

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.



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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.



What's New?

- Ask ECRI: Communicating Critical Test Results [read now](#)
- Blog: At-Home Cardiac Rehabilitation Just as Effective as Center-Based Programs [read now](#)
- White Paper: Hazard Vulnerability Assessment: An Expanded Approach Using Systems Thinking [read now](#)

Patient Safety & Relations

eACA Tool Helps Identify Contributing Factors and Create Corrective Actions

What's the news. An electronic apparent cause analysis (eACA) tool uses principles of high reliability organizations and human factors engineering to guide users in identifying contributing factors to safety events. Broken down into six categories, including staff performance/teamwork, environment, equipment/devices/supplies, leadership/management/supervision, communication, and tasks/processes, it supports the creation of reliable and sustainable corrective actions, according to a [study](#)

published in the October 2024 issue of the *Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*.

Why it matters. Healthcare organizations must identify the sources of failures and implement corrective actions to avoid future errors and, therefore, improve patient safety and quality of care.

How ECRI can help. The guidance article **Culture of Safety: An Overview** describes the elements of a safety culture and provides recommendations on how an organization can approach each element.

Whooping Cough Is at a Decade-High Level, Outbreaks Seen in Older Kids and Teens

What's the news. Whooping cough, also called pertussis, is at its highest level in a decade, with 18,506 cases reported so far this year, and vaccine exemptions are at an all-time high; although whooping cough is most commonly seen in infants and young children, public health workers say outbreaks this year are affecting older kids and teens, according to an **October 17, 2024, AP News article**.

Why it matters. On-time vaccination throughout childhood is essential because it helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. There is an urgent need for effective vaccine promotion strategies to sustain high pediatric immunization rates.

How ECRI can help. ECRI named **Vaccine Coverage Gaps and Errors** as one of its top 10 patient safety concerns in 2022.

Dementia Patients Value Autonomy in Medication Management—When Do Providers Step In?

What's the news. Autonomy in medication management, even with complex medication regimens, is often highly valued by patients with mild cognitive impairment and dementia and their family caregivers, up until the patient's safety is seriously questioned, according to a **study in the October 2024 issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society***. Researchers report patient-to-caregiver transitions in medication responsibilities were reactive to patient-driven medication errors or other adverse events, highlighting the opportunity clinicians have to initiate conversations with patients and caregivers about medication assistance.

Why it matters. Medication safety is an ongoing goal for risk managers, pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and other care providers. Because medication events can involve many individuals, processes, and systems, risk managers need to help their organizations adopt a multidisciplinary approach to medication safety.

How ECRI can help. The guidance article **Medication Safety** discusses how to involve both patients and their caregivers in the medication management process.

Telehealth Interventions Can Promote Serious Illness Conversations in Primary Care

What's the news. Among community-dwelling older adults with cognitive impairment, a telehealth intervention may help promote serious illness conversations with providers in primary care, according to a [study published in the October 2024 issue](#) of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. Documentation of serious illness conversations was 100% and usage of advance care planning billing codes was 96% among participants in the intervention, with 96% having high-quality documentation.

Why it matters. It is important that providers discuss and understand patients' current goals, values, and preferences regarding future medical care to ensure that patients receive care and treatment that aligns with these preferences.

How ECRI can help. The [Advance Care Planning: Office-Based Care](#) toolkit can help organizations ensure that advance care planning discussions are completed, optimized, and well documented.

Legal & Regulatory

Third-Party Vendors Present Significant Cybersecurity Risks

What's the news. Cybersecurity experts at the recent Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society Healthcare Cybersecurity Forum say that third-party vendors are a major source of risks and breaches, according to a [November 4, 2024, article in Healthcare Finance](#). This year's ransomware attack on Change Healthcare affected every US hospital, according to one expert, but the risk of the outage was not on their radar.

Why it matters. Cybersecurity attacks often have negative effects on patient care, such as poor outcomes from delays in tests and procedures, longer length of stay, more complications from medical procedures, more patient transfers, and even higher mortality in some cases. Operational disruptions, data breaches, and lost business or revenue are also commonly reported. In addition, violation of federal or state laws related to information privacy or data breaches may lead to regulatory action.

How ECRI can help. The guidance article [Cybersecurity in Ambulatory Care](#) can help organizations better understand current approaches to cybersecurity, identify opportunities for improvement, and clearly define roles in cybersecurity within the organization.



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