



*SaferCare*  
TEXAS

**ENHANCING  
AMBULATORY  
SAFETY:  
ROOM OF  
HAZARDS**

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## Background

**Customer** – Primary Care Clinic Staff

**Location** – UNTHSC campus

**Challenge** – Eliminating preventable harm in ambulatory settings

**Solution** – Provide hands-on-training and experiential learning to enhance observational skills and identify actual or potential safety hazards in an outpatient environment

**Benefits** – Enhance the effectiveness of individual and team competency in identification of hazards



According to previous mortality estimates, medical error is the third leading cause of death for patients in the United States. In an effort to address this critical healthcare issue, patient safety curriculum has been implemented across multiple levels of provider training. However, these curricula often follow a didactic format with little focus on actual skills assessment, hands-on-training or experiential learning. This format places the burden of translating didactic curriculum for job-specific use onto the learner. Further, the majority of these educational activities are limited to acute care settings, failing to address hazards occurring within ambulatory environments.

To support the advancement of patient safety in the ambulatory setting, SaferCare Texas, a department within UNTHSC, created an interprofessional safety-focused simulation to enhance the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) Clinical Practice Group staff on identifying actual and potential safety hazards in an outpatient environment.

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## Room of Hazards

A two-part activity called the “Room of Hazards” was designed using clinic exam rooms to demonstrate common ambulatory care safety threats. The exam rooms simulated safety threats including medication related errors, potential infection related harms and environmental hazards. A mock patient scenario with clinical information about the case was created to support the simulation. It included the patient’s allergies and a mock electronic patient record. In total, there were 59 hazards created within each exam room .



### PART 1

Participants entered the simulation space, read the mock patient scenario and as **individuals**, documented hazards and harms identified over a 5-minute interval, timed by a proctor. Once time expired, participants exited the individual simulation.

### PART 2

Participants were grouped into **teams** of 2-4. These teams re-entered the same simulated exam room space, discussed as a team what they observed, and documented their collective findings during a 5-minute interval, also timed by a proctor.



## The Power of Teams to Improve Safety

Analysis of the document results revealed the teams identified significantly more hazards than individuals alone.

The main objective of the Room of Hazards simulation was to enhance caregivers' knowledge of continued safety errors in order to avoid them.

In addition, the exercise illustrated the importance of teamwork for healthcare professions. Patient safety experts agree that communication and teamwork skills are essential for providing safe, quality health care. When all clinical and nonclinical staff collaborate effectively, as demonstrated with the ambulatory Room of Hazards activity, health care teams can improve patient outcomes, prevent medical errors, improve efficiency and increase patient satisfaction.

Health care teams that communicate effectively and work collaboratively reduce the potential for error, resulting in enhanced patient safety, improved clinical performance and preventable harm reduction.

## Partnerships Continue

To continue enhancing UNTHSC Clinical Practice Group staff's awareness of patient safety, SaferCare Texas is conducting similar simulations in the future.

SaferCare Texas is also partnering with other organizations and clinics to design innovative ways to illustrate the importance of patient safety. If this is something you or your team might be interested in doing, email [katie.shanklin@unthsc.edu](mailto:katie.shanklin@unthsc.edu)

**"KNOWING PATIENT SAFETY IS NOT ENOUGH...  
PRACTICE IT!"**