

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 18 MARCH 2008

NHS seeks Patient 'champions' to improve safety

A campaign to recruit *Patient Safety Champions* is launched today at a special conference in Birmingham.

Members of the public will champion the cause of patient safety, and the role patients can play in improving safety. 22 *Patient Safety Champions* will be recruited to work with staff responsible for patient safety across England and Wales.

The champions will be drawn from patients, including people who have been affected by medical accidents.

The *Patient Safety Champions* are being recruited as part of a joint project between Action Against Medical Accidents (AvMA) and the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA). The aim is to put patient concerns at the heart of efforts to improve patient safety.

Patient Safety Champions, who will be voluntary, will work closely with local NHS bodies including risk managers and Patient Safety Action Teams to ensure that the patient is considered in all work to improve safety.

Rita Lewis, Chair of AvMA, whose own family has been affected by medical accidents said: "For 25 years AvMA has championed the cause of patient safety and justice. This is an exciting opportunity for individual patients who have unique experience and perspective to offer to help address what is the most pressing issue facing the NHS today".

The project is linked to the international *Patients for Patient Safety* initiative spearheaded by the World Health Organisation.

Peter Mansell, Director for Patient Experience and Public Involvement at the NPSA, said: "Patients have a vital role to play in improving safety. There can be a tendency for the healthcare community to view incidents only in the clinical context. Patients have a much more humanistic view and can highlight consequences such as impact on quality of life that are sometimes missed by clinicians."

Patient Safety Champions will be recruited over the coming weeks to start work in May 2008.

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Notes

1. Members of the public interested in finding out more about becoming a patient safety champion should visit www.avma.org.uk/champions; e-mail: safety@avma.org.uk; write to Patients for Patient Safety, AvMA 44 High Street, Croydon CR0 1YB or telephone 020 8688 9555.
2. For full details of how to become a champion and what it involves go to www.avma.org.uk/champions or contact safety@avma.org.uk
3. The Call for Patient Safety Champions is being launched at 'Patients for Patient Safety', a one-day partnership event for NHS staff and patients at the City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham on 18th March 2008 between 10.30am and 16.30pm.
4. The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) helps the NHS learn from its mistakes so that it can improve patient safety. It does this by collecting reports on errors and other things that go wrong in healthcare so that it can recognise national trends and introduce practical ways of preventing problems. It does not investigate individual cases or complaints, but it does listen to public concerns and uses what is said to improve safety.
5. Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) is an independent charity (number 299123) which promotes patient safety and justice. It supports people affected by medical accidents and provides good practice. More information is available at www.avma.org.uk