

# What's New in the Patient Safety World

April 2021

## ECRI Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns for 2021

ECRI has released its annual list of "Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns" for 2021. ([ECRI 2021](#)). ECRI is quick to point out that this year's Top 10 list is dominated by topics having a relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here's the full list of ECRI's top 10 patient safety issues for 2021:

1. Racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare
2. Emergency preparedness and response in aging services
3. Pandemic preparedness across the health system
4. Supply chain interruptions
5. Drug shortages
6. Telehealth workflow challenges
7. Improvised use of medical devices
8. Methotrexate therapy
9. Peripheral vascular harm
10. Infection risk from aerosol-generating procedures

Item #2 focuses on long-term care facilities. It points out that, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, other disasters created emergency situations in long-term care facilities in recent years, citing several hurricanes. ECRI recommends facilities have in place plans that address:

- All-hazards vulnerability assessment
- Shelter-in-place; evacuation; or modified admission, transfer, or transition protocols
- Communication plans for staff, residents, families, emergency responders, and the public
- Crisis standards of care, including modified visitation
- Staffing and scheduling
- Supplies and equipment
- After Action Reports (AARs) to identify successes and improvement opportunities

Item #6 “Telehealth workflow challenges” is a topic we’ve recently addressed. In our November 2020 What’s New in the Patient Safety World column “[Telemedicine Here to Stay But Use It Safely](#)” we pointed out that one of the few positive things to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic (yes, there are some positives!) is that telemedicine has flourished. We talked about the advantages of telemedicine but also pointed out the barriers and challenges to effective telemedicine.

ECRI and the ISMP PSO reviewed a sample of 42 telehealth-related events and found several evolving themes, including:

- Poor WIFI accessibility in the healthcare setting
- Inadequate or inappropriate monitoring
- Inadequate availability of monitors and rooms with monitoring capability
- Inadequate language services
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy concerns

Our November 2020 What’s New in the Patient Safety World column “[Telemedicine Here to Stay But Use It Safely](#)” discussed challenges in telemedicine sessions due to patients having impaired hearing, neurological conditions impacting ability to communicate, and patient-related difficulties dealing with technology.

We refer you to ECRI’s full list ([ECRI 2021](#)) for details on all the other top 10 concerns.

## References:

ECRI. Top 10 Patient Safety Concerns for 2021. ECRI 2021  
[https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/Solutions/Patient-Safety-Organization/ECRI\\_Top10\\_Patient-Safety-Concerns\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/Solutions/Patient-Safety-Organization/ECRI_Top10_Patient-Safety-Concerns_2021.pdf)



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