed to revamp its infection control efforts to continue serving patients during the pandemic.



But what started as temporary measures in response to COVID-19 have become more permanent fixtures of the practice, including an independent structure for drive-up testing and vaccinations and a separate-entry exam room that allows potentially infected patients to

be seen without using the waiting room or other medical office spaces.

[Read the story](#)

Volunteers support patients and families after adverse events

A new resource is available to patients and families who have experienced medical harm. Based at the Betsy Lehman Center, the statewide Patient and Family Peer Support Network connects people with volunteers trained in peer support who have had a similar experience. In addition to listening and providing emotional support, volunteers can help them find additional resources.



Volunteer peer supporter [Sue Nevins, R.N.](#), intimately understands the importance of this work. More than 10 years ago, she was left with permanent facial palsy after surgery. She was struggling with anxiety and depression when she met [Linda Kenney](#), who is now Director of Peer Support Programs at the Betsy Lehman Center.

“I thought to myself, ‘I’m not alone!’ To have someone on the other end of the phone—someone who knows how it feels — is what we search for,” Nevis says. “Talking with Linda that day was the beginning of my healing journey.”

[Learn more](#) about the Patient and Family Peer Support Network. Printed brochures are available [by request](#).

Upcoming events

- **Infection control in assisted living for COVID-19 and beyond.** Virtual town hall for staff/clinicians in assisted living, hosted by the Betsy Lehman Center, in partnership with the Massachusetts Assisted Living Association. January 28, 3 - 4 p.m. [Register here](#)
- **How to write an OpenNote: Research & real-world experience.** OpenNotes offers a webinar and Q&A "office hours" about writing and sharing visit notes with patients. **Webinar:** January 29, 1 - 2 p.m. [Register here](#) **Office hours:** February 2, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. [Register here](#) (limited to first 75)
- **Quality of care in nursing homes.** The National Academy of Medicine hosts a public webinar February 11, 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. [Register here](#)

Patient Safety Beat is published by the [Betsy Lehman Center](#), a state agency that supports providers, patients and policymakers working together to advance the safety and quality of health care.



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