"Sign out is the most dangerous procedure in the emergency department."

Charles 'Chaz' Schoenfeld, MD (1950-2010)

What is Safer Sign Out (SSO)?

"Safer Sign Out is a patient-centered, team-based innovation that was developed by emergency medicine physicians to improve the safety and reliability of end of shift patient 'handoffs.'" It was developed by the Emergency Medicine Patient Safety Foundation (EMPSF) and its partners to help reduce risk, improve patient and clinician satisfaction, and increase the effectiveness of the physician sign out process.

Safer Sign Out is comprised of 5 key components, which have been designed to make the physician sign out procedure more reliable and to decrease the potential for vulnerability. Here is a quick overview of Safer Sign Out and the components.

1. Record – Document follow-up activities and critical data
    a. Use a paper or electronic recordable form
    b. Decreases likelihood of data loss and lapses
    c. Serves as a checklist and reference tool
2. Review – SSO form and chart/computer data
    a. Clinicians jointly review the form and data
    b. Assures mutual understanding between the clinicians
    c. Provides a time for Q&A
3. Round – Visit the patient together
    a. Critical step in the communication process
    b. Opportunity to check status of patient and provide an update
    c. Improves patient satisfaction
4. Relay with the Team – Discuss plan for patient with the nurse and team
    a. Opportunity to provide updates and feedback to the nurse and the rest of the team
    b. Strengthens team communication
    c. Verifies team understanding
5. Provide Feedback – Use SSO form as a feedback tool
    a. Use the form to give the outgoing clinician follow-up information
    b. Serves as a Quality Assurance tool

To learn more about the process and to access SSO tools and resources, visit
www.safersignout.com