High Reliability Organizing

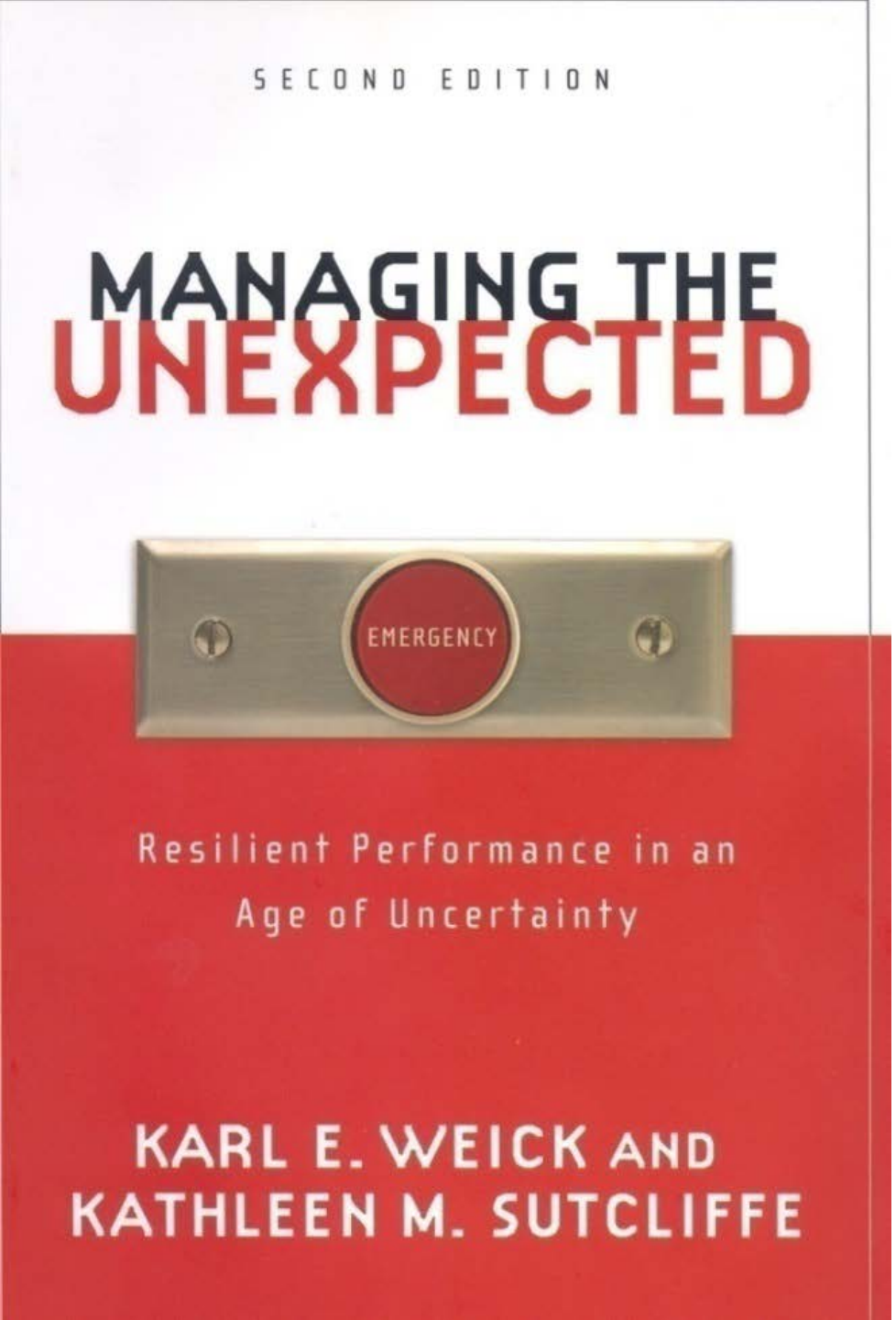
Barbara DeBaun, RN, MSN, CIC

Tennessee State Hospital Association Quality Improvement Course

March 2019

Why do we have a reliability gap?

1. Improvement excessively dependent on vigilance and hard work
2. Benchmarking to mediocre outcomes gives a false sense of reliability
3. Excessive clinical autonomy allows for wide and unjustifiable performance variation
4. Processes rarely designed to meet specific reliability goals



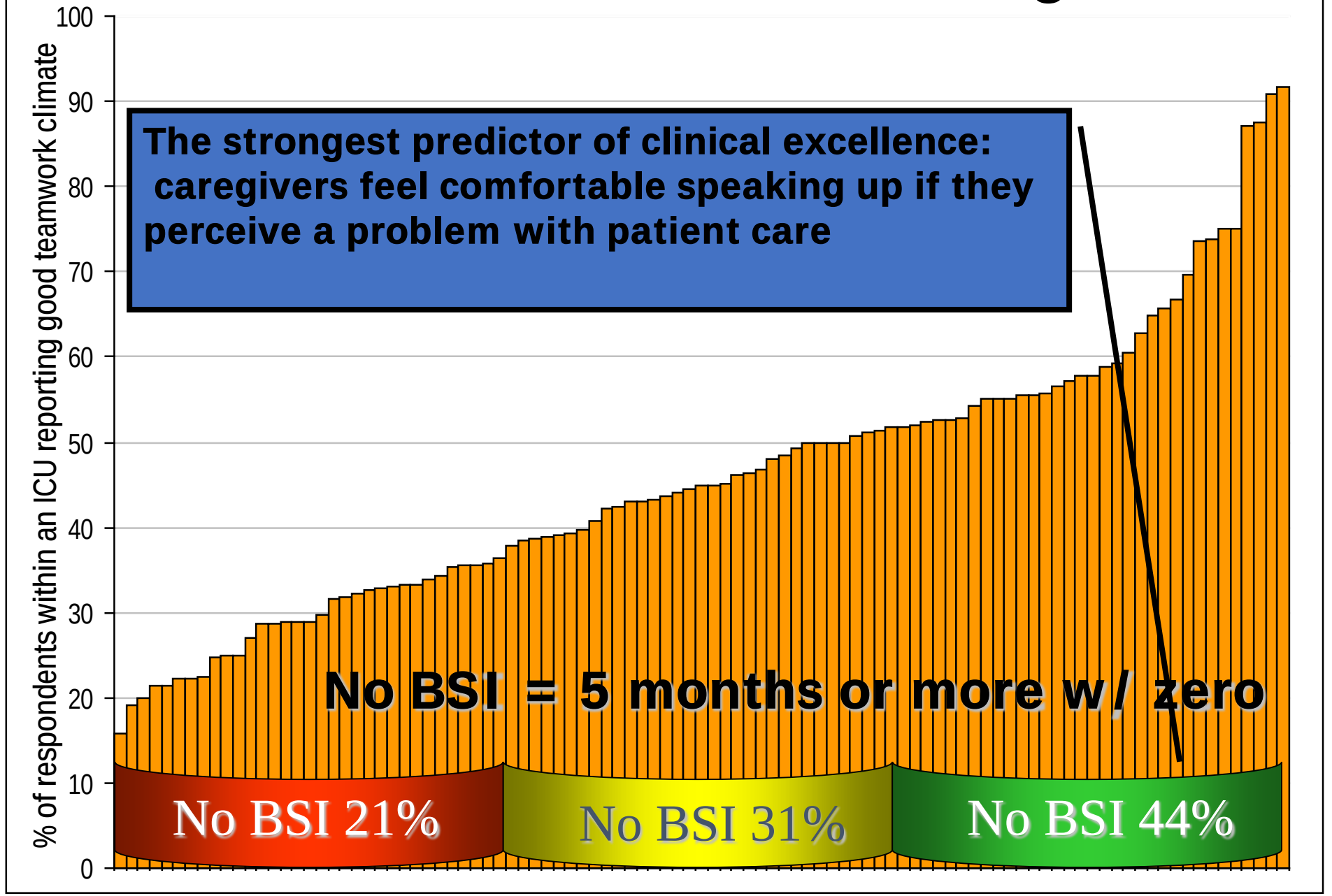
High Reliability

- Tracks small failures
- Resists oversimplification
- Is sensitive to operations
- Maintains capabilities for resilience
- Takes advantage of shifting locations of expertise

Sensitivity to operations

- Attentive to the front line
- “Big Picture” is less strategic and more operational
- Situational awareness
- Make adjustments that prevent errors from accumulating and enlarging
- People who refuse to ‘speak up” out of fear undermine the system

Teamwork Climate Across Michigan ICUs



Situational Awareness

- Environment & People
  - Attention to detail
  - Include all multidisciplinary team members including patients and family
  - Be proactive; anticipate potential risks “weak signals”
  - Promote teamwork and group understanding

Airline safety announcement

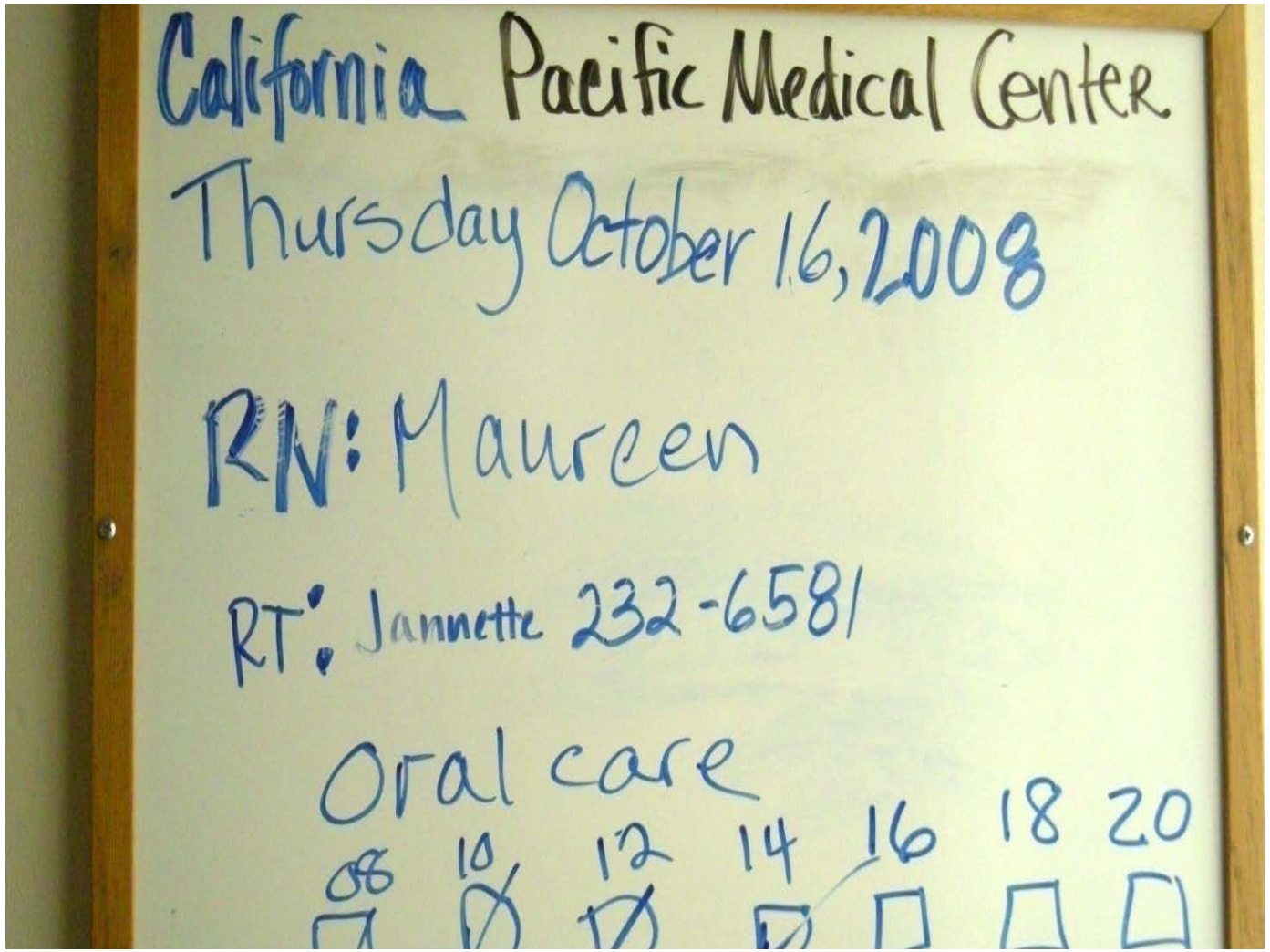
- “….must assist crew and help direct other passengers without being occupied with other intentions…”

SkyWest Flight Attendant
May 6, 2008

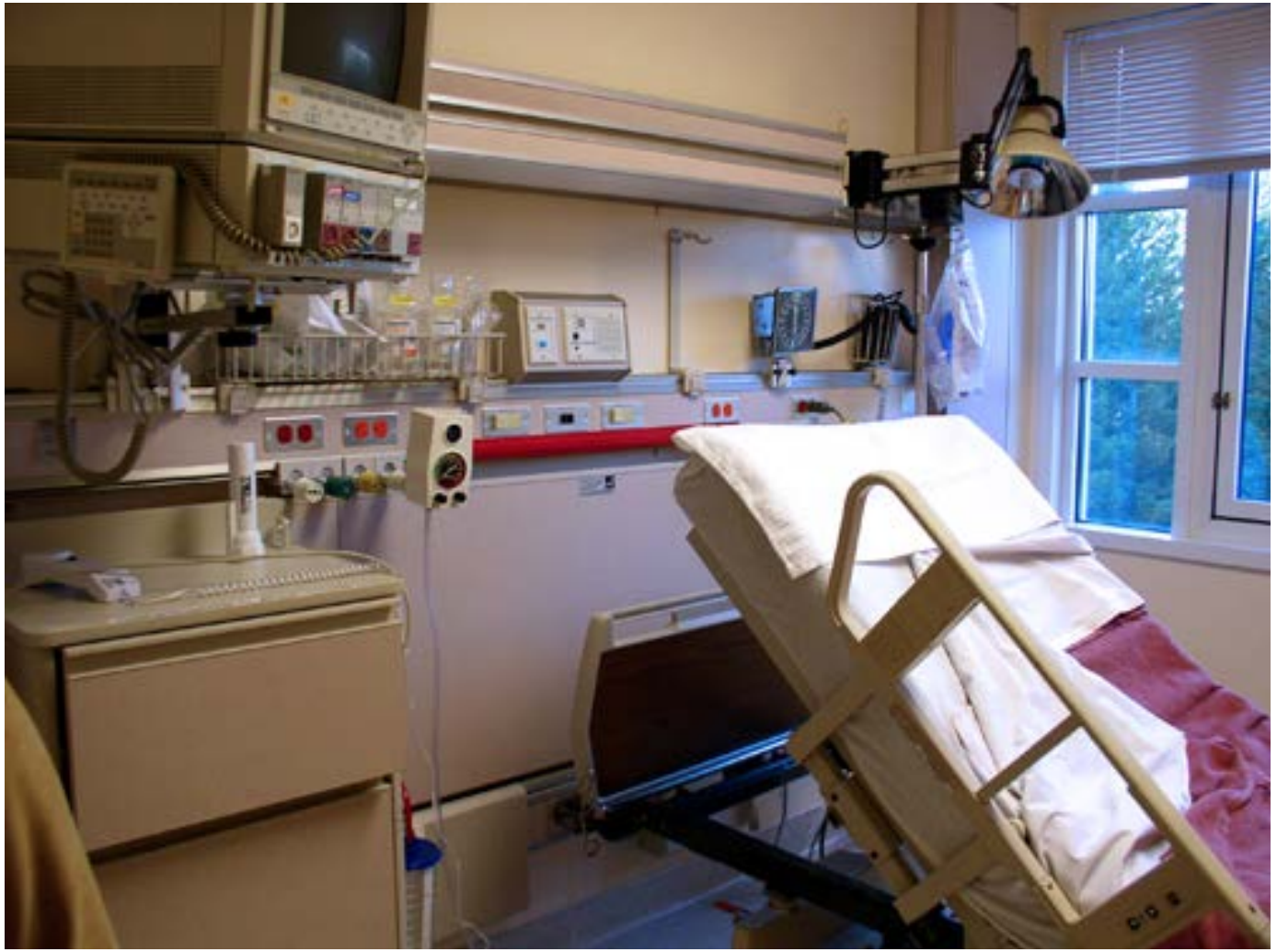
Preoccupation with Failure

- Encourage reporting of errors
- Treat any lapse as a symptom that something may be wrong with the system
- Focus on near-misses
- Are wary of potential liabilities of success
  - Complacency
  - Temptation to reduce margins of safety
  - Automatic processing

Making Failure Obvious

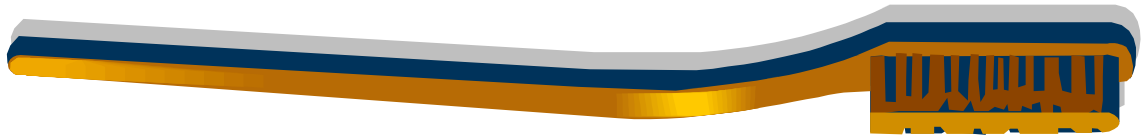


Making Failure Obvious

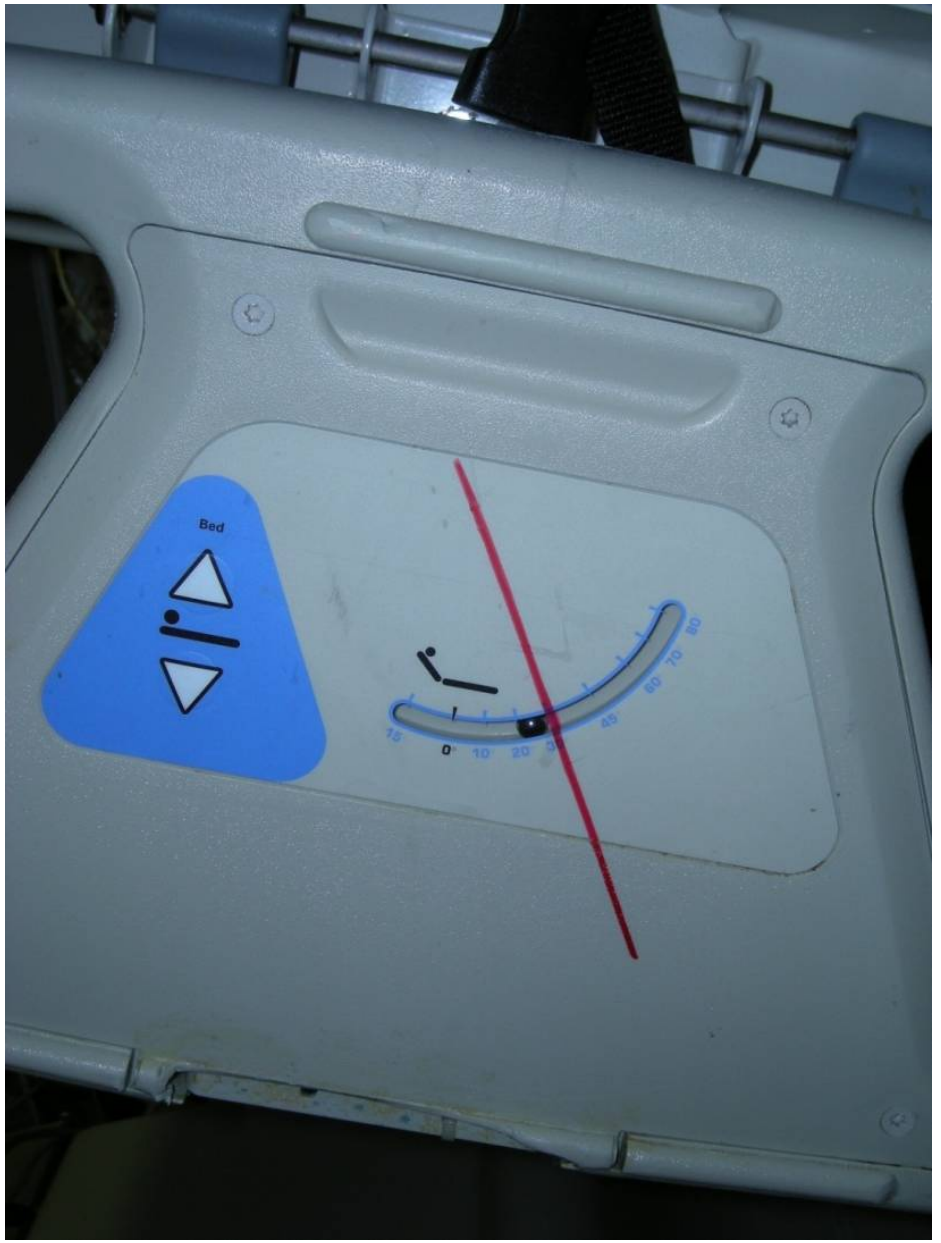


Making Failure Obvious

- Use of every-4-hour oral care kit
  - Only toothbrush should be left at 4AM
  - Staff held each other accountable



Making Failure Obvious

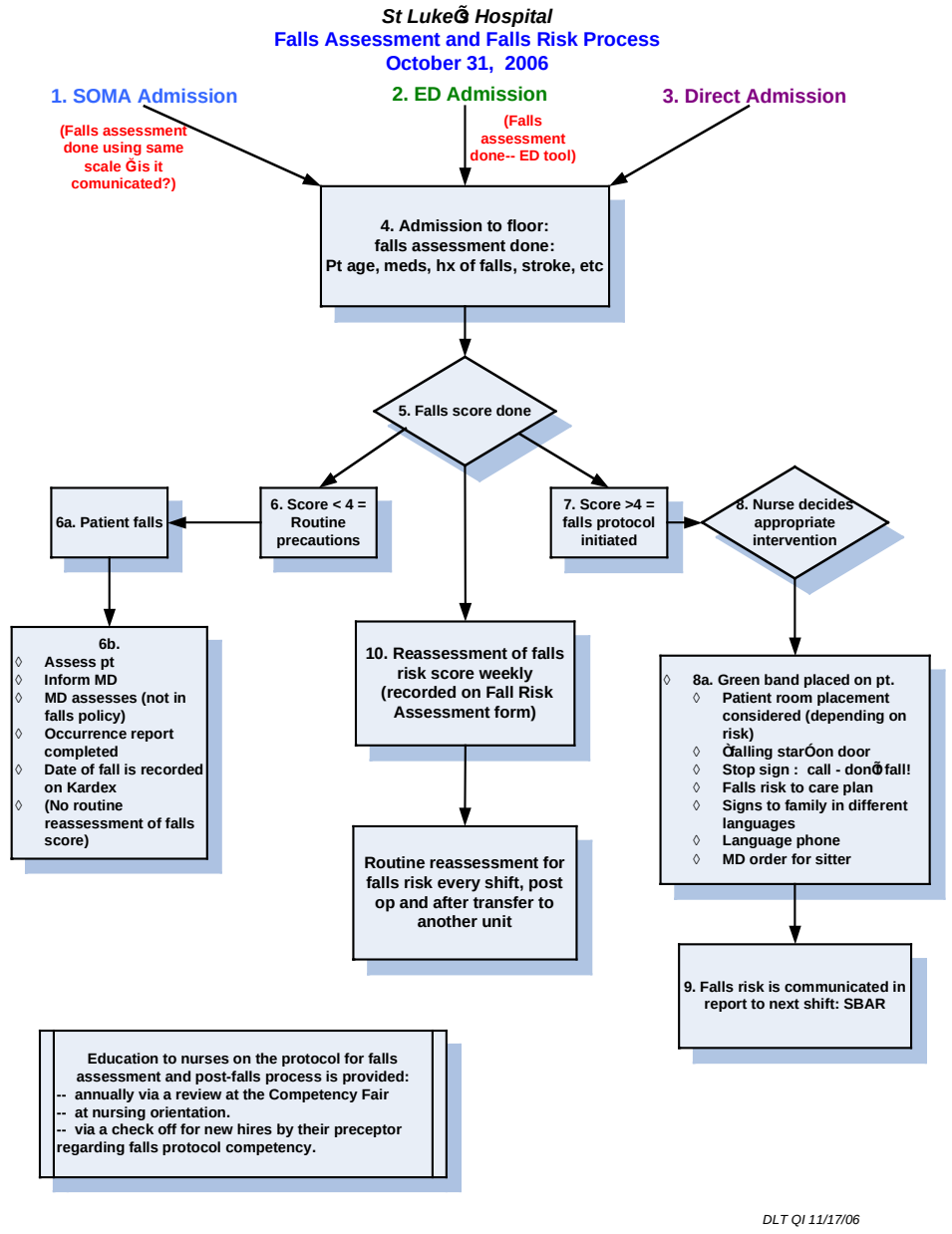


Making Failure Obvious

Reluctance to Simplify

- See as much as possible
- Welcome diverse experience, skepticism

Flowchart your current process



Commitment to Resilience

- Detect, contain and bounce back from inevitable errors
- Errors don’t disable
- Combination of keeping errors small and improvising workarounds that allow the system to keep functioning

Deference to Expertise

- Push decision making down and around
- “experience” not always a guarantee of expertise
- Awareness of others limitations and fallibilities