Creative approaches to handoffs help meet JCAHO’s safety goal

When things go wrong in health care, it’s often because a key piece of information isn’t passed on or isn’t passed on correctly.

Clinicians also tend to have different communication styles—in some cases, they aren’t even “in the same movie,” note experts from Kaiser Permanente, a leader in patient safety. When nurses call physicians, they tend to “paint the big picture” by reviewing the patient’s nursing care plan. Physicians want to cut to the chase: “What’s the problem, and what do you need?”

The plot thickens with the many departments a patient encounters during a hospital stay.

How do you get everyone in the same movie? Part of the solution is to follow the same script. As part of its 2006 National Patient Safety Goals, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is requiring organizations to standardize handoffs.

In this issue, we share some of the creative ways organizations are using to standardize handoffs.