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Zoom on Profile: Peter J. Pronovost, MD, PhD, FCCM



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Dr. Peter Pronovost is a world-renowned patient safety champion, critical care physician, a prolific researcher, publishing over 800 peer review publications, and a global thought leader, informing US and global health policy. His scientific work leveraging checklists to reduce catheter-related bloodstream infections has saved thousands of lives and earned him high-profile accolades, including being named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *Time Magazine*, receiving a coveted MacArthur Foundation “genius grant” in 2008, and regularly recognised as one of the most influential executives and physician executives in healthcare. The life-saving intervention has been implemented state by state across the U.S. Today, these catheter infections that used to kill as many people as breast or prostate cancer, have been reduced by 80% compared to 1999 before the “*To Err is Human*” report was published.

After demonstrating the ability to eliminate one harm in most health systems, Dr. Pronovost sought to eliminate all harms in one health system, Johns Hopkins. Toward that goal, Dr. Pronovost served the Johns Hopkins Medicine Senior Vice President for Patient Safety and Quality and the founder and director of the Johns Hopkins Medicine Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality. The Institute coordinates research, training and operations for patient safety and quality across JHM, bringing together over 18 different disciplines from every school and division of the university. Dr. Pronovost served as the Senior Vice President for Clinical Strategy and the Chief Medical officer for Unitedhealth Care. Dr. Pronovost was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2011 and has received multiple honorary degrees. Dr. Pronovost is an advisor to the World Health Organizations’ World Alliance for Patient Safety and regularly addresses the U.S. Congress on patient safety issues. Dr. Pronovost regularly writes a column for the Wall Street Journal and US News and World Report. He serves on the Board of the Patient Safety Movement Foundation. Dr. Pronovost is a founder of

Doctella, a health information platform for quality of care.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

- Population health
- High reliability medicine
- Hospital acquired infections
- Improving patient safety measurements
- Eliminating preventable deaths in hospitals
- Safety II Perspective in addressing challenges in hospitals
- Leveraging checklists to reduce infections
- Science behind creating long lasting change
- Telehealth & Virtual health programs serving patient and provider communities

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

- Creating a culture of safety where people believe defects are preventable rather than inevitable.
- Valid measures of safety and quality
- True systems engineering

3. What is your top management tip?

Change processes at the speed of trust. Trust grows when we do things “with” others rather than “to” others.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

It was seeing bloodstream infections go down by 80% across the country.

5. If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?

I would be a ski instructor

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Skiing, running and biking

7. Your favorite quote?

“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. In reality, it is what always has.” -Margaret Meade

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