

## Step Up and Be Counted

*(Editor's Note: From time to time, we invite guest editorials from professionals in the field. In this issue, Bryanne Patail emphasizes the role that biomed and clinical engineers play in the patient safety effort.)*

I salute AAMI, the *BI&T* Editorial Board, and the *BI&T* staff for printing patient safety related-topics in recent issues of the publication. The cover story on adverse event reporting (see page 111) brings to light the need for clinical engineers (CEs) and biomedical equipment technicians (BMETs) to learn and get involved in the investigation and reporting of medical device-related accidents and incidents.

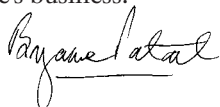
Dr. James Bagian, director of the VA National Center for Patient Safety continually reminds us: "what you don't know you can't fix." It is important for all CEs and BMETs to be "in the know" if they are serious about contributing to prevent adverse event-related deaths and injuries. You must take the initiative to encourage all clinical staff to alert you about medical device-related mishaps and "close calls."

The Patient Safety Focus column (see page 147), "How CEs Can Learn from Adverse Events," also addresses the need for the CE and biomed communities to step up and be counted. They need to change their paradigm and do more to decrease adverse events that result in patient injuries and death.

Investigation is just the beginning—it could answer what happened and why it happened. What you do with the information to conduct root cause analysis and formulate some short-term and long-term solutions could close the information loop and prevent a health care mishap from happening again.

It has been five years since the Institute of Medicine report, "To Err is Human," was first published. The goal was 50% reduction in injuries and deaths in five years. But experts say we are nowhere close to that and they are not satisfied with the speed of progress.

I urge all CEs and biomed to start a dialogue with the medical quality improvement and patient safety staff at their facilities. Participate and contribute your troubleshooting skills to improve patient safety at your facility. Safety is everyone's business.



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