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## **ACHCU Introduces New Ligature Risk Assessment Toolkit**

*Resources Address Expectation That Care is Provided in a Safe Setting for All Patients*

**CARY, N.C. (April 17, 2023)** – ACHCU, the educational and training division of Accreditation Commission for Health Care, Inc. (ACHC), has revealed its new Ligature Risk Assessment Toolkit for acute care and critical access hospitals. The ACHCU toolkit is comprised of two multi-component parts: one for behavioral health units and one for non-behavioral health units.

“Our goal in developing the Ligature Risk Assessment Toolkit is to build staff awareness of ligature risk points to establish a process for eliminating these risks from an environmental perspective,” said Deanna Scatena, association program director for acute care hospitals and critical access hospitals for ACHC. “Achieving and maintaining a safe setting for patients throughout hospitals is of the utmost importance to us, and these resources help to promote our ongoing commitment to performance improvement.”

A “safe setting” has a distinct meaning for patients who may be at risk of self-harm. To support compliance efforts in providing this setting for all patients, ACHC has adopted the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) definitions of a ligature risk point and ligature resistant. When implemented alongside one another, these resources help ensure compliance with the ACHC standards found in the chapters on Physical Environment and Patient Rights and Safety.

The toolkits for behavioral and non-behavioral health units are comprised of risk assessment guides and checklists for identifying and mitigating ligature risk points. A comprehensive risk assessment should be completed semi-annually by a multidisciplinary team. A shift-based checklist is an additional environmental assessment completed at the beginning of each shift by a staff member assigned to a patient identified as needing protection from self-harm. The checklist can be added to the organization’s electronic medical record or completed on paper and scanned into the patient record.

### **Behavioral Health Unit Ligature Risk Assessment**

The Behavioral Health Unit Ligature Risk Assessment Tool focuses on specific areas and conditions found in typical behavioral health units. This resource includes a unit-based compliance tool that identifies the desired state with regard to a ligature-resistant environment. A dashboard provides a visual overview with a count of identified risks pre- and post-corrective action/mitigation. ACHC created this tool for unit leadership and the quality and safety teams.

### **Non-Behavioral Health Unit Ligature Risk Assessment**

“At-risk” patients may be treated in any unit of the hospital. The Non-Behavioral Health Unit Ligature Risk Assessment Tool focuses on patient rooms and bathrooms. This resource includes a unit-based risk assessment tool, a dashboard to provide an overview of identified risks by location and a separate, shift-based bedside checklist that can be embedded in an EMR or scanned into a patient's medical record. Designed for use across the hospital, the tool helps maintain staff awareness of the need for protective action in units that are not primarily addressing behavioral health issues.

“From my experience as a life safety surveyor for ACHC acute care hospitals and critical access hospitals, I’m confident these periodic assessments are what’s needed to allow our customers to better drive proactive correction measures and mitigate self-harming risks,” said Richard Parker, associate director for life safety and physical environment for ACHC. “They further demonstrate our dedication to patient safety and quality care.”

For more information about ACHCU educational tools and resources email [customerservice@achcu.com](mailto:customerservice@achcu.com) or visit <https://achcu.com/compounding-pharmacy-tools/>.

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