

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2020

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Continuous period of zero inpatient falls at Aspirus Ontonagon

ONTONAGON, Mich. – May 2020 represents a 14-month continuous period of zero inpatient falls at Aspirus Ontonagon Hospital. Falls are the single most common adverse event in hospitals and are the leading cause of injury and death in older adults.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality reports each year in the United States between 700,000 and 1 million patients fall while hospitalized. About one-third of these falls could be prevented. Factors leading to patient falls include patients not using the call button to request help when exiting their bed, standing, or walking; use of high-risk medications that can cause dizziness or impaired mobility; tripping hazards and more. Falls are associated with increased length of hospital stay and poor health outcomes.

In May 2017, Aspirus implemented the Hester Davis (HD) falls program. The program emphasizes fall prevention training, education and competency for nursing and provides tools for achieving and maintaining compliance.

Over the past three years, ongoing education and use of best practices by the Inpatient Team has shown amazing results. The hospital adopted a new fall risk assessment that is completed every shift by the nurse. The assessment helps determine if a patient is at risk for falling and specific interventions are put into place to reduce that risk. The nursing staff tailors each patient's plan of care to his or her specific needs. Patients and families are educated on fall prevention and patients are encouraged to call for help in getting in and out of their bed.

“Our staff is always focused on patient safety,” said Becky Anderson, Quality Care Coordinator. “Partnering with Hester Davis has been highly instrumental to our success. This partnership and the commitment of all Aspirus Ontonagon staff to fall prevention has resulted in this wonderful milestone of zero inpatient falls throughout the past 14 months.”

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Aspirus is a non-profit, community-directed health system based in Wausau, Wisconsin. Its 8,700 employees are focused on improving the health and well-being of people throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Aspirus serves communities through four hospitals in Michigan and six hospitals in Wisconsin, 50 clinics, home health and hospice care, pharmacies, critical care and air-medical transport, medical goods, nursing homes and a broad network of physicians. Aspirus was recognized in 2018 and 2019 by IBM Watson Health as a Top 15 Health System in its annual study identifying the top-performing health systems in the country. For more information, visit aspirus.org.