District Health Boards (DHBs) have made pleasing progress in the use of interventions and practices known to reduce patient harm caused by falls, healthcare associated infections and surgery. Here is a snapshot of how four DHBs have achieved their results.

**High use of surgical safety checklist by Hawke’s Bay DHB**

In June 2013, Hawke’s Bay DHB used the World Health Organization’s surgical safety checklist in 34 percent of operations. By taking a team approach, the DHB is now using the list in an impressive 97 percent of operations.

Theatre manager Joan Plowman says the DHB achieved the result by making the form used to document use of the checklist more user-friendly, and by carrying out random audits of the forms. Results of the audits are posted every month in the staffroom.

The DHB took a team approach to increasing the use of the checklist, involving surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and anaesthetic technicians, as well as the DHB’s quality team. The aim was to spread the message that the checklist is much more than a box-ticking exercise; it is a proven method of preventing harm to patients.

**Assessing patients for falls risk a top priority for Tairawhiti DHB**

Three years ago, Tairawhiti DHB set itself the goal of having every adult inpatient assessed for falls risk on admission to hospital. When the DHB discovered it wasn’t meeting its goal, it embarked on a drive to increase its assessments and make sure it took action on the falls risk factors it identified.

All staff are now given a talk on the importance of preventing falls, as part of their orientation or organisational update sessions. A Tairawhiti-wide falls prevention group has been launched, and has expanded its focus from hospitals to include age-related residential care and the community.

Director of nursing Sonia Gamblen says staff now have a much higher awareness of the importance of preventing falls, which has led to the DHB’s improved performance in the quality and safety markers. The DHB will continue to implement individualised care plans for those who are assessed as having a falls risk, and is now turning its attention to working to prevent falls among dementia/confused patients.

**430 CLAB-free days for Wellington Hospital’s intensive care unit**

Wellington Hospital’s intensive care unit (ICU) is celebrating more than 430 days without a case of central line associated bacteraemia (CLAB).

The hospital, part of Capital & Coast DHB, participated in a national project to reduce levels of CLAB, which are blood stream infections caused by central line catheters inserted into blood vessels near the heart.

ICU charge nurse manager Stephen James says initiatives helping prevent cases of CLAB in the unit included providing doctors with pre-prepared packages of materials needed to insert a central line catheter, and standardising procedures for managing a catheter after it had been inserted. Health care workers taking a team approach and sharing knowledge with other DHBs had also contributed to achieving the unit’s 430 CLAB-free days.
Whanganui DHB exceeds hand hygiene goal

An eye-catching awareness campaign has seen Whanganui DHB exceed the quality and safety marker goal for compliance with good hand hygiene practice.

Early this year, the DHB’s communications department designed and produced vinyl decals which are displayed above sinks and beside hand gel stations to push hand hygiene messages to Wanganui Hospital staff, patients and visitors. A highly visible hand gel station was also produced to greet people entering the hospital's main entrance. All staff, including volunteers, were strongly encouraged to complete an online learning training session promoting hand hygiene.

Infection prevention and control coordinator Ruth Foulkes says Whanganui DHB’s campaign was based on the World Health Organization’s hand hygiene programme. The campaign aims to engage a wide range of audiences, from health care workers through to patients and hospital visitors.