

**Patient safety:
A global health priority**

**World Patient Safety
Day**

Speak up for Patient Safety!

Handbook 2019

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Introduction

On Tuesday 17 September 2019, health stakeholders from all over the world will stand together, united in a celebration of World Patient Safety Day (WPSD). This will be the first year running that we have joined hands to mark the Day. It is a unique opportunity for patients, patients' groups and others to stand together in our claim that safe patient-centered healthcare is an essential component for the achievement universal health coverage.

This day was established at the recently concluded World Health Assembly in May 2019 as part of the Global Action Plan on Patient Safety Resolution where Member States from all 194 countries agreed to address global patient safety in a concerted manner.

Therefore, this World Patient Safety Day, we will be calling on all governments and health stakeholders to ensure and oversee successful implementation of the commitments they made under the World Health Assembly Resolution 'Global Action on Patient Safety' as part of national plans to reduce avoidable harm.

[Keep reading for a letter template on following this up with your local Ministries of Health.]

We need your support campaigning

We need your help to make this happen. With your support we can raise greater awareness, change perspectives and improve the lives of patients across the globe. Please support World Patient Safety Day as much as you can. There are many ways to advocate for patient safety. In this handbook, we have put together some examples of activities to give you some inspiration. These activities range from lobbying your health ministers and raising awareness of safety measures on social media, through to raising awareness amongst the public on key issues relating to patient safety and creating opportunities for effectively engaging the media.

This guide

This guide is designed to help everyone support the Day. It provides both big and small ideas for activities and events, plenty of background information, a range of resources and lots of marketing materials you can adapt to make the most of World Patient Safety Day.

Please use the platforms and messaging outlined here to engage with your health authorities and community and encourage them to spread the word, either on the day itself or any convenient day close to it.

Find out more

Visit <https://www.iapo.org.uk/campaigns> for an online version of this guide and more.

History of World Patient Safety Day

At the recent 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019, the Assembly (the decision making body of the World Health Organization) considered the report by the Director-General on global action on patient safety which highlighted the growing public health challenge of patient safety. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the Assembly adopted the resolution WHA72.6 Global Action on Patient Safety to address global patient safety in a concerted manner.

Part of the resolution, all 194 Member States endorsed the establishment of a World Patient Safety Day, to be marked annually on 17 September in order to increase public awareness and engagement, enhance global understanding, and work towards global solidarity and action by Member States to promote patient safety. The adopted resolution also includes recommendations that Member States are urged to commit to.

1: The Theme

Patient Safety: a global health priority

Safety in healthcare is a global concern because of increasing numbers of people suffering avoidable harm or being put at risk of injury while receiving healthcare. Patient harm due to adverse events is a leading cause of death and disability everywhere in the world. Each year, an estimated 134 million adverse events occur due to unsafe care in hospitals in low- and middle-income countries, contributing to 2.6 million deaths, while approximately 1 in 10 patients is harmed while receiving hospital care in high-income countries.

The endorsement of the World Patient Safety Day at the 72nd World Health Assembly showed that although health systems and their effectiveness differ from country to country, patient safety issues have very similar if not the same causes in all countries.

This means that if all regions and countries aim to achieve UHC, the issue of patient safety must be carefully considered and prioritized.

Through this global campaign, we will mobilize patients, health workers, policy makers, academicians, researchers, professional networks and the healthcare industry to “Speak up for Patient Safety!”.

The campaign invites all health stakeholders to collaborate with governments towards promoting and supporting patient safety initiatives. We aim to raise awareness among policy-makers, healthcare leaders, health workers and other key stakeholders about the need to formulate policies, create a work culture, and provide care where the safety of patients is a priority. The campaign also seeks to help patients be more aware and engaged in their own care.

A key tenet of IAPO’s Patient-Centered Healthcare Declaration is that patients must have access to safe, quality and appropriate treatments as warranted by their conditions. If the principle of patient safety is not properly guaranteed in health policy and practice, no healthcare system can be viewed truly patient-centric. Therefore, World Patient Safety Day presents an opportunity to advocate for safer healthcare for everyone by holding all stakeholders accountable on commitments they have made to prioritize patient safety in all countries.

We hope that countries, regions and partners will use the day to engage in policy dialogue and formulate patient safety action plans. All this as an effort to establish systems and networks that support the engagement, participation and empowerment of patients, families and communities and civil society in the delivery of safer healthcare.

Only multi-stakeholder collaboration will allow us to outline the necessary steps to achieve patient safety for everyone, as it is an issue that cuts across various levels. By coming together this World Patient Safety Day, we call on all stakeholders to develop healthcare strategies that will guarantee patient safety for all.

Campaign key messages

1. This World Patient Safety Day patient advocates across the globe will be calling on all governments and health stakeholders to ensure and oversee successful implementation of the commitments they made under the World Health Assembly Resolution ‘Global Action on Patient Safety’ as part of their national plans to reduce avoidable harm.

2. World Patient Safety Day is a unique opportunity for all health stakeholders to position patient safety as an essential component for strengthening health care systems to achieve universal health coverage.
3. Patient safety is a global health priority.
4. Collaborative working, based on genuine patient involvement is key to ensuring the achievement of patient safety within health systems.
5. All patients, patient advocates and carers are committed to prioritizing patient safety and making healthcare safer worldwide.

2: How to show your support

Ideas and activities

We have put together a list of ideas to help you show your support using as much or as little time and resources as you can spare. Patient safety can be promoted and supported in multiple ways. It is up to you to choose the ones that you feel can have the strongest impact. You don't need lots of money to make a large impact and to show your solidarity. Be creative and think of ideas not listed here too!

Effort level: Easy-peasy

- Use your social media networks to spread the word - follow and share news on Twitter and Facebook. Use the hashtag #PatientSafety and #WorldPatientSafetyDay and the slogan "Speak up for Patient Safety" to add your voice to the conversation.
- Add the WPSD banner to your organization's website hyperlinking it to IAPO's website.
- Raise awareness with WPSD fliers, posters, stickers or t-shirts among your local communities, government, health service providers and any other health professionals.
- Talk about #WPSD2019 at any events or meetings that you are holding and engage more people in the campaign.
- Add your voice to the campaign and send us a quote of 60 words or less on what WPSD and the theme mean to you. This will be turned into a 'quotagram' and shared globally via social media. We would love to hear what a World Patient Safety Day means to you in a quotation from your organization. (Send it to: rachel@iapo.org.uk)

Effort level: I can dedicate some time to WPSD

- “Be the news!” Talk to your local/national media about the day and the issues that patient groups face, and how to work together towards safe healthcare.
- Distribute patient safety information to members of the public.
- Promote key messages by matching them with the chosen medium to get to the target audiences.
- Highlight World Patient Safety Day in your organization’s newsletter or events pages on your website.
- Contribute to IAPO’s monthly newsletters in September and October writing an article about your views on this year’s WPSD theme. (Get in touch with: rachel@iapo.org.uk)
- Identify opportunities to speak at local community events or meetings where you can raise awareness of patients’ rights, safe medicines and healthcare.
- Organise visits and meetings to local hospitals to meet with patients and health professionals and engage them in the campaign.

Effort level: Let’s go all out on this!

- Hold health and community engagement workshops, offering opportunities for patients to speak about own experiences (challenges and solutions) regarding patient safety. Share these experiences via short articles with us to promote patient pharmacovigilance stories.
- Run a cultural event such as a play, theatre, dance or concert with your local groups and networks to raise awareness on safe medication and healthcare in creative ways.
- Host a poster competition to engage young people and let them say describe what patient safety means for them. Share these with us to help you promote them.
- Hold a march or a walk around your local area to raise awareness and promote discussion around patient safety.
- Identify decision-makers and target key players linked to healthcare, such as doctors, nurses, health professionals and teachers who have a strong collective voice in health policy-making through their associations and industry representative bodies.
- Deliver a letter to Ministries of Health and other health authorities calling for a

commitment to ensure and oversee successful implementation of the commitments made under the World Health Assembly Resolution 'Global Action on Patient Safety' within healthcare systems in their respective countries as part of national plans to reduce avoidable harm.

- Call on health authorities to use World Patient Safety Day to establish a compact among your organization and their organization to increase patient participation and engagement in a national effort to improve patient safety in our healthcare system as we head towards Universal Health Coverage by 2030.
- Create a safe space, either online or offline, for patients to discuss their issues, experiences and what patient safety means to them.
- Host a face-to-face seminar or online webinar to discuss a strategy for achieving patient safety in your area/country/region. Invite a range of stakeholders to speak on the panel.
- Create a website or Facebook page to promote a petition and gather online support for a policy intervention aiming to promote patient safety.
- Ask a well-known patient or celebrity from your region or country to support your event or endorse the day, to increase the media and public attention.
- Visit your local hospital to engage with patients and health professionals.

Suggested timeline

- **August:** Start thinking about possible activities.

Have a clear plan to celebrate WPSD and contact your supporters to promote your activities (local and regional Ministry of Health and other stakeholders).

- **Early September:** Build up a drumbeat of activity on social media in the lead up to Tuesday 17 September and tell IAPO what you are planning.

- **September 17th:** World Patient Safety Day! Hold events, be active on social media, encourage everyone to support WPSD and help build the momentum.

Let's get digital - using social networks



Use Twitter to post short updates and to receive a live feed of current

news and events; you can also post photos, films, and share what's happening now. Add #PatientSafety #WorldPatientSafetyDay and [@IAPOvoice](#) to your posts so that your comments appear on our page and can be easily found by other people celebrating World Patient Safety Day. Make sure you follow us at @IAPOvoice to follow news and activities.

Post longer messages on Facebook to share stories, news, photos and information about your events and activities. Try to add a photo to your Facebook post whenever possible as it will attract more attention. Post your updates on <https://www.facebook.com/IAPOvoice/> as well as your own page. Like our page!



We want to hear from you. Please let us know what you are planning for the Day, what you do and how it went. Email our Communications Officer at rachel@iapo.org.uk.

Engaging the media

A great way to engage all audiences in World Patient Safety Day is through your local media. We encourage you to build relationships with influential journalists to help generate coverage of your World Patient Safety Day activities. This also will help to increase your organization's profile and highlight your great work.

You can develop your own media outreach programmes at either national or local levels by using press releases with key messaging (see page 5), social media hashtags and sample social media updates, and highlighting your activities.

Writing and issuing press releases

When writing and issuing press releases to media, including press and broadcast platforms, it is useful to have the [IAPO Principles on Universal Health Coverage](#), the [IAPO Declaration on Patient-Centred Healthcare](#), [IAPO Policy Briefing #5: Patient Safety](#) and [IAPO Patient Safety Toolkit](#) as resources and references. This can help you compare and contrast your country's policies with those of other countries in your region, using an international definition as a key reference.

Link your objectives with government priorities and topical issues that are currently in the news. For example, you may have a case study that demonstrates how patients in your country are affected by the lack of safety healthcare. These cases are useful to create media interest.

All efforts to engage the media need to begin with a clear statement and answer the following five questions to define the story:

- **Who is central to the story?**
- **What is the news you want to report?**
- **Why has it happened and what will the consequences be?**
- **When did it happen?**
- **Where did it happen?**

Remember that a press release must offer new information or a different angle or event, to be considered news. You must offer journalists a clear opinion and an additional insight to increase your chances of them covering your story. It is also often a good idea to announce collaborations with other organizations and launch joint media campaigns. An example press release is available for you on the website to use and adapt when reaching out to your local press and media.

It is important to use real patient stories in your media engagement. Stories telling the experiences of patients help to strengthen your advocacy by giving it a personal and human angle. Use personal stories to move hearts, and data and figures to stimulate minds.

"World Patient Safety Day is a Day of reflection on the plight of a patient while imagining that at some point you could be the one and think critically on possibilities that can improve patient safety so that health services delivery can focus at putting the patient first in its planning and implementation."

Ideas for catching media attention

Approach a health, policy, news-focused publication or blog to publish an article that you have written for WPSD.

Tag relevant media on your social media posts

Invite media to cover the event that you are organizing to promote patient

Approach a politician with an interest in the issue to write an article or offer to write it for them. Approach a health, policy, news-focused publication or blog to publish the

Ask a champion to support your cause and highlight your activities! A famous person, well-known patient, or celebrity from your region or country would help to bring increased media and public attention to your event, and to World Patient Safety Day.

Don't forget to collaborate! Partnering with other patients', health and human rights organizations can increase the impact of your campaign, and support you with the distribution of your messages, press releases and social media updates.

These can help to strengthen your engagement with the government, as a coalition with a united voice has more impact. The IAPO toolkit 'Working with partners and stakeholders' offers guidance for patients' organizations on how to develop partnerships with stakeholders while retaining independence.

<http://iapo.org.uk/working-partners-and-stakeholders-toolkit>

Speaking on radio and television talk shows

Sharing your personal story will help others understand why the day is so important. Practice your interview technique and be prepared. When you are being interviewed by a journalist, it is often easier to start with the conclusion because those can provide the introduction to the story.

This applies in two ways: the way you tell the story and how you respond to questions. It

is important to acknowledge the question but then to move on to what you want to say by 'bridging' your response. To do this, you will need to find a word, phrase or idea in the question to use as a link. Prepare your story with your key messages in phrases so that you are ready to put this across in your responses.

Lobbying decision-makers

Only by taking a cross-sector and multi-stakeholder approach will we achieve safety in healthcare for all. Decision-makers and policy-makers are often those with the power to invest in strategies to ensure patient safety. Therefore it is crucial for patients to develop adequate knowledge as to the most effective ways to reach out to these actors. Below is a checklist to consider when writing to government bodies, campaign groups and other important and relevant stakeholders.

1. Identify key decision-makers

Getting your messages heard by the right people is essential to successfully influence policy. Also, the healthcare system is composed of many important players, including professionals, health ministry representatives, industry representatives, government officials, academics and the media. Knowing where the decision-making power lies and who the crucial actors are in the various fields is key to holding stakeholders to account for supporting and ensuring patient safety within our health systems.

2. Approach decision-makers

It is important to identify the best methods of engagement depending on the actor that you want to approach. Ensure that the actions that you take are appropriately tailored on the characteristics of the partner or entity to whom you want to speak. Carefully selecting forms of engagement that are fit-for-purpose can do a lot to make your voice stronger and better heard from those who have the power to ensure successful implementation of the commitments made under the World Health Assembly Resolution 'Global Action on Patient Safety' within healthcare systems to reduce avoidable harm.. Where possible, partner with other organizations and plan joint activities to ensure that different patient communities come together and speak with one, strong voice.

3. Call on key healthcare stakeholders to commit to working towards patient safety

Explore ways of securing commitment from stakeholders to ensure they will work with

us, as the patient movement, towards patient safety. One way of securing such a commitment may be to request the establishment of an agreement between you and the stakeholder to increase patient participation and engagement in efforts to improve patient safety within healthcare systems. See letter template to help with this here.

Ensuring patients have access to safe, quality and appropriate healthcare is at the heart of a patient-centred approach. Therefore another way of securing such a commitment may be to request endorsement of the [IAPO Declaration on Patient-Centred Healthcare](#).

Available materials

There are a range of materials that IAPO has developed to help you with your engagement and activities. Please download the resources from our website here: <https://www.iapo.org.uk/campaign-resources>

- **World Patient Safety Day newsletter article example**
- **Example letters to send to decision-makers**
- **Example press release**

Adding your own information

Where appropriate, we recommend you localise the materials by using facts and figures from your country and your own spokespeople. Develop messages based on the theme, and link them to your specific context and country issues. Include examples from your country about why these issues are important and should be highlighted.

Final comments

Thank you for your support of the 1st World Patient Safety Day!

Please keep IAPO up to date with your plans and progress on World Patient Safety Day, particularly any media coverage. We look forward to hearing about your successes!

Email your updates to rachel@iapo.org.uk