



Illinois Health and Hospital Association

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***Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers, Sparta Community Hospital District, Sinai Chicago Awarded 2024 Patient Safety Awards  
Hospital Staff Recognized for Strong Commitment to Improve Patient Safety,  
Provide Equitable, Quality Care***

**NAPERVILLE** – The Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) Patient Safety Organization (PSO) announced the recipients of its three annual MAPS PSO Patient Safety Champion and Ambassador awards in recognition of their extraordinary efforts to improve patient safety in healthcare.

“IHA and MAPS are proud to congratulate this year’s awardees from Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers, Sparta Community Hospital District, and Sinai Chicago for their unwavering commitment and dedication to improving the delivery of safe, quality care to all patients,” said IHA President and CEO A.J. Wilhelmi. “These awards reflect the high standards of care hospitals strive for every day and the direct impact of hard work and passion to improve the lives of patients across the state.”

**The MAPS PSO 2024 Patient Safety Champion individual award was presented to Samantha Whalen, RN, a registered nurse at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers.**

Samantha Whalen was honored for her keen awareness of patient safety and her strong dedication to the patients and community she serves. While Whalen was preparing Marcaine for use in a surgical case and after utilizing the blunt tip needle to withdraw the medication, she noticed a piece of the vial’s rubber stopper floating within the syringe. She immediately took the syringe, blunt tip needle, and medication vial out of service and reported the incident to appropriate leaders. Had she not noticed the rubber stopper debris within the syringe and removed the product, the surgical patient could have experienced severe harm or even death. By the next day, the organization had removed all current inventory of blunt tip needles from the units and replaced stock with a safe alternative. Education was sent out to all clinical staff through email, physical signage posted within the units, and information was included the clinical newsletter. As a result of Whalen’s quick action, staff were also able to complete the required reporting to the manufacturer and the FDA in a timely manner.

**For the 2024 Patient Safety Champion team award, the MAPS PSO committee honored the following diagnostic imaging team members at Sparta Community Hospital District (SCHD):**

Aaron Fiene; Bridgett Bayer; Seth Becker; Kelly Bova; David Mackenzie; Ashley Deutschmann; Joshua Diercks; Kelsi McDaniel; Jordan Meyerhoff; Megan Ritz; Sara Simpson; Amanda Vanover; Ashley Wolfe; Danielle Rickenberg; Brandi Wolf

To improve accuracy and patient safety, the Diagnostic Imaging department collaborated with other SCHD departments to address challenges with diagnostic imaging orders. Taking a proactive leadership role, the Diagnostic Imaging team implemented measures to ensure orders are accurate and patients receive only the necessary testing. These efforts have successfully refined processes, resulting in adjustments or changes to testing orders before patient appointments, benefiting numerous patients. To ensure the accuracy of diagnostic imaging orders and to provide timely and accurate pre-certification, the Diagnostic Imaging team reviews incoming future orders placed by SCHD providers. Ordering diagnostic imaging exams can be a complicated task, which depends on many factors that lead the provider to order the correct exam. For this reason, the Diagnostic Imaging team vets incoming orders for accuracy. Each day, shortly after midnight, the team also processes a report that lists all the future orders placed during the previous day and that list is reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness.

These awards were presented by MAPS, an IHA company, at the MAPS PSO Annual Culture of Safety Workshop in October. Awardees received trophies, pins and certificates to commemorate their achievements.

**The MAPS PSO 2024 Patient Safety Ambassador award was presented to Le’Mikas Lavender at Sinai Chicago:**

Le’Mikas Lavender co-led a pivotal patient safety improvement initiative that focused on enhancing healthcare equity, reducing patient falls, and improving overall patient outcomes. One of the major successes was his involvement in the Health Equity Project, which focused on increasing healthcare accessibility for underrepresented communities by 15% and raised patient satisfaction by 20%. The project also boosted community engagement by 30%, solidifying the organization's leadership in promoting health equality and reducing disparities. In his role co-leading the Quality Improvement Committee, Lavender focused on implementing best practices that resulted in a 25% increase in adherence to safety protocols across the organization. These efforts contributed to a 2-point improvement in Leapfrog safety scores, representing a 40% overall enhancement in patient safety metrics. Lavender also partnered with nursing on a system-wide prevention strategy for patient falls, achieving a 20% reduction falls. This initiative not only empowered staff to respond effectively to incidents, but also fostered a proactive culture of safety. These results were achieved through data-driven strategies that optimized patient safety and operational efficiency. Through these initiatives, Lavender not only achieved measurable improvements in patient safety, including reductions in falls, sentinel events and grievances, but also established a foundation for continuous improvement.

**MAPS PSO Patient Safety Champion Program**

Federally certified since 2010, MAPS PSO assists its members with the important work of reducing adverse events so they can provide a safer healthcare experience for their patients. As part of its commitment to member excellence, MAPS established the Patient Safety Champion Program to highlight and reward members’ commitment to patient safety.

MAPS PSO has a vital role in coordinating adverse event reporting and aggregating the data to drive collaboration and change. MAPS PSO members use this information to guide their efforts to improve care. MAPS PSO members include Midwestern health systems, hospitals, Critical Access Hospitals,

physician's groups, long-term care and specialty outpatient clinics. Each benefit from the security of a protected PSO environment to collect, analyze, and learn from adverse event data and best practices.

To learn more about MAPS PSO, visit [www.alliance4ptsafety.org](http://www.alliance4ptsafety.org).

#### **About the Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety**

The [Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety \(MAPS\)](http://www.alliance4ptsafety.org) is a federally listed Patient Safety Organization (PSO) aligned with the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA). Since 2010, its mission has been to promote the adoption of best practices by Midwestern healthcare organizations to improve the delivery of safe and quality care to all patients. As a non-profit organization, MAPS strives to position itself as the leading provider-sponsored PSO. Based in Naperville, Illinois, MAPS provides the opportunity to exceed standards of quality of care by providing expert clinical staff and strong programs and services focused on patient safety education, strong member PSO operations and performance improvement.

#### **About IHA**

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Chicago, Naperville, Springfield and Washington, D.C., advocates for Illinois' more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of non-profit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see [team-iha.org](http://team-iha.org). Like IHA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/teamiha). Follow IHA on [X](https://twitter.com/teamiha), formerly Twitter.

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