

FINNISH PATIENT SAFETY STRATEGY 2009-2013

Promoting patient safety together

By The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

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BACKGROUND

This is the first national patient safety strategy drawn up by the steering group set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. It is the product of discussions at working groups based on a large network of health care related and safety experts. The work started on the initiative of the ministry in 2006 and the document was launched at a national patient safety congress in January 2009.

NATIONAL STRATEGY - target state by the year 2013

Patient safety will be embedded in the structures and methods of operation: care and treatment is effective and safe.

Objectives

The patient is actively involved in improving patient safety

- The organisation will have procedures by means of which patients and clients can tell about the safety concerns they have observed and receive feedback on that.
- The organisation will have practices according to which the patients are told about risks linked with treatments.
- The organisation will have jointly agreed procedures for the aftercare of adverse events.
- The staff will have been made familiar with the patient safety procedures and practices through in-service training.
- Representatives of patients and patients' organisations will be included in groups for ensuring patient safety.

Patient safety is managed proactively and through learning

- The organisation will have a comprehensive risk and quality management system.
- The organisation will ensure staff skills and professional development.
- The organisation will make use of other actors' good patient safety practices.

Patient safety incidents are reported and learned from

- The organisation will have clear procedures for the internal reporting, monitoring and handling of errors and patient safety incidents.
- The organisation will observe the joint policy for national reporting.

- The organisation will use the national information on patient safety indicators for promoting patient safety.

Patient safety is promoted systematically and by means of adequate resources

- The organisation will have drawn up a patient safety plan and appointed the persons coordinating the promotion of patient safety.
- Promotion of patient safety is a part of the action and economic plan.
- Professionals will observe in their work the central principles of promoting patient safety, apply its most important methods and make use of the available tools, handbooks and recommendations for patient safety promotion.

Patient safety is taken into account in health care research and teaching

- Patient safety will be taken into account in the orientation of all health care professionals employed in the organisation, in training of students, and in employee skills assessment. Particular attention will be paid to verifying the skills and competence of fixed-term employees.
- The organisation will have the resources for making surveys of patient safety promotion and take part in research projects in the field.

LEGISLATION

Finnish legislation contains a number of laws that have influence on patient safety issues and quality of health care:

- Constitution of Finland 1999
- Act on the Status and Rights of patients 1992
- Act on Health Care Professionals 1994
- Patient Injuries Act 1986
- Personal Data Act 1999
- Act of Openness of Government and Services 1999
- Language Act 2003
- Act on Restructuring Local Government and Services 2007
- A new Health Care Act planned to be passed this spring will most probably prescribe that health care organizations have their explicit patient safety plans

CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PLANS

The National Institute of Health and Welfare shall have responsibility of the main activities related to the strategy. A national working party has been set up by the Institute (03.2010-12.2011), with the task of planning how to implement and support patient safety improvements, research on patient safety issues and to develop indicators to monitor patient safety activities and improvements in the country. One of the objectives is to produce guidelines for building up patient safety plans at the local level. A second national patient safety congress will be arranged in the year 2011.