

QUALITY CONNECT

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Building Safer Healthcare Together

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Shri. Jaxay Shah
Chairman, QCI

Healthcare quality is not defined by infrastructure alone it is defined by trust, safety, and the collective commitment of all stakeholders to uphold the highest standards of care. The theme of this edition, “Building Safer Healthcare Together,” echoes the very essence of India’s journey towards a resilient and equitable healthcare ecosystem.

At the Quality Council of India, we firmly believe that safety is not the responsibility of a single institution or profession; it is a shared national mission. Whether it is a doctor ensuring the right diagnosis, a nurse maintaining strict infection control, a technician managing digital systems, or a patient actively participating in their care every contribution strengthens the fabric of safe healthcare.

This year, we witnessed transformative initiatives shaping India’s quality landscape. The Gunvatta Yatra, Gunvatta Pathshala, and Q-Mitra have taken quality awareness to the grassroots, igniting a nationwide movement where excellence becomes part of everyday healthcare practice. NABH’s pioneering work

in expanding accreditation programs, strengthening digital health standards, and promoting patient safety innovations continues to set India apart on the global stage.

As we move towards the collective vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, safe and quality-driven healthcare will remain central to national progress. QCI is committed to empowering institutions, professionals, and communities to adopt practices that place patients at the heart of care.

I congratulate NABH for this comprehensive edition of the newsletter and extend my appreciation to all contributors whose work reflects dedication, innovation, and a deep sense of responsibility toward nation-building.

Together, let us advance towards a future where safety is ensured, trust is strengthened, and quality becomes a way of life in every healthcare setting across the country.

Jai Hind !



Mr. Rizwan Koita

Chairman NABH

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the NABH Newsletter. The theme for this issue, Building Safer Healthcare Together, highlights a responsibility that lies at the heart of NABH and healthcare, ensuring that every patient receives care that is safe, reliable, and respectful.

Patient safety is not the responsibility of any single individual or department. It is built through everyday practices, shared awareness, and a culture that values safety across the entire healthcare institution. From clinical protocols and infection control to communication and reporting systems, every step taken to strengthen quality directly contributes to safer care for patients. At NABH, patient safety has always been central to our work and our standards. NABH has also launched training programs such as the Essentials of Patient Safety for Healthcare Professionals, designed to build awareness and practical understanding of safety practices among healthcare teams. These efforts are intended to support institutions in strengthening their internal systems and encouraging greater attention to patient safety in everyday clinical practice.

One important platform that brings this mission to life is the National Patient Safety Conference, organised annually by NABH. The conference brings together

hospitals, clinicians, policymakers, and other stakeholders who help shape safer healthcare systems. It offers a valuable forum for exchanging ideas, sharing practical experiences, and discussing challenges and solutions related to safety practices. These interactions help strengthen a more connected and informed safety culture across the healthcare ecosystem.

In this issue of the newsletter, we reflect on the many efforts being undertaken by healthcare institutions and professionals to make patient safety an everyday priority. Creating a culture of safety requires openness, collaboration, and a willingness to learn and improve continuously. It is encouraging to see hospitals across the country embracing this approach and integrating safety practices into their systems and processes.

I want to thank the hospitals, healthcare professionals, assessors, and technical experts who continue to support NABH in advancing quality and safety in healthcare. I also acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the NABH Secretariat and the QCI team whose work helps sustain these initiatives.

Let us continue to work together to ensure that safety is not just a standard, but a way of working in every healthcare setting. In doing so, we support the national goal of Viksit Bharat @2047—a vision where every citizen has access to quality healthcare that is both safe and sustainable.

**Warm regards,
Chairperson
NABH**



Mr. Chakravarthy T. Kannan

Secretary General, QCI

It gives me immense pride to present this edition of the NABH Newsletter, centred on the theme “Building Safer Healthcare Together.” This theme is both timely and timeless, reminding us that safety is not an isolated function but the result of coordinated, continuous, and compassionate efforts across the healthcare ecosystem.

India’s healthcare landscape is expanding rapidly, and with this growth comes the responsibility to ensure that quality and safety remain uncompromised. Through its robust accreditation frameworks, innovative standards, capacity-building initiatives, and stakeholder engagement, NABH continues to serve as a catalyst in elevating India’s healthcare practices to global benchmarks.

Initiatives such as Gunvatta Manthan, Gunvatta Pathshala, NABH Digital Health Standards, and numerous skilling programs highlight our commitment to creating systems that are not only compliant but also future-ready. Digital transformation, patient safety culture, and inclusive quality programmes are shaping a new era where excellence is driven by evidence, empathy, and collaboration.

This newsletter captures the spirit of that transformation featuring knowledge, research, field experiences, and inspiring stories from healthcare professionals across the country. Their dedication strengthens our belief that quality is not a destination but a journey we undertake together.

As we advance towards the vision of a self-reliant and developed India, QCI remains steadfast in supporting every healthcare stakeholder in their pursuit of excellence. I commend the NABH team and all contributors for their commitment and passion showcased in this issue.

Let us continue working hand-in-hand to build systems that are safe, efficient, transparent and people-centric ensuring that every patient, in every corner of India, receives the care they rightfully deserve.

Jai Hind!



Dr. Atul Mohan Kochhar CEO, NABH

Healthcare is not just about treatment; it is about building trust, ensuring safety, and nurturing a culture where quality becomes second nature. At NABH, we believe that “patient safety is not a destination; it is a continuous journey of improvement, innovation, and collaboration.”

The theme of this edition **“Building Safer Healthcare Together”** resonates deeply with our mission. It reflects a vision where hospitals, healthcare professionals, and patients join hands to create an ecosystem of uncompromised care, guided by quality standards that inspire confidence and save lives.

One of the most inspiring initiatives furthering this vision is the Gunvatta Yatra – a nationwide movement led by NABH in collaboration with leading healthcare organisations. The Yatra has been designed to ignite a culture of quality improvement, patient safety awareness, and operational excellence across the country. From metro cities to remote districts, healthcare institutions are actively engaging in

workshops, interactive sessions, and learning exchanges, reaffirming their commitment to delivering care that is safe, reliable, and patient-centric.

“Excellence in healthcare is achieved when every stakeholder believes – and acts – as a guardian of patient safety.”

The Gunvatta Yatra is not just a series of events; it is a powerful statement – that India is ready to lead a movement where healthcare delivery evolves beyond treatment to a more holistic, quality-driven approach. The response has been extraordinary, with thousands of professionals participating and sharing innovative solutions that are reshaping how care is provided.

As we progress on this journey, it is important to recognise that healthcare is evolving at a pace never seen before. Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and automation are redefining care pathways, while patient expectations continue to rise. NABH has been proactively integrating these advancements into its accreditation programs to ensure that hospitals not only meet but exceed the benchmarks of safety and quality.

Additionally, we see an inspiring trend: healthcare providers are embracing continuous learning and

capacity building as core values. Through training programs, quality improvement workshops, and performance benchmarking, hospitals are building resilient systems that can anticipate risks, prevent errors, and elevate the patient experience.

“Quality is not an act; it is a habit – one that must be nurtured across all levels of healthcare delivery.”

Looking ahead, our vision is clear – to ensure that safety and quality become the cornerstones of India’s healthcare transformation. This aligns closely with the national vision of ‘**Viksit Bharat 2047**’, where healthcare will stand as one of the strongest pillars of progress. NABH is committed to be a catalyst in this transformation by providing robust frameworks,

fostering innovation, and empowering organisations to achieve global standards of care.

On behalf of NABH, I extend my sincere gratitude to all our partners, hospitals, healthcare professionals, and policy advocates who continue to support this mission. Together, we are not only building safer healthcare systems – we are building a healthier, stronger, and more resilient India.

Let us continue this journey with dedication, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Jai Hind!



National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers

MISSION

To operate accreditation and allied programs in collaboration with stakeholders focusing on patient safety and quality of healthcare based upon national/international standards, through process of self and external evaluation.

VISION

To be the apex national healthcare accreditation and quality improvement body, functioning at par with global benchmarks.

VALUES

Credibility	:	Provide credible and value addition services
Responsiveness	:	Willingness to listen and continuously improving service
Transparency	:	Openness in communication and freedom of information to its stakeholders
Innovation	:	Incorporating change, creativity, continuous learning and new ideas to improve the services being provided

Articles from NABH Secretariat



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eHEALTH
THE ENTERPRISE OF HEALTHCARE



NABH Care Home Accreditation in India - Enhancing Quality and Building Safer Elderly Care

Mr. Trinadh Raju
 Accreditation Officer, NABH

Abstract

The elderly population in India is growing rapidly and is projected to exceed 320 million by 2050, thereby increasing the demand for long-term care services, particularly care homes. The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) has developed accreditation standards to ensure the high quality of care in care homes, including senior living facilities, old age homes, assisted living facilities, palliative care facilities, transition living facilities, specialized care facilities, differently abled living facilities, and hospice care. This literature review explores the benefits of NABH care home accreditation in India, focusing on improvements in quality care, safety, governance, and operational efficiency. The introduction of "The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment bill 2019) in the Lok Sabha (India) in December 2019, the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment initiated the formation of rules under this bill in October 2021. NABH standards for care homes will certainly help and encourage the adoption of the bill and the rules under this bill. By analyzing available resources, seeks to highlight the role of NABH care home accreditation in transforming the care home sector in India, identifying its impact on both providers and residents. The review also proposes recommendations for enhancing the adoption and implementation of NABH standards across India.

1: Introduction

1.1 Background

India's aging population is growing, with over 08% of its population over the age of 60, a number expected to rise significantly in the coming decades. As a result, the need for elderly care homes has grown substantially, but concerns about the quality and safety of care in these care homes have been frequently raised. To address these issues, the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) has introduced a set of accreditation standards for care homes that aim to improve the quality of care, resident safety, staff competence, and overall effective functioning of care homes. NABH accreditation standards for care homes are intended to improve the structure and functioning of care homes, creating a benchmark for providing consistent and quality elderly care. However, the implementation of these standards remains limited, with barriers such as a lack of awareness and inadequate infrastructure hindering the adoption of accreditation standards. Therefore, this review aims to investigate the benefits of NABH accreditation for care homes in India and its contribution to enhancing elderly care services.

1.2 Objectives

The primary problem is to understand how NABH accreditation benefits care homes in India and whether it effectively enhances quality care and resident safety. The objectives of this review are to:

- Explore the key benefits of NABH accreditation for care homes in India.
- Examine how accreditation impacts the quality of care, resident safety, and functioning of care homes.
- Identify barriers to the widespread adoption of NABH care home accreditation.
- Provide policy recommendations for increasing NABH accreditation across India.

2: Review of Selected Literature

2.1 NABH Accreditation: Purpose and Scope

The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) was established under the Quality Council of India (QCI) to enhance the quality of healthcare services in India. NABH accreditation is recognized as a mark of excellence, focusing on patient safety, quality care, and organizational management. The standards set by NABH for care homes cover various aspects, including:

- **Resident care:** Ensuring that care provided is evidence-based, person-centered, and tailored to individual needs.
- **Staff competence:** Ensuring that care home staff are adequately trained, qualified, and engaged in continuous professional development.
- **Six pillar chapters:** Implementing various standards pertaining to responsibility of management, facility management and safety, health, hygiene and infection control, resident engagement and wellness, resident rights and education, and human resource management (1st Edition NABH Care Home Standards).
- **Organization and transparency:** Establishing systems of governance, documentation, and regular audits to ensure compliance and quality standards.
- **Key performance indicators:** Key performance indicators (KPIs) help to systematically monitor, evaluate, and continually improve service performance. (1st Edition NABH Care Home Standards).

2.2 Benefits of NABH Accreditation

The literature emphasizes several key benefits of NABH accreditation for care homes in India:

- **Improved Quality of Care:** NABH care home accreditation standards encourage care homes to adopt evidence-based practices and resident-centered care models.
- **Enhanced Resident Safety:** Accredited care homes have demonstrated improved safety protocols, including better infection control measures, reduced errors, and improved safety precautions among residents. By adhering to NABH care home accreditation standards, care homes create a safer environment for their residents.
- **Operational Efficiency:** NABH care home accreditation leads to improved operational governance, such as better management of resources, staff, and documentation. Care homes benefit from streamlined processes, reducing waste and improving efficiency. Additionally, the accreditation process encourages regular audits, leading to continuous quality improvement.
- **People Trust and Rise in Demand:** Families seeking care for elderly loved ones are more likely to trust and choose NABH care home accreditation. Accreditation acts as a seal of quality, a mark of excellence, which enhances people's confidence and demand for services.

2.3 Challenges in Achieving NABH Care Home Accreditation

While the benefits of NABH care home accreditation are clear, several challenges hinder its widespread adoption. These include:

- **Lack of Awareness:** Many care home administrators and residents are not fully aware of the importance and benefits of NABH accreditation, leading to reluctance in pursuing the accreditation process.
- **Resource Constraints:** Smaller and rural care homes often may lack the necessary resources, including trained staff and infrastructure, to meet the NABH requirements of the standards.

3: Description

3.1 State of Elderly Care in India

Elderly care in India is often inconsistent, with a wide disparity in the quality of services provided by care homes across urban and rural areas. Care homes operate without standardized protocols, leading to concerns about inadequate medical care, poor hygiene, and substandard living conditions for residents. In particular, care homes in rural areas face significant challenges due to limited financial resources, a lack of trained staff, and low awareness of quality care standards.

3.2 Need for NABH Care Home Accreditation

In this context, NABH care home accreditation can play a vital role in ensuring that care homes meet established quality standards and improve the overall quality of elderly care. However, despite the clear advantages, the uptake of NABH care home accreditation remains slow, particularly among smaller and rural care homes. The challenge is to address the barriers preventing widespread adoption and ensure that more care homes in India can benefit from accreditation.

4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study uses a systematic review to assess the benefits of NABH care home accreditation for care homes in India. The review synthesizes findings from a range of sources, including reports, accreditation standards, and publications of NABH.

4.2 Data Collection

Literature was collected from databases such as the NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers) website and AHPI (Association of Healthcare Providers India) website. Relevant keywords such as "NABH accreditation," "elderly care homes India," "long-term care quality," and "care home resident safety" were used to identify pertinent studies.

4.3 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the data. The literature was categorized into key themes such as benefits in quality care, safety, and the

challenges to implementing care home accreditation in India.

5: Results

5.1 Key Findings

- **Improved Care Quality:** May indicate that NABH accreditation leads to higher standards of care in accredited care homes, with better health outcomes and resident satisfaction.
- **Safety Protocols:** NABH accredited care homes may report a better refined system, enhancing protocols and adherence to safety protocols.
- **Operational Benefits:** Accredited care homes may show enhanced efficiency in nursing governance, day-to-day improvement in process, managing resources, and staff by obtaining feedback from the assessment process.
- **Increased Public Confidence:** Accredited care home feedback may indicate that receiving the best possible quality of care to every resident lead to public confidence in care homes, leading to higher occupancy rates and greater demand. This attainment not only achieves accreditation, but it is a promise of continuity of world class healthcare with compassion and integrity.
- **Cost of accreditation process:** With nominal application & annual fees and a step-by-step approach, NABH accreditation remains a low-cost investment that yields high returns in terms of quality care, resident safety and credibility.

6: Summary

6.1 Summary of Findings

This review highlights the significant benefits of NABH care home accreditation in improving the quality of care, safety, operational efficiency, and public trust in care homes. While the benefits of accreditation are clear, challenges such as limited awareness, and resource constraints hinder its widespread adoption. Addressing these barriers is essential for increasing the reach of NABH care home accreditation across India.

6.2 Recommendations

- **Health and Healthcare:** Aim to address the need for improved mental healthcare for older adults, prioritize mental health as an integral part of healthcare, enhance access to services, and promote quality care for all individuals. (Gopalakrishnan, K & Alexander, T 2024).
- **Financial Incentives:** The government should offer subsidies or financial assistance to help care homes meet the costs associated with NABH accreditation, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Nationwide campaigns should be initiated to raise awareness among care home administrators and the general public about the importance and benefits of NABH accreditation.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Training programs for care home administrators and staff should be developed to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to meet NABH standards.

7: Conclusion

NABH care home accreditation has the potential to significantly improve the quality of elderly care in India's care homes and senior citizen assisted living homes. While its adoption is still limited, the clear benefits in terms of quality of care, safety, operational efficiency, and public trust make it a valuable tool for enhancing care home accreditation standards. Addressing the barriers to care home accreditation will help ensure that more care homes can benefit from these improvements, ultimately leading to better care for India's elderly population.

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Together Towards Safer Healthcare: Strengthening Quality Standards, Empowering Teams, and Fostering Patient-Centered Practices for a Safer, Healthier

Mr. Uzair Rehmani
Program Analyst, NABH

Introduction

Healthcare safety is not merely a regulatory requirement; it is a shared commitment among caregivers, administrators, policymakers, and patients. The theme “Building Safer Healthcare Together” reflects a collective responsibility to create a culture where safety is prioritized at every level—clinical practices, hospital operations, patient interactions, and digital integration. In India, this vision is strongly driven by the standards of the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), which emphasize continuous improvement in quality and patient safety.

The Importance of a Safety-First Culture

A safety-first culture is the foundation of healthcare excellence. It is built on the following pillars:

Leadership Commitment – Safety begins at the top. Hospital leaders must integrate patient safety goals into organizational strategy, resource allocation, and training programs.

Standardized Processes – Adherence to evidence-based protocols minimizes variability in care and reduces risks of adverse events.

Transparent Reporting Systems – Encouraging reporting of near misses, adverse events, and safety concerns fosters a proactive approach to risk management.

Patient-Centered Care – Involving patients and their families in care planning and decision-making leads to

better compliance, fewer errors, and improved outcomes.

Role of NABH in Advancing Safety Standards

“Standards are not just rules—they are pathways to safer, better, and more reliable care.”

NABH has been a driving force in institutionalizing safety frameworks across Indian healthcare facilities. Through its accreditation standards, NABH ensures that hospitals develop:

- Robust Clinical Protocols aligned with international best practices.
- Infrastructure Safety Measures including fire safety, biomedical waste management, and emergency preparedness.
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Programs to track performance indicators and implement corrective actions.
- Staff Competency Programs focusing on skill enhancement and patient handling protocols.

These measures not only raise safety benchmarks but also foster a culture where safety becomes a habit rather than an obligation.

Building Safer Healthcare Together: A Collaborative Journey

“Healthcare safety is everyone’s responsibility — providers, patients, and policymakers alike.”

Safety cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders:

1. Healthcare Providers

Doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals are the frontline defenders of patient safety. Their role extends beyond clinical expertise to include:

- Maintaining hygiene and infection control practices.
- Following protocols for medication administration and surgical safety.
- Actively participating in quality audits and training sessions.

2. Hospital Administrators

Management plays a crucial role in providing the necessary resources, technology, and policy frameworks to support safety initiatives. This includes:

- Implementing risk management systems to identify and mitigate hazards.
- Investing in modern medical equipment and regular maintenance schedules.
- Establishing feedback mechanisms to address patient concerns and complaints.

3. Patients and Families

Patients are integral to the safety ecosystem. Educating them about their rights, treatment plans, and safety protocols empowers them to be active participants in their care. Engaging patients helps in:

- Reducing medication errors through clear communication.
- Encouraging adherence to discharge instructions and follow-up care.
- Creating a transparent environment where concerns can be voiced without hesitation.

4. Policymakers and Regulators

Government bodies and healthcare regulators provide the necessary frameworks and guidelines to ensure accountability. NABH, in collaboration with Quality Council of India (QCI), works to align safety standards with global practices while addressing India's unique healthcare challenges.

NABH Impact at a Glance

“Every accreditation is a step toward safer, quality-driven healthcare for India.”

NABH Achievements

- 25,000+ healthcare facilities accredited across India.
- 25+ Accreditation & Certification Programs covering hospitals, AYUSH centres, dental clinics, imaging facilities, and more.
- 1,50,000+ Healthcare Professionals trained in patient safety and quality protocols.
- Pan-India Outreach through workshops, awareness drives, and quality improvement programs

Key Focus Areas for Safer Healthcare

To build safer healthcare together, it is essential to focus on critical domains that significantly influence safety outcomes:

1. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

Hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) are a major concern. NABH standards emphasize:

- Hand hygiene protocols and staff training.
- Sterilization and disinfection of equipment.
- Monitoring infection rates and implementing corrective actions.

2. Medication Safety

Errors in prescribing, dispensing, and administering medicines can lead to serious harm. A robust medication safety system includes:

- Double-checking high-risk medications.
- Using barcode technology for dispensing.
- Educating patients on correct medication usage.

3. Emergency Preparedness

Disasters—natural or man-made—pose significant risks to healthcare delivery. Hospitals must maintain:

- Clear emergency protocols and evacuation plans.
- Regular fire drills and mock disaster management exercises.
- Stockpiles of essential medicines and supplies.

4. Digital Transformation and Safety

The integration of technology, such as Electronic Medical Records (EMRs), AI-driven diagnostics, and

telemedicine, has enhanced healthcare delivery. However, it also requires:

- Data security protocols to protect patient information.
- Cybersecurity training for staff.
- Regular audits of digital systems to prevent breaches.

Challenges in Achieving a Safety Culture

“The biggest challenge in safety is not technology—it is commitment to change.”

While significant progress has been made, several challenges remain:

- **Resource Constraints:** Smaller facilities may face financial limitations in implementing advanced safety measures.
- **Workforce Shortages:** Overburdened staff may struggle to adhere to protocols consistently.
- **Resistance to Change:** Transitioning from traditional practices to standardized procedures can encounter resistance at multiple levels.

Addressing these barriers requires capacity building, continuous training, and collaborative efforts from government and private stakeholders.

The Road Ahead

“Together, we can build a healthcare system where quality and safety go hand in hand.”

The vision of “Building Safer Healthcare Together” goes beyond compliance. It envisions a future where:

- Every hospital becomes a learning organization—analysing data, reducing errors, and implementing improvements proactively.
- Patients become co-creators of safety—actively participating in decisions about their care.
- Healthcare professionals embrace a no-blame culture—encouraging error reporting and system improvements without fear of reprisal.

NABH will continue to play a pivotal role by strengthening standards, fostering innovation, and creating platforms for knowledge exchange.

Conclusion

Safety is not a destination; it is a continuous journey that requires collaboration, commitment, and courage. By aligning the efforts of healthcare providers, administrators, patients, and regulators, we can create an ecosystem where care is not only effective but also safe, compassionate, and reliable. Together, we can build a future where every healthcare interaction is guided by the principle “First, do no harm.”



From Promise to Practice: Uniting for Safer Healthcare Every Day

Mr. Prateek Gautam
Program Coordinator, NABH

Healthcare is often lauded for its rapid advances and lifesaving interventions, but behind every breakthrough lies an enduring challenge: making quality and safety a universal reality, not a privilege for the few. Far too many times, quality care is synonymous with major metropolitan hospitals or prestigious healthcare brands—while in truth, every patient, everywhere, deserves to feel safe and valued. The journey forward demands a collective reimagining: building safer healthcare together, by turning quality into a living, breathing culture shared across all teams and settings.

Beyond the Quality Department: Shared Stewardship

A common misconception persists in many organizations—the notion that quality is governed solely by the Quality Department. In reality, sustainable safety and excellence are built by the daily actions of every individual: the consulting physician double-checking a critical result, the resident admitting an oversight and learning from it, the nurse pausing to listen closely to a patient's unusual symptom. Housekeepers, technicians, and administrative staff all interlock within a tapestry that supports patient care. When quality is woven into each job description and valued as much as clinical skill, patient safety transforms from a box on an accreditation checklist to the very heartbeat of care.

Fatigue, Overwork, and the Human Cost

It's easy to tell staff to “do better,” but the truth is, most hospitals operate under enormous strain. Long shifts, high patient loads, unpredictable emergencies, and chronic understaffing take a cumulative toll. Healthcare workers—consultants, residents, nurses, support staff—work tirelessly, often at the expense of their own well-being. Burnout and fatigue sap vigilance and compassion, undermining even the best systems. Safety isn't just about protocols; it's about the emotional, intellectual, and physical readiness of the people delivering care. Supporting their mental and physical health isn't just desirable—it's essential for true quality.

Culture Change: From Leadership to the Frontline

Culture does not change with memos or slogans; it changes with daily reinforcement, praise for cautious diligence, and honesty in the face of mistakes.

Leaders set the tone: they must celebrate those who question a process, analyze incidents openly and without blame, and foster an environment where fresh perspectives are welcomed. Only when healthcare workers at every level feel empowered to speak up does a culture of safety genuinely emerge.

Breaking Down Hierarchies: Quality Is Not a Luxury

Perhaps the greatest misconception is that high-quality, safe care is only possible in well-funded, tertiary institutions. However, the foundations of quality—clear communication, diligent teamwork, respect for voices at every level—cost nothing, yet yield the greatest results. Whether in a rural community clinic or a city hospital, it’s these shared values and daily discipline that build and sustain safe environments.

Lived Examples: Voices at the Bedside

In quiet moments on the ward, real culture is revealed. I recall a junior nurse who, hesitantly but firmly, questioned a medication order. Her intervention prevented a serious complication, because her team respected and supported her willingness to speak up. In another instance, housekeeping staff identified a small leak in a patient area, averting what could have led to a serious fall. These are small examples, but they represent the real power of collective responsibility.

Practical Steps: Embedding Quality in the Everyday

- **Regular Interdepartmental Debriefs:** Bringing together staff from all areas to analyze processes, share lessons, and suggest improvements makes everyone a stakeholder.
- **Wellness Initiatives:** Creating spaces and

opportunities for staff mindfulness, stress relief, and peer support directly protects both health workers and patients.

- **Empowering Patients:** Open channels for patient feedback, providing easy-to-understand information, and encouraging families to participate cultivates mutual trust and vigilance.
- **Celebrating All Wins:** Recognizing the contributions of every team member—regardless of job title—reinforces that safety is everyone’s duty.

Making Quality the New Normal—Together

To build safer healthcare is to treat safety and excellence not as extraordinary, but as ordinary—an everyday expectation lived out by all. Quality must never be the exclusive domain of large hospitals or specialized departments; it must become the common language that unites us in service to every patient.

By supporting each other, prioritizing staff well-being, and fostering open, honest communication across every department, we can build a future where safe, high-quality care is standard—not exception, not luxury, but deeply rooted culture. It is a collective promise—made and kept, every day, together



Building Safer Healthcare Together

Ms. Samra Siddhiqui
Program Coordinator, NABH

Healthcare services are the cornerstone of an equitable and productive society. Safe healthcare is fundamental in achieving positive health outcomes. Healthcare does not only include doctors or nurses but a whole infrastructure starting from primary healthcare centres to hospitals equipped with modern equipment to treat critical illnesses. Better and safer

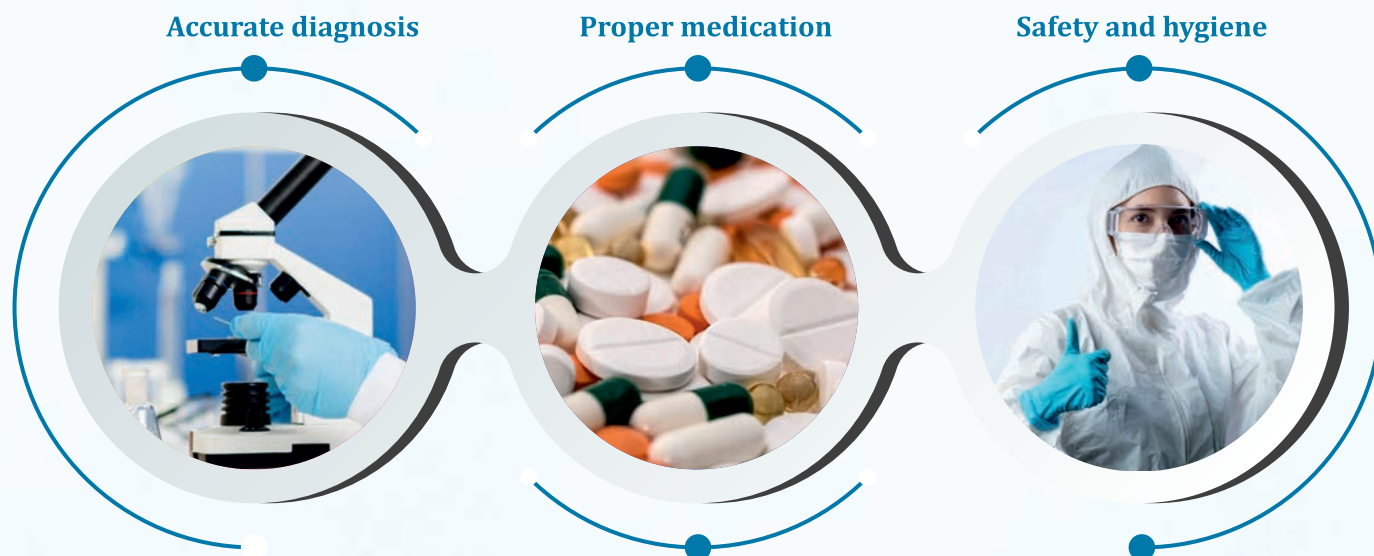
healthcare ensures reduced mortality rate, longer lifespan and reduced financial burden on the economy. The risk of getting infection during hospitalization is much more than in aviation and nuclear industries, which stands at 0.000001% and 0.003 respectively (NHSRC, 2025). Unsafe healthcare practices reduce global economic growth by 0.7% in a year (WHO, 2023).



Figure 1: Components of Healthcare

Risks are an inherent part of the medical care, but these risks can be mitigated by adopting high standards in patient's care. Harm occurs due to errors in patient care and not because of progression of disease (Vincent and Amalberti, 2016). Safer healthcare encompasses accurate diagnosis of the disease, proper administration of medications, following all the safety and hygiene

PHCs are very important for a country like India where 60-65% lives in rural areas (Kumar, Rajasekharan Nayar and Koya, 2020). The notable point here is that public healthcare institutions are more prone to these risks given inadequate resources at their disposal. Currently the rural healthcare is facing shortage of health facilities: 18% shortage at sub centre level, 20% at PHC level and 30% at Community health centre level (Kumar,



protocols. Safe healthcare ensures patient well-being at every stage of treatment. It also encompasses proper management of biomedical waste.

Figure 2: Key elements of safer healthcare

Around 10% of the patients gets harmed in the healthcare and globally around 3 million patients lose their lives because of unsafe health practices (WHO, 2023). Around 15% of the total expenditure in hospital is gone to address the unsafe practices during treatment (NHSRC, 2025). This figure is higher in low-income countries. Common practices that lead to patient harm are incorrect medication, unhygienic surgical procedure, false diagnosis, unsafe blood transfusion etc (WHO, 2023). Study indicates that additional costs occur due to infection acquired during hospitalization, legal expenses, other medical expenses and disability can cost as high as \$ 19 billion annually in some countries. The definition of harm also includes the progression of disease due to delay in diagnosis or false diagnosis (Vincent and Amalberti, 2016).

Primary healthcare centre (PHC) in rural India is a nodal point to deliver the basic healthcare services to the population especially in rural areas (Lahariya, 2020).

Rajasekharan Nayar and Koya, 2020). Healthcare professionals providing their services are abysmally low than what is recommended by the World Health Organization. Improvements needed in this sector are recruitment of more healthcare professionals, increasing the number of beds in proportion to the population, improving the infrastructure etc.

- Adopting safe procedures and following all the safety protocols.
- Proper training of healthcare workers can reduce these errors and increase their efficiency.
- Prioritizing patients' health in policy making.
- Effective health information system is necessary for disseminating the information between patients and healthcare professionals.
- Proper reporting in case of adverse events.

Government has launched many initiatives to improve the patient safety parameters in healthcare systems. To address the issue of safety in healthcare system, a National Patient Safety Implementation Framework has been implemented targeting 6 core objectives (NHSRC, 2025).

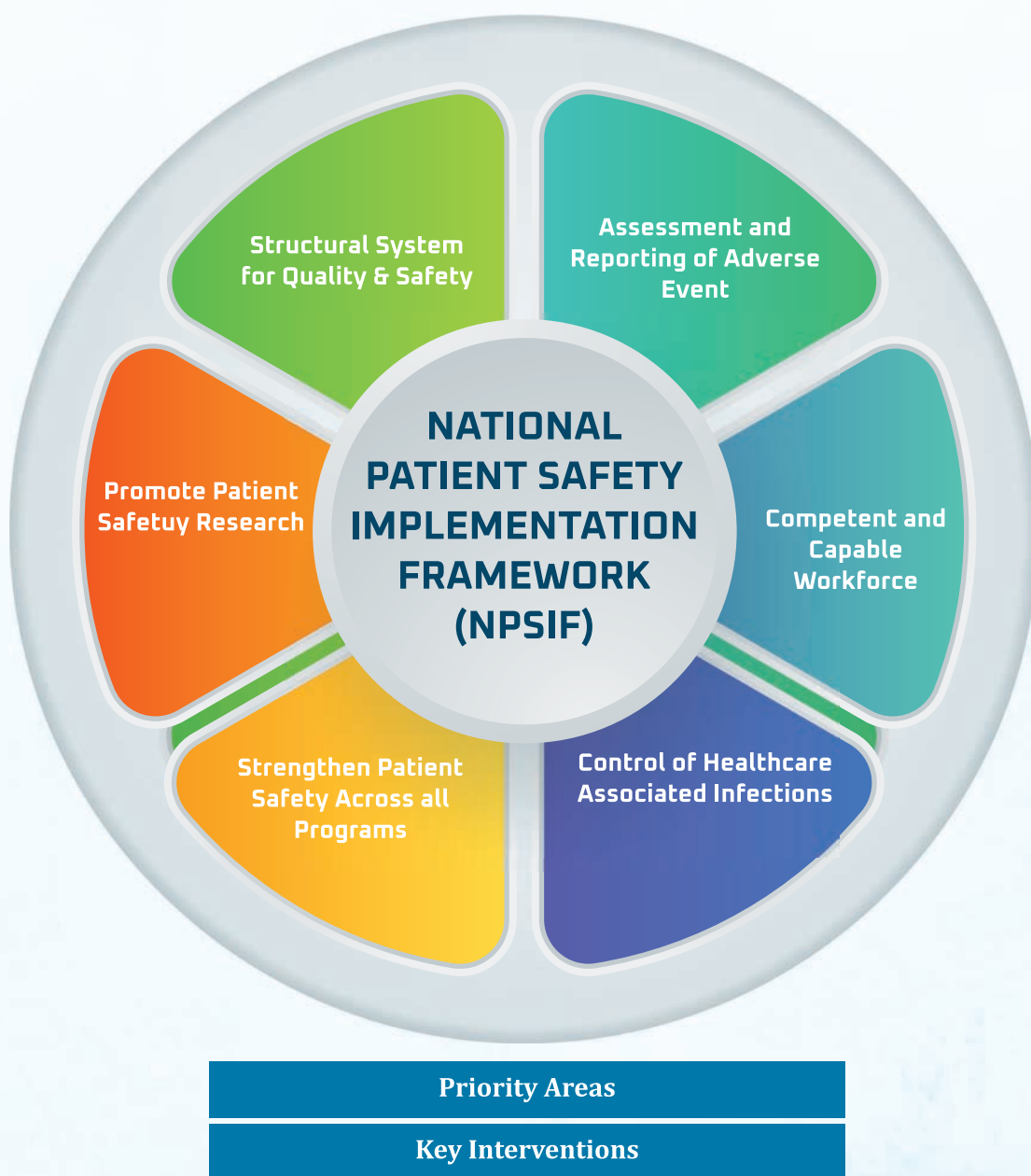


Figure 3: Building blocks of National Patient Safety Implementation Framework

source: (NHSRC, 2025)

These pillars of National Patient Safety Implementation Framework will help in achieving objectives.

1. A robust regulatory mechanism and quality accreditation system will ensure that all the institutions in the healthcare system must adhere to safety standards prescribed by the authorities. In this mechanism, patient's safety is at the centre. This framework will facilitate in providing a safe healthcare environment to the patients.
2. A reporting system for adverse events is essential to assess the harm caused by unsafe practices. This reporting system will also work as a learning tool and help in improvement of the system. This system will also fix the accountability in any case of adverse event and also help in risk management.
3. A properly trained workforce is at the core of this framework because it is the healthcare professionals who are responsible for the safety and care of the patients. A well trained and competent workforce ensures the prevention of errors in healthcare. To achieve this objective one most important thing is lessening the burden on the workforce.

4. Healthcare associated infection is a risk in a country as vast as India especially in public hospitals where resources are scarce and workforce is inadequate. Strategic plan for infection prevention and its control is necessary for mitigating the hospital related infections.
5. All the health-related programs must incorporate safety parameters as a major component. These parameters should be in line with the standards followed at the global level to ensure maximum safety.
6. Safe healthcare is the result of collective efforts by all the stakeholders. Dedicated research and studies in this area will precisely tell the overall burden of unsafe practices in healthcare.

In conclusion, Safer healthcare is necessary for ensuring patient well-being, reducing financial burden due to medical errors and strengthening the trust of people in healthcare system. It protects patients from preventable harms and improves the quality of health services. With technological advancements in healthcare, safety becomes even more critical in medical treatments especially in critical illnesses (Vincent and Amalberti, 2016). Safer healthcare is the prime responsibility in creating a healthier society.

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Building Safer Healthcare: The Digital Leap with NABH

*“Standards, Innovation, and Trust –
Building India’s Digital Health Future”*

Ms. Trisha Sharma
Program Coordinator, NABH

Introduction

India’s healthcare system is standing at a decisive turning point. With over 1.4 billion citizens, the challenges of quality, safety, accessibility, and cost require solutions that go beyond incremental change. Digital health—powered by integrated Hospital Information Systems (HIS), Electronic Medical Records (EMR), telemedicine, and AI-based analytics—is emerging as the backbone of a more connected and efficient health ecosystem.

The Government of India is spearheading this transformation through:

- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) – creating a national health information superhighway with unique Health IDs and interoperable digital records.
- National Health Authority (NHA) – leading ABDM implementation and ensuring standards-based integration.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) – the world’s largest government-funded health insurance scheme, offering coverage to over 50 crore citizens, now increasingly reliant on digital platforms for faster, error-free claim processing.

To ensure that hospitals adopt these digital tools safely and effectively, NABH launched the 1st Edition Digital Health Standards—India’s first accreditation framework for digital healthcare excellence.

NABH 1st Edition Digital Health Standards: Raising the Bar

The standards are designed to ensure that hospitals, clinics, and HIS/EMR vendors adopt digital tools without compromising patient safety, data security, or clinical quality.

They include two special chapters:

- Digital Operations Management (DOM) – Defines how technology-enabled workflows are structured for registration, clinical documentation, laboratory services, pharmacy management, discharge, and follow-ups. It ensures efficiency, traceability, and reduced patient waiting times.
- Digital Infrastructure Standards (DIS) – Sets the requirements for secure, scalable, and interoperable digital backbones—covering networks, servers, cybersecurity, backup systems, and disaster recovery protocols.

In addition, NABH Digital Health Standards for HIS/ EMR Companies set out best practices for software providers—ensuring their solutions meet interoperability requirements, support ABDM integration, protect patient privacy, and deliver robust uptime and support.

This dual approach is transforming the ecosystem—hospitals get clear guidance for safe adoption, and vendors are held to a uniform benchmark that improves compatibility and trust across the sector.

Only 37 countries in the World have their own Accreditation Bodies, NABH from India is one of them and NABH is the first one in the world to launch Digital Health Standards.

Why Indian Hospitals Resist—and Why They Shouldn't

1. Perceived High Costs

Many administrators assume digital transformation requires massive upfront investments. ABDM-ready, NABH-aligned systems can be adopted in phases, starting with basic EMR modules and scaling up to full HIS integration. Long-term, these systems reduce administrative overheads and increase revenue cycle efficiency.

2. Fear of Workflow Disruption

Hospitals with high patient volumes worry about downtime during implementation. DOM provides a step-by-step change management approach, enabling transition without interrupting essential services.

3. Data Security Concerns

With India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act now in effect, security isn't optional—it's a legal obligation. DIS ensures that hospitals have encryption, access controls, and disaster recovery measures in place from Day 1.

4. Skills Gap

In semi-urban and rural areas, staff may be less tech-comfortable. NABH mandates structured digital skills training, ensuring every stakeholder—from reception to the ICU—is capable and confident.

Best Practices for Digital Adoption

- Adopt NABH-aligned Checklists – Covering data entry accuracy, privacy compliance, equipment uptime, and periodic backup validation.
- Interoperability First – Choose HIS/EMR systems certified for ABDM integration to ensure nationwide data exchange.
- Role-based Access Control – Limit patient data visibility to authorised personnel.
- Regular Cybersecurity Drills – Test response plans for ransomware or system outages.

- Patient-Centric Interfaces – Offer patients mobile access to prescriptions, lab reports, and follow-up reminders.

Conclusion

India's healthcare future is digital—and it is happening now. ABDM is building the national digital backbone, NHA is driving its implementation, PM-JAY is ensuring financial access, and NABH is setting the gold standard for quality and safety in digital adoption.

With Digital Operations Management (DOM) and Digital Infrastructure Standards (DIS) guiding hospitals, and dedicated standards for HIS/EMR vendors, the ecosystem is aligning towards a single vision: safe, efficient, patient-centred digital care.

Hospitals that act today will not only be compliant—they will be leaders in a healthcare revolution that puts India on the global map for quality digital health.

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NABH Global presence and Participations



NABH at ISQua's 41st International Conference | São Paulo, Brazil BR 🇧🇷 🌐

📍 World Trade Center, São Paulo |  31
12th – 15th October 2025

At ISQua's 41st International Conference, NABH played a pivotal role in driving India's healthcare quality narrative, bringing forward insights and innovations that resonated across the global quality community. The event brought together 1,400+ leaders and experts from 85 countries, marking one of the most significant global gatherings on healthcare quality and patient safety.

Representing India on the global stage, NABH's leadership team — led key sessions and presented papers on Patient Safety & External Evaluation, sharing India's progress in data-driven prevention, digital transformation, and sustainable quality frameworks that are strengthening healthcare systems across the world.





NABH DISHA – Entry Level Certification Programme

NABH DISHA – Entry Level Certification Programme

QCI-NABH conducted NABH DISHA for Entry Level Certification Programme on 24-25 November 2025, bringing together assessors, experts and stakeholders to align on strengthening the Entry Level Certification landscape. The sessions focused on key areas including core guidance documents, common non-conformities, eligibility parameters, and assessment requirements.



NABH-QCI CSR Outreach

NABH-QCI, as part of its CSR initiative, collaborated with Social Vision India to support underprivileged communities. Employees across QCI came forward to donate clothes, books, stationery, shoes, and other essential items, reflecting a sincere commitment to care and social responsibility.

During the CSR outreach, the NABH-QCI team spent time with underprivileged and specially-abled children and families, gaining first-hand understanding of their needs and the importance of inclusive care and community support. The initiative not only provided much-needed assistance but also reaffirmed NABH-QCI's dedication to serving society with quality, responsibility, and purpose.



NABH-QCI Universal Health Coverage Week

NABH-QCI conducted a week-long activity on the occasion of Universal Health Coverage Week from 10th to 17th December 2025.



QCI-NABH-NHA

QCI-NABH and the National Health Authority formalised their collaboration through the signing of an MoU in Bhubaneswar, strengthening the ABPMJAY Quality Certification Programme a joint initiative since 2019 to benchmark hospitals on defined quality parameters.



MITRA Empanelment Training Programme

NABH successfully conducted the first MITRA Empanelment Training Programme from 15–19 December 2025, reinforcing its commitment to strengthening quality systems across the healthcare ecosystem. The MITRA initiative meaning “Friend” reflects NABH’s vision of guiding Healthcare Organisations in their journey toward accreditation, certification, and continuous quality improvement through structured and ethical support.

This five-day, in-person programme brought together empanelled MITRA organisations on a common platform for learning and exchange. The sessions focused on NABH standards, assessment methodologies, implementation strategies, ethical practices, and compliance requirements, supported by interactive discussions and expert-led deliberations to ensure consistent, transparent, and aligned guidance.



NABH Digital Mitra Training Programme | Mumbai | 19–21 December 2025

The inaugural NABH Digital Mitra Training Programme marked an important milestone in advancing India’s digital health ecosystem.

Held over three intensive days in Mumbai, the programme equipped participants with structured knowledge and practical insights to support healthcare organisations in:

- Aligning with NABH Digital Health Standards
- Driving consistent, standards-compliant digital transformation
- Strengthening HIS/EMR adoption

This first cohort lays the foundation for a growing national network of Digital Mitras—professionals empowered to guide, support, and sustain digital health implementation across healthcare settings.



NABH Digital Mitra Training Programme

The NABH Digital Mitra Training Programme held in Bengaluru on 16–18 January 2026 marked another significant step in strengthening India’s digital health ecosystem.

Conducted over three focused days, the programme enabled participants to gain structured understanding and practical insights to support healthcare organisations in:

- Aligning with NABH Digital Health Standards
- Enabling consistent, standards-compliant digital transformation
- Strengthening HIS/EMR adoption and implementation

This cohort adds momentum to the growing national network of Digital Mitras—professionals equipped to guide, support, and sustain digital health initiatives across diverse healthcare settings.



NABH-QCI Gunvatta Samarpan

QCI Bhubaneswar Gunvatta Samarpan was organized on 11th December 2025 at Mayfair Convention Centre, Bhubaneswar.

The Samarpan was attended by eminent leaders from accredited hospitals of Odisha



NABH-QCI at 100 IMA NATCON 2025

NABH- QCI participated in All India Medical Conference 100 IMA NATCON 2025, which was hosted by IMA Gujarat State Branch, Ahmedabad Medical Association on 26th, 27th and 28th December 2025.



Team NABH at Yashoda Medicity

Team NABH as a Observer during the Gunvatta Gurukul Field Visit for Batch 13 at Yashoda Medicity Indrapuram Ghaziabad.

The visit for Gunvatta Gurukul trainee was a rich learning experience, offering practical insights into the implementation of NABH standards and the culture of quality, patient safety and continuous improvement in healthcare.

Interacting with dedicated teams and observing best practices on the ground reinforced the importance of structured quality frameworks in delivering safe and effective care.



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