



**BETSY  
LEHMAN  
CENTER**

for Patient Safety and Medical Error Reduction

# ADVISORY

## Recent Reports of Adverse Events during Cataract Surgery in Massachusetts

### ■ YOU SHOULD KNOW

Massachusetts has seen a recent increase in reports of Serious Reportable Events (SREs) associated with cataract surgery in hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers. Betsy Lehman Center is collaborating with the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Massachusetts Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (MSEPS), and the Massachusetts Society of Anesthesiologists (MSA) to alert ophthalmologists, anesthesiologists, and clinical managers about these adverse events. In addition, we are working to better understand the root causes of these incidents and to share strategies for reducing the risk of future harm to patients.

### ■ WHAT'S BEEN REPORTED

In 2014, four hospitals and three ambulatory surgical centers reported a total of 11 SREs related to cataract surgeries to DPH.

These incidents appear to involve systems failures that resulted in either implantation of intraocular lenses not intended for the patient or wrong-site injections of anesthesia.

### ■ WHY WE'RE INFORMING YOU

The purpose of this advisory is to make you aware of the risks identified by adverse events that hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers are required by law to report to DPH. We believe that more advanced patient safety programs at the institutional level might have prevented the occurrence of these incidents. While DPH works directly with each reporting facility to determine root causes and develop corrective action plans, we believe that preliminary information about potential risks is of value to all facilities, clinicians, and staff engaged in providing cataract surgery.

### ■ WHAT'S NEXT

Betsy Lehman Center is convening a group of experts to study the underlying causes of these incidents and to identify actionable strategies for mitigating the identified risks. We will broadly disseminate the findings and recommended strategies.

### ■ WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Consult with staff to evaluate your facility's patient safety protocols to ensure that they include established best practices for preventing harm to your patients. Best practice resources are available on Betsy Lehman Center's website.

### ■ CONTACT US

If you have insights, concerns, or other information to contribute, we encourage you to contact Betsy Lehman Center at 617-701-8271. Under Massachusetts law, we will preserve the confidentiality of any such reported information. You also should feel free to direct non-confidential communications to DPH's Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at 617-753-8000, MSEPS at 617-426-2020, or MSA at 781-890-9174.

<http://www.mass.gov/betsylehman/>



Massachusetts Society of  
Eye Physicians and Surgeons



### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Unclear intraocular lens order forms
- Lenses for multiple patients present in operating room
- Insufficient orientation of contractors
- Administration of anesthesia not included in "time out"