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Delaware Valley Healthcare Council's patient-safety awards

by John George Staff Writer

The Delaware Valley Healthcare Council announced Thursday this year's award winners for patient-safety initiatives and other programs designed to improve care.

Crozer-Keystone Health System in Delaware County received the 2009 Delaware Valley Patient Safety Award for creating its "Great Catch" program. The initiative provided an easy way for staff to report "near miss" events that almost resulted in medical errors. Additionally, the program is used to educate surgical physicians and staff about risk-reduction strategies. The Health Care Improvement Foundation, which is affiliated with DVHC, awarded Crozer-Keystone a grant of \$5,000 to help support future patient-safety initiatives.

Named as finalists for the patient-safety award were: Paoli Hospital, which developed a collaborative effort to reduce patient risk by adopting the use of sterile saline flushes for the maintenance of central lines; Phoenixville Hospital, where a multidisciplinary clinical team determined that improving identification, assessment, and intervention processes for patients at risk would decrease the incidence of aspiration pneumonia; and Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia, which developed a registered nurse residency program to ease the transition from nursing graduate to professional nurse — a program that resulted in registered nurse turnover dropping from 28 percent in 2007 to 5.3 percent last year.

The winner and finalists were picked, from among 38 nominated projects, by a 10-member committee of quality and patient safety leaders from Drexel University School of Public Health, ECRI Institute, Healthcare Performance Improvement, the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, Independence Blue Cross, the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and VHA East Coast.