Safety 2025: Three Health Care Industry CEOs on Why They’ve Committed to Zero Harm

By Lauren Keeley

Press Ganey’s mission to eradicate avoidable harm in the health care industry was never more evident than with the launch of Safety 2025: Accelerate to Zero. The initiative, which seeks to help hospitals and health systems achieve an 80% reduction in patient harm by 2025, is grounded in Press Ganey HPI methodologies and safety event measures. Partner health care organizations at any stage of their safety and high reliability journeys are encouraged to sign the Safety 2025 Pledge and commit to zero harm. In doing so, they gain access to industry-leading thought leadership, learning forums, practice insight, and data sharing and learning.

We recently spoke with leaders of three health systems who have signed the Safety 2025 Pledge to understand how they hope their organizations will benefit from participation. Vidant Health CEO Dr. Michael Waldrum, Centura Health President and CEO Peter D. Banko, and Altru Health System President Dr. Steven Weiser share their perspectives below.

Q: What inspired you to join Safety 2025: Accelerate to Zero?

MW: This initiative aligns with our health system’s safety and reliability transformation voyage. Over the past 14 years, with HPI as our partners, we have implemented a multipronged approach to advance our efforts in safety and high reliability. Because the Safety 2025 commitments encompass actions we have executed as a part of our voyage, we hope it will help us stay the course to zero harm.

Additionally, while we have made tremendous progress in operationalizing principles of reliability science to reduce harm, we still have work to do in further advancing a culture that fosters psychological safety and protects our team members, providers, and patients from harm. As a learning organization, we are especially excited that the initiative provides a national network to share and integrate lessons learned locally.

PB: Serious safety events happen all too often in health care. For me, and for our organization, it’s become rather personal. When we asked the Centura community across our 17 hospitals to stand up if they’ve experienced harm or death of a family member due to harm in health care, 80% to 90% of the crowd—from governance, to physicians, to associates, to leadership—stood up. There was no question we were going to participate in Safety 2025.

SW: As we evaluated patient safety organizations, it was clear that Safety 2025 aligns well with all the goals we seek to achieve and strategies we have implemented thus far on our reliability journey. Elements of the initiative, such as executive declaration of a zero-harm goal, personalization of safety events, and commitment to learning from each other, made this a natural decision for us.

Q: What do you hope to gain from your participation in Safety 2025?

MW: We have been discussing for some time the need to adopt a broader definition of harm, beyond physical harm, to include emotional harm. The Safety 2025 community is exploring this concept. Emotional harm stemming from serious safety events (SSEs) can erode trust, damage relationships, and adversely affect the physical and mental health of team members, providers, and patients. Being able to understand the impact of emotional harm by having a systemic approach to capture, assess, and address SSEs will help us advance a safety culture based on empathy, trust, respect, and inclusion. This will help us drive toward our goal to reduce all types of preventable harm.

AT A GLANCE

- Press Ganey invites partner organizations to join them in reducing patient and caregiver harm across the industry by 80% over the next five years by committing to Safety 2025: Accelerate to Zero.

- The initiative includes complimentary access to the HPI Press Ganey Patient Safety Organization (PSO) platform for client organizations that sign the Safety 2025 Pledge and commit to zero harm.

- CEOs from three client organizations explain why they signed on to Safety 2025 and how they foresee it advancing, accelerating, and sustaining their efforts in safety and reliability.
PB: The number one responsibility of our CEOs is to improve the quality and safety of our patient care. I believe that too often our processes and systems in health care get in the way of our caregivers doing the work. Fixing our systems and processes so that people can do their incredible things safely and reliably is fundamental to how I think about safety and what we need to do going forward. This initiative provides a framework and methodology not only for making those strides, but for data sharing and learning with other partner organizations on the road to zero harm.

SW: Our focus is to always continue to move toward zero harm. With the tools and talent Press Ganey is using to support the Safety 2025 initiative, I am confident we will get there much faster. The use of data-driven analytics, strong educational and evidence-based foundations, collaboration and networking, and the benefit from an “all share, all learn” philosophy come together to help us adapt and innovate in the ever-changing health care landscape.

Q: What role will Safety 2025 play in helping you further advance, accelerate, and sustain your efforts in safety and reliability?

MW: The educational forums offered to Safety 2025 members provide opportunities to learn from national thought leaders and like-minded organizations. Being able to transparently share and learn from our successes and failures together as a safety community will help us further advance our high reliability operating system, which is foundational to our health system imperatives of quality (including safety), experience, and finance. Advancing our efforts to have a more integrated approach between these three imperatives, as they are interconnected and mutually enforcing, will propel us toward excellence.

PB: We started our safety and high reliability journey at Centura in 2018 with an assessment, and then about a year ago we launched our tiered enterprise-wide safety huddles. This is our daily organizational rhythm that allows for situational awareness of safety events for associates and patients. The process allows us to escalate events that have occurred, then cascade identified learnings across our ministry.

I requested that every Centura facility CEO sign the Pledge, not just myself. Moving forward, we want—through Safety 2025—to get everyone behind the work toward zero harm. Declaring zero harm as the goal, being transparent in reporting safety events, and putting a face on safety are first steps on this critical transformation.

SW: Quality and safety are cornerstones of excellent care delivery. Altru declared a path toward zero harm in November 2018. Since then, our physician-led organization has been dedicated to improving transparency and evaluating root causes to prevent safety events for our patients, who are our family and friends. We are focused and determined to cultivate and evolve a culture of high reliability throughout our organization.

Through this partnership, we hope to not only raise awareness about the importance of a strong safety culture but improve our overall performance far more expeditiously. Transparency in our successes and our challenges will only serve to create a stronger health care organization. We can only get better through a journey that is directed by the type of commitment that Safety 2025 demands.

Vidant Health is a 1,708-bed health system serving more than 1.4 million people in 29 eastern North Carolina counties.

Centura Health is a mission-driven, faith-based organization and the largest health care network in the Colorado and Western Kansas regions, meeting the needs of more than half a million patients each year.

Altru Health System is a community of 3,800 health professionals and support staff committed to caring for over 200,000 residents in the northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota regions.

Learn more about Safety 2025: Accelerate to Zero and how your organization can participate here.

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