SPECIALTY FOCUS

Internal Medicine/ Family Medicine

A Guide to Common Areas of Risk and How to Address These

	Key Areas for Errors	Strategies to Reduce Errors
Failure to Diagnose or Delayed Diagnosis	• **Heads—acute neurological presentations:** CVA, SAH, epidurals, encephalitis/meningitis and space occupying spinal cord lesions • **Hearts—chest pain triple rule-out:** MI/ACS, PE, dissection • **Guts—acute abdominal emergencies:** appendicitis, perforations, ischemic bowel, abscess • **Bugs—severe infectious diseases:** sepsis, necrotizing fascitis, MRSA, SBE, septic joints	• **Recognize the narrow window of opportunity** to make these rare but serious diagnoses • **Perform a good exam and document it,** including neurologic when appropriate • **Use imaging and communicate** with your radiologist • **Urgent consults**—you own the window of time until your patient gets there • **Vital signs are important,** especially trends and discharge vitals • **Document** what you are thinking
Cancer	• **Timely diagnosis** of and screening for breast, colorectal, lung, melanoma and prostate malignancies • **Incidental findings on imaging** warrants work-up or follow-up imaging	• **Sophisticated tickler and tracking systems** • **Risk-specific screenings** and document their completion or refusal • **Systematic work-up** of symptomatic findings • Once there is an incidental finding, **track it through the process** • **Alert patient** of any findings, recommendations, and document in the chart • **Use closed loop communication** to alert any other providers who may need to know about the findings
Medication Errors	• Dosing errors • Look alike/sound alike medications • Allergies or adverse drug reactions • Failure to monitor	• **Ensure the right prescription, right delivery, and right dose;** understand how your electronic systems can help or hinder this • **Proper patient education and monitoring**

Copic Resources

3Rs Program: Early intervention and resolution program to preserve relationships

24/7 Risk Management Hotline: Physician risk managers available for guidance

Education: Specialty-specific education, on-demand courses, virtual programs, and seminars

Copiscope: Our newsletter that covers current topics in risk management and patient safety

Online Resource Library: Clinical guidelines, consent forms, practice management resources, and more