

Pronovost Named Director of New Hopkins Patient Safety Institute

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Patient safety expert Peter J. Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of anesthesiology and critical care medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, has been named director of the newly established Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality at Johns Hopkins.

Along with becoming director of the institute, Pronovost was named Johns Hopkins Medicine's senior vice president for patient safety and quality.

Pronovost is internationally known for his work using a simple five-step checklist coupled with a program of culture change to dramatically reduce the number of central-line associated bloodstream infections in ICUs, virtually eliminating them at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and throughout the state of Michigan. Pronovost's program — now in place in nearly every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and in many nations around the world — is believed to have saved thousands of lives and millions of health care dollars.

The infections, which kill more than 30,000 Americans annually, are down 58 percent across the country in recent years, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"While it's rare for research to impact practice, and rarer still for it to impact policy, Peter has a knack for conducting research that does both," says Edward D. Miller, dean of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and CEO of Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Peter has been a tireless advocate for the development of innovative, field-tested and practical patient safety tools. His design of clinical care practices is saving the lives of countless patients who might otherwise have been lost to human error and infection."

Pronovost says he wants to build on the success of his checklist and bring the same focus to other areas of medicine where preventable harm continues unabated.

"Our team has proved you can take one safety problem and nearly eliminate it by bringing science to the delivery of health care and by using our hospital as a laboratory," says Pronovost, a 2008 winner of a MacArthur Fellowship, or "genius grant," from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. "Now we want to scale up for all other types of preventable harm using this model of research, practice and evaluation and share that with the world too. We have an amazing team of interdisciplinary researchers and safety leaders to guide the way. I am honored and humbled to be given the opportunity to do just that."

The Armstrong Institute is made possible by a \$10 million gift from C. Michael Armstrong, the chairman of the board of trustees of Johns Hopkins Medicine and retired chairman of Comcast, AT&T, Hughes Electronics and IBM World Trade Corporation.

The Armstrong Institute will oversee all of the current patient safety and quality efforts throughout Johns Hopkins Medicine. It is designed to rigorously apply scientific principles to the study of safety

for the benefit of all patients, not just those at Johns Hopkins. The focus will be on eliminating preventable harm for patients, eliminating health disparities, ensuring clinical excellence and creating a culture that values patient-centered care, collaboration, accountability and organizational learning. Johns Hopkins will serve as a learning laboratory to test the best that its researchers have to offer in the fields of patient safety and quality improvement.

“Peter Pronovost has exemplified excellence at Hopkins and throughout the country through his patient safety research, implementation and results,” says Armstrong. “He is the right leader for the Armstrong Institute and will take patient safety to the next level.”

Pronovost, who earned his M.D. at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and his Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, currently heads Johns Hopkins’ Quality and Safety Research Group and is medical director of Hopkins’ Center for Innovation in Quality Patient Care. Both groups as well as other partners through the university and health system will be folded into the new Armstrong Institute.

Pronovost has written more than 400 articles and chapters related to patient safety and the measurement and evaluation of safety efforts. Last year, he chronicled his experiences in *Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals: How one doctor's checklist can help us change health care from the inside out*. He chairs the ICU Physician Staffing Committee for the Leapfrog Group and serves on the Quality Measures Work Group of the National Quality Forum.

He also serves in an advisory capacity to the World Health Organizations’ World Alliance for Patient Safety and is leading WHO efforts to improve patient safety measurement, evaluation and leadership capacity globally. Because of Pronovost’s efforts, the World Health Organization has recently established its first office dedicated to advancing patient safety, located at Johns Hopkins.

Pronovost expects to bring a multidisciplinary approach to the new Armstrong Institute because, he says, “there are different types of safety problems that require different theories and different methods to solve. More important, we need to listen to and partner with clinicians.” For example, he says he plans to tap the expertise of psychologists to assist in improving teamwork, sociologists to help with organizational culture, and human factors and systems engineers to improve the interaction between staff members and new hospital technologies.

“Originally, 120 years ago the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine was founded to link research and practice by becoming the first medical school linked to a hospital,” Pronovost says. “Numerous discoveries were made and so many were saved as basic research was married to clinical practice. Now, we’re building on that noble tradition as we take aim at preventable harm, bringing the best science to the urgent need of improved patient safety and the highest in health care quality.”