

Institute for Safe Medication Practices

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ISMP Responds to New Patient Safety Legislation

HUNTINGDON VALLEY, Pa.—The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 was signed into law by President Bush on July 29, and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) hopes that it will encourage greater voluntary practitioner reporting of errors. The legislation offers protection for patient safety information, including error reports and root cause analyses, if it is shared with certified independent patient safety organizations (PSOs).

PSOs will receive confidential error reports, analyze the data, and disseminate recommendations on how to reduce the risk of errors. ISMP currently receives medication error reports from the national voluntary nonproprietary USP-ISMP Medication Errors Reporting Program and for the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Reporting System (PA-PSRS) under contract with ECRI. The Institute also collects other patient safety information, including data from its Medication Safety Self Assessments[®].

“The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act offers healthcare providers the opportunity to report errors and share their stories with national organizations that are experienced in collecting and analyzing this information, without fear of retribution,” said Michael R. Cohen, RPh, MS, ScD, FASHP, President of ISMP. “The lessons that can be learned from firsthand practitioner accounts are invaluable, and a national database could effectively supplement many state-based reporting programs already underway.”

ISMP applauds the elimination of barriers to reporting and recognition of the role that established PSOs can play in collecting and analyzing reports and developing proven prevention strategies. In fact, the Institute has long championed a non-punitive culture in healthcare that seeks not to punish the individual, but instead fix system-based causes of errors. In 2000, ISMP published a discussion paper on adverse event and error reporting in healthcare designed to serve as a conceptual framework for a national error reporting system (available online at <http://www.ismp.org/Pages/IOM.html>). ISMP also partnered with other healthcare organizations to hold a briefing with the U.S. Senate and House that served as an impetus for development of the current legislation and worked with Congressional staff on many of the elements of the law.

For more information on medication error reporting programs and prevention efforts, or for interviews on this topic, contact Renee Brehio at 704-321-3343 or e-mail rbrehio@ismp.org.

About ISMP: The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that works closely with healthcare practitioners and institutions, regulatory agencies, consumers, and professional organizations to provide education about medication errors and their prevention. ISMP represents more than 30 years of experience in helping healthcare practitioners keep patients safe, and continues to lead efforts to improve the medication use process. In 2004, the Institute celebrated the 10th anniversary of its official incorporation as a nonprofit organization. For more information on ISMP, or its medication safety alert newsletters for healthcare professionals and consumers, visit www.ismp.org

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