

## **NEVER SAY NEVER**

*How standardized nursing language can reduce “never events” in healthcare & improve patient safety.*

### **For Immediate Release**

(Green Bay, WI) – The old saying “never say never” takes on a profound reality when applied to hospital events that are never supposed to happen but, in reality, often do. These events are referred to as “never events” and include largely preventable problems such as falls, foreign objects being left in a patient’s body after surgery, infants being discharged to the wrong person, or patient death or serious disability associated with a medication error. While the exact number of never events is unknown, it’s estimated that these events result in many injuries and deaths every year, as well as millions of dollars in additional healthcare costs.

Adding further urgency to the issue is that recently enacted Federal rules no longer reimburse hospitals for charges associated with many such never events. Medicare contends that because these events are considered preventable, health care providers must accept responsibility, accountability and liability.

While the solution to reducing never events is complex, the nursing profession can provide part of the solution. “One proven way of reducing never events is through the use of standardized terminology to document a registered nurse’s diagnosis and care plan for a patient,” said T. Heather Herdman, PhD, RN, Executive Director of NANDA International (NANDA-I). NANDA-I is a professional nursing association that develops, refines and publishes terminology accurately reflecting nurses’ clinical judgments.

In a health care environment where nurses are providing more care to more patients, Dr. Herdman says a standardized nursing language “provides clarity in communication among all professionals caring for that patient which, in turn, leads to a better level of care and improved patient safety.”

While using a standardized language is an important step in reducing never events, it’s equally important to select a standardized nursing language that provides researched based terminology. “There are significant differences among available standard nursing languages,” Dr. Herdman explained. “Ideally, a standard language provides the RN with diagnostic terms, their associated signs and symptoms, as well as the foundational scientific research.” The depth of information available to the RN about a term leads to greater accuracy in nursing diagnosis and care. “Some languages only offer a list of diagnostic terms, without associated patient signs and symptoms and without the research to back it up. Without these components the wrong term, or diagnosis, could easily be made,” said Dr. Herdman.

The bottom line is that standardized nursing language is directly related to safe and effective care for patients. Herdman summed up the issue by stating, “A patient care plan written in a language that is understood by all will reduce the risk of never events. It is critical that this point is not lost as we tackle avoidable errors in patient care.”

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***NANDA International (NANDA-I)** is an organization of nursing professionals from more than 20 countries, that develops, refines and publishes terminology accurately reflecting nurses' clinical judgments. NANDA-I's unique, evidence-based standardized nursing language includes social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of care. It is used in 32 countries worldwide. To learn more, go to: [www.nanda.org](http://www.nanda.org)*

**Media Contact:**

Angela Walschinski - NANDA-I  
Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Inc.  
920-965-7750 ext. 119  
[awalschinski@LFpublicrelations.com](mailto:awalschinski@LFpublicrelations.com)  
[www.LFpublicrelations.com](http://www.LFpublicrelations.com)