

NASA News

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NASA AND VA ROLL OUT NEW REPORTING SYSTEM FOR PATIENT SAFETY

As of March 2002, patients at Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics nationwide will have an extra 'pair of eyes' looking out for their safety.

In collaboration with NASA, the VA is rolling out a new medical reporting system, called the Patient Safety Reporting System (PSRS), to most of its medical facilities nationwide. The PSRS is an independent, external system that operates in a complementary manner to the agency's current internal reporting systems. The PSRS is modeled after NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), an incident reporting program administered for the Federal Aviation Administration by NASA's Ames Research Center in California's Silicon Valley.

"The experience gained in operating the ASRS for 25 years will be invaluable in establishing the collection of voluntary, confidential data reported by health care providers on the front line of patient care in VA facilities," said Linda Connell, NASA ASRS/PSRS director.

Dr. James Bagian, director of the VA's National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS) added, "when individuals feel uncomfortable reporting to the internal systems, they have a safety valve they can use – the PSRS." The guiding principles of the PSRS are improvement of patient safety through voluntary participation, confidential reporting, and non-punitive provisions for VA employees who chose to participate, according to officials.

The VA operates 163 medical centers across the country and last year had more than 3 million patients enrolled in its health-care system. The PSRS invites all VA medical facility staff to voluntarily report any events or concerns that involve patient safety.

Ames Research Center is NASA's lead Center for Information Technology and Human Factors. NASA Ames has operated the ASRS for the FAA since it was established in 1976.

PSRS forms and information are available at VA medical facilities and at the PSRS website:

<http://psrs.arc.nasa.gov>.

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