

# Child Health Patient Safety Organization

## Serious Safety Event Action Alert



### Take Action to Reduce Risk of Similar Harm

## High-Risk Pediatric Populations: Improving Safety and Reliability in Diabetes Care Management

Child Health PSO has identified an immediate safety concern related to treatment of pediatric patients diagnosed with diabetes. This alert is driven by situations identified in the Child Health PSO database, which can lead to serious harm for this high-risk patient population.

### Resultant Harm

More children are being diagnosed with diabetes. The ability to manage their care remains a challenge as the disease process can be complex and lead to other comorbidities. If symptoms of diabetes complications are not recognized early, the outcomes can be life threatening.

### Fundamental Issue

Managing care for patients with diabetes can be a low-frequency, high-risk activity for health care providers who do not specialize in this patient population and do not have access to clinical job aides.

For example, patient harm can occur when:

#### Organizations lack:

- Sufficient resources (e.g., clinical experts, job aides, policies/procedures/ protocols that align with the national standards) for each care setting.
- Appropriate patient monitoring systems (e.g., trigger mechanisms, active surveillance of hypo/hyperglycemia, glucagon use).
- Adequate competency training for specific tasks/actions (e.g., use of diluted and concentrated insulin, reprogramming of insulin pumps).
- Clear communication systems with the patient/family related to the care plan throughout the care continuum (e.g., inpatient, discharge).
- Robust discharge processes (e.g., instructions, education) for patients/ families.

#### Clinicians lack:

- Knowledge of how and when to obtain expert consultation (e.g., endocrinologist, diabetes educator) or how to access internal resources throughout the care management process.
- Understanding of patient's complete medical history and/or fails to validate medical information supplied by the family.
- Familiarity of national standards and internal resources available for the care management of patients with diabetes, which can lead to harm, such as missed recognition of serious disease complications (e.g., diabetic ketoacidosis), insufficient glucose monitoring, and medication errors.

## Recommendation to Mitigate Risk at Your Hospital

Conduct a risk assessment to determine organizational gaps related to improving the safety and reliability in diabetes care.

- Use the provided [Risk Assessment Tool](#) developed by a team of your peers from children's hospitals across the country.

### What can I do with this alert?

- Forward to the recommended target audience for evaluation.
- Include in your Daily Safety Brief.
- Create loop-closing process for evaluating risks and strategies implemented to decrease risk of repeat harm.
- Let us know what is working and what additional information you need.

**Leverage your PSO membership**  
Learn from each other to reduce patient harm and Serious Safety Events.

### Contact

[psosupport@childpso.org](mailto:psosupport@childpso.org)

*This alert is approved for general distribution to improve pediatric safety and reduce patient harm. This Alert meets the standards of non-identification in accordance with 3.212 of the Patient Safety Quality Improvement Act (PSQIA) and is a permissible disclosure by Child Health PSO.*

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### Additional Resources

- American Diabetes Association, Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes – 2017.  
[http://professional.diabetes.org/sites/professional.diabetes.org/files/media/dc\\_40\\_s1\\_final.pdf](http://professional.diabetes.org/sites/professional.diabetes.org/files/media/dc_40_s1_final.pdf)
- Managing hospitalized patients with ambulatory pumps – Part 2; Guidelines for the use of insulin pumps during hospitalization. ISMP NurseAdviseERR  
<http://www.ismp.org/newsletters/nursing/issues/NurseAdviseERR201611.pdf>
- Enhancing insulin-use safety in hospitals: Practical recommendations from an ASHP Foundation expert consensus panel. American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy. <http://www.ajhp.org/content/70/16/1404>
- American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists and American Diabetes Association Consensus Statement on Inpatient Glycemic Control  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2681039/pdf/zdc1119.pdf>
- Pediatric Learning Solutions (PLS), a Children's Hospital Association education program, offers two online courses that address the symptoms and management of **Diabetes Mellitus** and **Diabetic Ketoacidosis**. Each course reviews care and management practices, including insulin and delivery mechanisms. These resources are available now if your hospital participates in the [PLS program](#).

### Target Audiences

- Nursing, medical and clinical leaders
- Quality improvement
- Patient safety
- Legal/risk management
- Clinical educators
- Organizational leaders
- Primary care
- Emergency/urgent care
- Specialty care services
- Infection prevention and control

### Acknowledgements

This Alert and Risk Assessment Tool has been reviewed and endorsed by the [Pediatric Endocrine Society](#).

We also thank the Executive Committee of the [Section on Endocrinology, American Academy of Pediatrics](#) for their review of this material.

### Has a patient experienced an event at your organization that could happen in another hospital?

- Child Health PSO members should submit event details into the [Child Health PSO portal](#).
- Contact Child Health PSO staff to share risks, issues to assess, and mitigation strategies with member hospitals.

*More than 50 children's hospitals are actively engaged with  
Child Health PSO. We currently are enrolling new members.*