

# SBAR Communications

## Bonnie Desselle, MD

Among health care professionals effective communication is vital to achieve the best patient outcomes possible. Improving communication and other teamwork skills will result in improved performance. During emergencies and critical situations, communication among all health care team members is of utmost importance. A framework for team members to effectively communicate information to one another was developed by TeamSteps\*. The mnemonic SBAR stands for:

- Situation
- Background
- Assessment
- Recommendation

An example:

- SITUATION
  - "I am calling you about a patient who is having a seizure".
- BACKGROUND
  - "He is KL, the CP child we admitted earlier with pneumonia and known seizure disorder. He is having generalized rhythmic movements of his upper and lower extremities and difficulty breathing."
- ASSESSMENT
  - "I think he is having a seizure and respiratory distress."
- RECOMMENDATION
  - "We should give him some Ativan and oxygen and I would like you to come and help me."

It is recommended that all members of the health care team communicate in this manner. Good modeling of communication by the faculty should result in improved communication skills of our trainees and ultimately improved patient outcomes.

\*TeamSTEPS (Team strategies and tools to enhance performance and patient safety) is a training curriculum created by the Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Department of Defense to teach health care professionals techniques that were first developed to improve aviation flight crews' coordination.