Building an Accountable and Safe Culture, Getting to Zero

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Introduction
Zero Harm – if that’s the goal for every healthcare provider, the only way to achieve this is for patient safety to be embedded into our culture. The journey towards patient safety requires commitment and the highest level of dedication. Safety cannot be merely a strategic priority, but must be a value that is woven into the heart of the entire workforce in the organization and in all we do. Trust, respect, and inclusion are non-negotiable standards that must encompassed by all levels from leaders, clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals. A true enduring value of Culture of Safety’s commitment to zero harm is to be a part to identify, mitigate any risk that poses a threat to safety and harm not just to patients but everyone walk through or work in KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH). Target Zero Harm is a journey, we need physicians, nurses, allied health, administrative and ancillary staff to be on board with leaders as safety champions, patient safety leads and advocates to build partnership to closing the deficiency gaps in their respective department or division to promote the culture of safety.

Aim
Our goal is Zero Harm, we aim to achieve our high calling by having all staff understand the five essential skills and these are: hold up values and expectations, enable system thinking which help to facilitate people making good decision, promote behaviors that support best choices, learn and balance between assigning blame and never holding anyone accountable for bad choices made, in addition to building on our sustainability programs to promote culture change.

Methodology
Strategic Initiatives and Programs – Our Road Map to Achieve Target Zero Harm

The development of strategic initiatives, including accountability for safety as part of the leadership development strategy for the organization with delivery of essential safety, quality and risk management training programs (Figure 1) for staff from senior executives, managers, clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals, front liners, outsourced staff and volunteers.

KKH Safety and Reliability - Target Zero Harm Training Roadmap

Figure 1

We enable staff to recognize that everyone across the organization has expertise to contribute to patient care, having peers hold each other accountable, staff feels comfortable reporting errors and variations in care through speaking up for safety. Training includes cultivate ownership to task, having everyone takes accountable for safety, focus on learning with the cultural commitment apply equally to the entire workforce, regardless of rank and file. Consistent messaging on target zero harm, keeping patient safe is done through multiple communication channels such as monthly CEO-CMB Forum, Leadership and Safety Rounding, Patient Safety & Quality Network Forum, and Safety Bulletins, Clinical Heads/Division/Department huddle or meeting to obtain commitment through internalization.

Results
Deploying learning and development to build upon an empowering and adaptive culture will enable employees to understand expectations, operational vision and values, in addition to know those necessary ingredients required to succeed together. Training is integrated into an organization’s strategy where it engages the hearts and minds of the employees, and enables them to co-create solutions for success. The chart below shown the number of training programs attended by various categories of staff with safety and reliability as our top priority.

Conclusion
Patient safety has to be rooted and integrated into the way we care for our patients. Being accountable is about taking responsibility and ownership in doing the right thing even when no one is watching. When team members consistently demonstrate ownership and accountability, trust is formed, and mutual respect can be earned to create a comfort level for peers to speak freely and watch out for each other. Senior leaders are responsible for establishing safety-mindedness for all employees and these behaviors include, but are not limited to, transparency, effective teamwork, and promoting active communication through getting our people to connect, collaborate, co-create and celebrate successes.