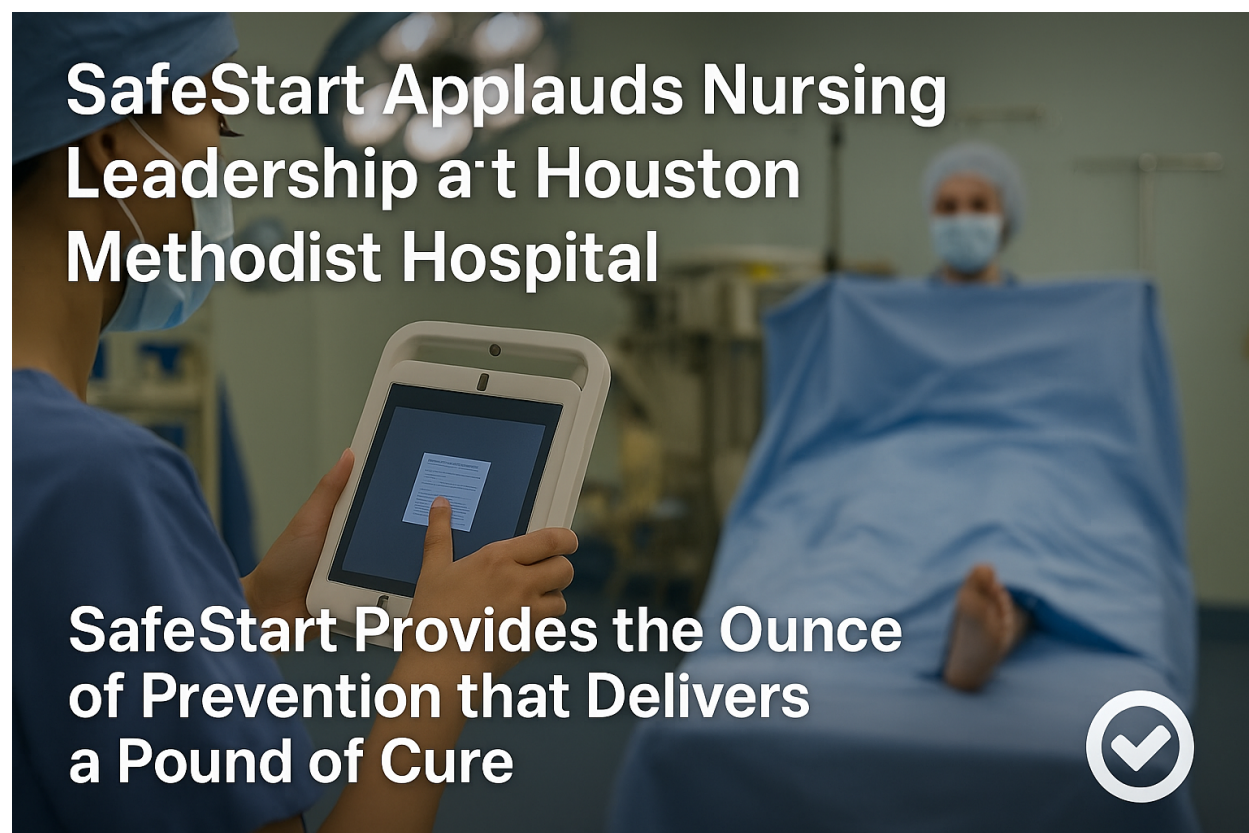




SafeStart Applauds Nursing Leadership at Houston Methodist Hospital

Why their work to prevent wrong surgeries deserves national attention



SafeStart Medical extends its sincere congratulations to **Monica Harrelson, MSN, CNOR, CNL; Kayleigh Kautz, BSN, CNOR, CNAMB; and Francia Marshall, BSc, BSN, RN-BC**, of **Houston Methodist Hospital – Texas Medical Center**, for their outstanding leadership in addressing one of healthcare’s most persistent and devastating safety challenges — **wrong-site, wrong-procedure, and wrong-patient events (WSPEs)**.

Their recent project, highlighted in *Outpatient Surgery Magazine (OSM)* and presented at the **2025 AORN Global Surgical Conference & Expo**, represents a model for how dedicated nursing teams can reduce patient harm through structured communication, standardization, and accountability.

Bold text → section headers and key SafeStart statements.

- *Italic text* → direct quotations or paraphrased material from **OSM, AORN, or The Joint Commission**.
- Regular text → SafeStart commentary and context

How to prevent surgeries performed on the wrong site, procedure or patient — or with the wrong implant. Wrong Surgeries: A Growing Concern

According to OSM’s coverage of The Joint Commission’s Sentinel Event Data 2024 Annual Review, wrong surgeries ranked among the top sentinel events for the third year in a row, with 127 incidents reported last year — a 43% increase from 2022. More than two-thirds were wrong-site operations, with others involving wrong-patient, wrong-procedure, or wrong-implant cases.

The report identified leading contributors as: policies and procedures not followed; time-outs not performed or incomplete; poor hand-off communication; task fixation or multitasking; and incomplete information in the electronic health record.

Each of these factors shares a common thread — **human factors breakdowns**.

Better Hand-off Communications

(as described by OSM and the Houston Methodist nursing team)

To reduce the potential for wrong-site and other sentinel events, Harrelson, Kautz, and Marshall identified that inconsistent handoffs between pre-op and intra-op nurses were a key source of

error. By implementing a standardized bedside handoff protocol — including EMR verification, nurse-to-nurse identification, and documented electronic confirmation — compliance improved from 60% to 93% within ten months.

SafeStart strongly aligns with this finding. **Better communication starts at patient intake and continues into the operating room.**

SafeStart's digital workflow integrates patient verification, procedure matching, and annotated surgical-site confirmation long before the first incision, ensuring that communication errors are identified and corrected early — not discovered after harm occurs.



Help Is Available

(inspired by OSM and AORN's Sentinel Event commentary)

AORN reminds us that the Joint Commission's Universal Protocol and the World Health Organization's Surgical Safety Checklist remain essential — but compliance alone hasn't eliminated WSPEs.

Checklists fail because people can mindlessly tick off items and they fail because users trust unverified information. When the data inside a checklist are wrong, the process only hard-wires

error. SafeStart resolves this “[checklist paradox](#)” by ensuring that every pre-surgical fact — from procedure to site to implant — is confirmed, cross-checked and approved by the patient and all take holders before it’s ever relied upon.

SafeStart automates the information content verification process and patient engagement long before the first incision.

SafeStart builds on those evidence-based frameworks by creating a **continuous digital hand-off chain** — from patient intake into the operating room. SafeStart automates visual site verification, procedural matching, and documentation integrity cross checks that protect both patients and providers.

When nursing leaders like those at Houston Methodist advance the science of safety, **SafeStart can provide the scalable, durable mechanism that makes their insights repeatable across every facility, every patient, every procedure.**

Conclusion

The collaboration between forward-thinking nursing teams and innovative safety technology represents the future of surgical safety.

At SafeStart, we proudly echo the spirit of their work: - *“Better hand-off communication saves lives.” (and limbs)*

And SafeStart make it possible — **every patient, every procedure, every time.**

References & Acknowledgments

Adapted in part from *Outpatient Surgery Magazine* (AORN publication) and *The Joint Commission’s 2024 Sentinel Event Data Annual Review*. Special recognition to Houston Methodist Hospital’s nursing leadership team for their exemplary contribution to patient safety.

Healthcare Risk, Quality & Safety

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