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Johns Hopkins & Lockheed Martin Collaborate For Next Generation ICU Unit

The Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality of Johns Hopkins Medicine is collaborating with the Lockheed Martin Corporation, a global security and technology company, to create a safer and more efficient hospital intensive care unit (ICU) model. The two organisations will work to streamline complex and fragmented clinical systems and processes to reduce medical errors and improve the quality of care for critically ill patients.

"A hospital ICU contains 50 to 100 pieces of electronic equipment that may not communicate to one another nor work together effectively," says Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., Armstrong Institute director and senior vice president for patient safety and quality for Johns Hopkins Medicine. Pronovost, who often contrasts the healthcare and aerospace industries, says, "When an airline needs a new plane, they don't individually select the controls systems, seats and other components, and then try to build it themselves." The piecemeal approach by which hospitals currently assemble ICUs is inefficient and prone to error, adding risk to an already intricate environment. "Lockheed Martin has the expertise to integrate complex systems to help us build a safer and more efficient ICU model not just for Johns Hopkins but for patients around the world," Pronovost says.

"A single system that could prioritise patient alarms based on individual risk of cardiac or respiratory arrest, for example, could prevent alarm fatigue, when clinicians sometimes are inundated with a chorus of competing alarms. This could help us understand risks on a personal level based on each patient's age, diagnosis and family history."

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