

ECRI's *Strategic Insights for Ambulatory Care* newsletter is being offered to CAPIC insureds at no cost. If you are interested in visiting any of the links in this edition, please contact Brad Dunkin, Assistant Vice President, at BDunkin@CAPphysicians.com.



April 23, 2024

Strategic Insights for Ambulatory Care is a biweekly service provided by ECRI and the Cooperative of American Physicians (CAP). We welcome your comments; please send them to AmbulatoryCareRM@ecri.org.



Webinar: Register Now

Permanente Live: Keeping Patients and Clinicians Safe from Harm

Hosted by The Permanente Federation Executive Vice President Stephen Parodi, MD, and featuring ECRI President and CEO Marcus Schabacker, MD, PhD, this complimentary virtual fireside chat will examine strategies to address the multiple threats to patient, physician, and clinician safety, including supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, rising violence, and burnout.



Learn more & Register

Spotlight on Healthcare Worker Well-Being

ECRI included [**Decline in Physical and Emotional Well-Being of Healthcare Workers**](#) on our list of the top 10 patient safety concerns in 2024. Rampant physical and emotional exhaustion from several stressors has contributed to many healthcare workers leaving or contemplating leaving the profession. This can create a cyclical, exacerbating effect by increasing stress for remaining staff and potentially compromising patient safety and staff well-being. Read ECRI's report for action recommendations to help your organization address this issue.



[Read the Report](#)

What's New?

- **Upcoming webinar: Fear of Discovery: How PSOs Provide a Secure Environment for Safety Work** Join ECRI and Andrew Bolin, JD, of Bolin Law Group on Wednesday, May 8, at 1:00 p.m. ET as we discuss establishing Patient Safety Evaluation Systems, their relationships to PSOs, the differences between state and federal protections, and how to work with surveyors who request information protected under the Act. [register now](#)

Patient Safety & Relations

CDS Tool Identifies Patients' Gaps in Care

What's the news. A federally qualified health center network in New York City implemented a clinical decision-support (CDS) tool that alerts primary care providers to patient gaps in care and triggers dynamic order sets unique to each patient, according to a [study published March 20, 2024, in *NEJM Catalyst*](#). Analysis of all encounters with at least one gap in care found that 46% of the time, at least one gap was closed when the provider acknowledged the alert compared with 33% when the provider bypassed the alert.

Why it matters. CDS tools that are dynamically patient specific can help improve quality of care, especially if implemented as part of a broader quality improvement initiative.

How ECRI can help. The [Resource Collection: Medical Records and Documentation](#) provides guidance and resources on the documentation of patient information, the functionality of electronic health records, and more.

Gender and Race Disparities in Unmet Care Needs among Older Adults

What's the news. Older adults of color, especially women, experienced higher rates of unmet care needs compared with White and male older adults; these differences were mostly explained by different levels of care needs due to disparities and differential care networks, according to a [study in the April 2024 issue of *The Gerontologist*](#). Hispanic women and foreign-born Hispanic men also experienced disparities.

Why it matters. Understanding gender and race disparities among older adults can help organizations identify strategies to improve long-term care services and support for older adults facing social disadvantages.

How ECRI can help. The [Taking Action: Strategies to Advance Health Equity](#) provides strategies to help organizations identify and address disparities their patients may face.

EHR Optimization Led to Productivity Improvements

What's the news. Optimization of electronic health records (EHRs)—developed from an intensive quality improvement process involving clinicians and clinical staff collaborating with information technology (IT)—led to significant improvements in productivity ratios of monthly charges and payments, according to a [study in the March/April 2024 issue](#) of the *Annals of Family Medicine*. Optimizations were categorized as accommodations (i.e., department adjusted workflow to EHR), creations (i.e., IT developed new workflows within EHR), discoveries (i.e., department found workflows within EHR), and modifications (i.e., IT changed workflows within EHR).

Why it matters. When implemented effectively, EHRs can help providers care for patients efficiently and safely. This study demonstrates the importance of EHR optimization and collaboration with IT to best utilize this technology.

How ECRI can help. The guidance articles [Electronic Health Records: Functionality](#) and [Electronic Health Records: Operational Issues](#) address recommendations to mitigate the risks associated with EHR functionality and operational issue related to EHR system use.

Worker & Environmental Safety

Man Wielding a Chainsaw Assaults Hospital Staff

What's the news. A man wielding a chainsaw assaulted multiple healthcare workers and a state trooper at a Vermont hospital in March; he was arrested and has been charged with four counts of assault, simple assault, and disorderly conduct, according to an [April 2, 2024, NBC news article](#).

Why it matters. Violence in healthcare is associated with a variety of risks for patient and worker safety, including physical and emotional harm, as well as organizational liability.

How ECRI can help. The guidance article [Workplace Violence](#) presents strategies for preventing violence and provides information on managing violent events and training employees in violence prevention and response.

Legal & Regulatory

Questions Remain about Legal Implications of AI Adoption

What's the news. As artificial intelligence (AI) tools become more widely used in healthcare, a lack of federal regulations leaves providers and healthcare organizations with questions regarding who bears the blame if AI makes a mistake and how much compensation a patient gets, according to a [March 24, 2024, Politico article](#). AI may also affect insurance premiums, with insurers considering increased risks related to bias and cybersecurity threats and the potential for overall improvements in care.

Why it matters. AI has the potential to help providers improve patient care; however, unreliable functionality, bias, lack of transparency, privacy issues, and uncertainty over liability can reduce AI's effectiveness and compromise patient safety.

How ECRI can help. ECRI named [Unintended Consequences of Technology Adoption](#) one of its top 10 patient safety concerns in 2024.



ECRI Headquarters, 5200 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462, 610.825.6000