

Johns Hopkins' Armstrong Institute to Aid the Leapfrog Group in Grading the Safety and Quality of U.S. Hospitals

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A team of researchers at Johns Hopkins' Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality has been tapped to provide scientific guidance to The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit known for publishing report cards detailing how hospitals perform in key quality and safety measures. The Johns Hopkins experts will apply their knowledge and research of health care performance measures to guide the methodology behind the two primary mechanisms Leapfrog uses to assess hospitals: the Leapfrog Hospital Survey and the Hospital Safety Score.

"Patients should have access to the most accurate and current data on hospital safety and quality when making important decisions on where they and their loved ones should receive care," says Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president of quality and safety at Johns Hopkins Medicine. "This collaboration highlights The Leapfrog Group's commitment to bringing the best information available to health care consumers."

In support of the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, the team at the Armstrong Institute will assess an ever-evolving list of quality and safety indicators - from whether newborns receive recommended screenings to how often health care workers wash their hands - to create the best overall picture of hospital safety and quality possible.

To support the Hospital Safety Score, the Armstrong team will work closely with the Blue Ribbon Expert Panel, a nine-member group of patient safety experts who have provided guidance to Leapfrog around the Hospital Safety Score.

Armstrong Institute instructor Matt Austin, Ph.D., who is the former director of the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, will lead the Johns Hopkins team's efforts.

"This partnership reflects the Armstrong Institute's strong commitment to empower and engage patients and families to be active participants in their care," Austin says. The institute recently received a \$9.4 million grant to better involve the families of ICU patients in their loved ones' care. The joint initiative builds upon prior collaborations between the two patient safety-focused groups. Pronovost, the Armstrong Institute's director, is the longtime chair of Leapfrog's ICU Physician Staffing expert panel - a key measure in assessing if hospitals are using specially trained physicians in caring for the sickest patients.

The Leapfrog Group is best known for their annual survey, which, for the past 11 years, has publicly reported national hospital quality and safety data for health care consumers and purchasers. Their Hospital Safety Score, a more recent initiative that awards hospitals a letter grade based on their overall performance on publicly reported data, provides a standardized method to evaluate patient safety across hospitals, including facilities that opt out of the survey.

"The Armstrong Institute has demonstrated that they are experts in applying research to practice," says Leah Binder, M.B.A., president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "We look forward to bringing this expertise to the work of The Leapfrog Group."