Restricting Medical Air Access for Safety by Controlling Air Flowmeters Initiative

What is this initiative about?

The possibility of tubing connections being inadvertently mixed up between wall outlets for medical air and oxygen has been a long-standing patient safety issue. Evidence shows that a combined strategy of using both AirGaurd and controlling the inventory of air flowmeters is the most effective way to reduce the risk of misconnections and keep our patients safe.

The Respiratory Health Strategic Clinical Network and Health Professions Strategy & Practice partnered together to develop a solution for AHS.

Beginning in March 2016; AHS and Covenant Health sites adopted this combined strategy across the province:

- Removing all air flowmeters from wall outlets and **retaining only a very small number** of air flowmeters;
- Adding **AirGuard safety covers** to all retained air flowmeters;
- Developing an appropriate **inventory control** process for all retained air flowmeters that have been converted with AirGuards;
- Prescribing or interchanging metered-dose inhalers with spacers when possible, rather than delivery of respiratory medicines using nebulizers.

This strategy applies to all disciplines, to all care settings, and to all staff and physicians.

- For more information on this initiative, contact respiratoryhealth.scn@ahs.ca
- For AHS & CH staff, please visit insite – Health Professions Strategy & Practice (HPSP) > Resources

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