

## Patient handoffs: standardized and reliable measurement tools remain elusive.

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Patterson ES, Wears RL. Patient handoffs: standardized and reliable measurement tools remain elusive. Jt Comm J Qual Patient Saf. 2010;36(2):52-61.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/patient-handoffs-standardized-and-reliable-measurement-tools-remain-elusive>

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Resident work-hour [restrictions](#) and [The Joint Commission](#) have provided two drivers in recent years for improving patient [handoffs](#). Despite efforts to develop standardized [approaches](#), providers remain [concerned](#) about the impact of inadequate handoffs. This study reviewed nearly 400 articles to outline the seven primary functions of handoffs with each tied to a set of different interventions for improvement. The functions included information processing, narratives, accountability, social interaction, and cultural norms. The authors suggest that the diversity in handoff measurement reflects the lack of consensus about the primary purpose of a handoff, and that the definition should avoid an overly narrow construct. An accompanying editorial [see link below] highlights the challenges in developing handoff improvement strategies. A past AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#) discussed a case of a handoff error that led to an [adverse event](#).