

# Technology and Patient Safety

James Hereford  
Ex. VP, Strategic Services and Quality  
Group Health Cooperative

Technology is necessary but not sufficient

The system is comprised of people, processes and technology

They must be thought of simultaneously to optimize the system

Failure to do so can have significant negative consequences

Patient involvement is often forgotten

Patients are traditionally in a passive mode in the system

The system is largely a black box to the patient

They don't know what SHOULD be done

They don't know what IS being done

Medication reconciliation

Allergies

Lab results

Problem lists

Technology can provide transparency to the patient



Technology brings capabilities

Having information

Intra-system

Inter-system

Community data sharing is a MUST

Applying logical filters to data

Best Practice Alerts



Communication

Between clinicians  
Clinical orders  
Clinical documentation  
Good hand offs

Between patients and clinicians



Optimizing the system

Technology changes the system, but it doesn't have to be a positive change

System leaders must attend to the people and the processes of care

Technology must change the way you practice

The processes will change, either with intended or unintended consequences

Technology requires its own safe guards

Technology can impact many things quickly

This requires the IT group to have its own culture of safety

Prevention  
Detection  
Remediation

System leads to culture

The highest levels of patient safety require the health care system have a CULTURE of safety

Culture is a direct result of what the system "affords" or makes easy, and what it disincentivizes makes difficult

The implementation of technology provides an opportunity to re-shape the culture by reshaping the system

It can't be ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY  
Will we SEIZE the opportunity???