



Joint Statement on the Conviction of RaDonda Vaught

August 15, 2022

RaDonda Vaught, a critical care nurse from Tennessee, was sentenced to three years' probation for criminally negligent homicide for making a fatal medication error. This conviction sets a dangerous precedent for all healthcare professionals and puts an even greater strain on an already stressed healthcare community by discouraging people from joining the healthcare workforce. Even more importantly, it discourages those who care for patients to share, discuss, report and mitigate their errors and near misses, thus concealing the strongest opportunities for improvement. This is contrary to the Institute of Medicine's landmark 2000 report, [*To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System*](#), and runs counter to the culture of patient safety that is the core of a safe and effective healthcare system.

Although members of the healthcare team are highly trained, errors are always possible. Healthcare systems need to ensure that processes are in place for staff to provide patients with the best care in a safe and reliable practice environment. Only by identifying potential system failures, discussing them as part of quality improvement efforts, and learning at a clinician and system level can change occur and patients receive better care.