

# Health & Safety

HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER

AUG - SEPT 2014

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Working safely may get old, but so do those who practice it."

-Author Unknown

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SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

## What is a "Culture of Safety?"

*"To establish a culture of safety, an organization must change from one of blame for errors to one where errors are seen as opportunities to learn and improve. A culture of safety recognizes that errors exist and are a part of the healthcare business, and deals with them in a non-punitive manner (unless behavior is truly egregious.)"*

-Duke University Medical Center



To help create a supportive environment for our workforce members to report safety problems, a confidential Catalyst **Patient Safety Survey** was sent to all faculty, staff and students last November.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree on brief statements about patient safety issues, medical errors, and event reporting in their selected work units.

Results from the survey provided a benchmark and highlighted under-reporting as a current problem. Additional training in departments is planned.

The Patient Safety Survey was a project of the School's Coordinated Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) Operations Committee which meets bi-monthly, working to ensure a safe and healthy environment for care of patients, employees and staff.

The Committee plans to conduct future surveys; the next format will be streamlined to increase participation rates.



## On the Job: JULY

⇒ There were a total of 4 **clinic safety events** reported for July: Three bloodborne pathogen exposures and one sharps injury. Two of the BBP exposures were attributed to "patient movement."

**Provider Tip:** Safety advocates suggest explaining the procedure and telling the patient what you're about to do; patients may be less anxious and less prone to move suddenly if they know what to expect.

⇒ Hall Health is now called: **Hall Health Primary Care Center**

⇒ The **new health & safety cards** to be worn with your SoD ID were distributed this spring and have straight corners. If your corners are rounded, we can set you straight! Just email Kira Robinson in Clinical Services at kirag@uw.edu to be sent a new card.





Dental wastewater can contain as much as 100-2,000 parts per million (ppm) of mercury. An amalgam separator can remove up to 99% of the mercury in dental wastewater, if properly maintained.

-WA State Dept. of Ecology

## School Wins Wastewater Award

Protecting Puget Sound water quality is a priority at the UW School of Dentistry, where between **31,200-41,600 gallons of dental wastewater a year** undergo a rigorous treatment process to extract mercury from dental chair wastewater to meet strict requirements placed on the School's discharge limits. Amalgam particles which aren't captured in chair-side traps are filtered by the School's two amalgam separators, located in the mechanical rooms of the B and D wings. Maintenance Manager, Dave Fox, coordinated the installation of the separators, and has serviced the equipment over the past 5 years. Dave works with UW Environmental Health & Safety and sends water samples and collected data each month to King County officials. Thanks to Dave's hard work, the School received the 2013 Gold Award for exemplary compliance with the Industrial Waste Program of the King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks.

Help our environmental efforts by remembering to:

- Remove amalgam in chunks so it is more likely to be caught in chair-side traps.
- NEVER put amalgam in sharps containers, red biohazard bags, trashcans or wash it down a regular sink.
- Dispose of amalgam **ONLY** in a chair-side trap or in a clinic-designated scrap amalgam jar.



## Asbestos Training Changes

### HEALTH & SAFETY

Recently, the WA State Dept. of Labor and Industries (L&I) reinterpreted their asbestos policy and updated their asbestos training. The new requirements are as follows:

**New UW** employees are *still required* to complete asbestos awareness training at the beginning of their employment.

**Most UW employees are no longer required to complete annual asbestos awareness training.**

**Certain employees**, such as maintenance and custodial workers, whose work may bring them into contact with asbestos containing materials must still do annual training.

Additional *specialized* training is *still required* for employees who work directly with asbestos-containing materials.

As always, report any asbestos concerns to your supervisor and use caution around construction and renovation projects.



Got Exit Plan? Evacuations

## 2014 Fire Drill: September 4th

The Annual fire drill has been scheduled for the morning of Thursday, September 4th for the B, C & D wings. Evacuation of patients will be at the discretion of each clinic.

**EVACUATIONS:** The Health Science Group 4 Health & Safety Committee includes two representatives from the School of Dentistry, Juanita Roberts and Sandy Phillips. At their July 22, 2014 meeting, the group focused on:

- ◇ Identifying better evacuation routes
- ◇ Creating strategies for directing evacuees
- ◇ Improving communication between designated Evacuation Coordinators