



EBOOK

ACTION PLANS THAT ACTUALLY WORK:

**USING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE MEANINGFUL
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN HOSPITALS**



vastian

INTRODUCTION:

Quality leaders have long relied on action plans to drive Performance Improvement (PI) initiatives by identifying care gaps, applying corrective steps, and measuring improvement in outcomes and processes. However, these action plans often rely on outdated, fragmented, and manual processes that may lead to ongoing preventable harm, care inefficiencies, and steep penalties.

For example, hospitals currently face losing an average of

\$25,000 IN UNREIMBURSED COSTS

FOR EACH HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTION (HAI)¹

Additionally, under the Hospital-Acquired Condition Reduction Program (HACRP), hospitals face an average penalty of

\$329,000 ANNUALLY²

WITH HIGH RATES OF INFECTIONS & COMPLICATIONS



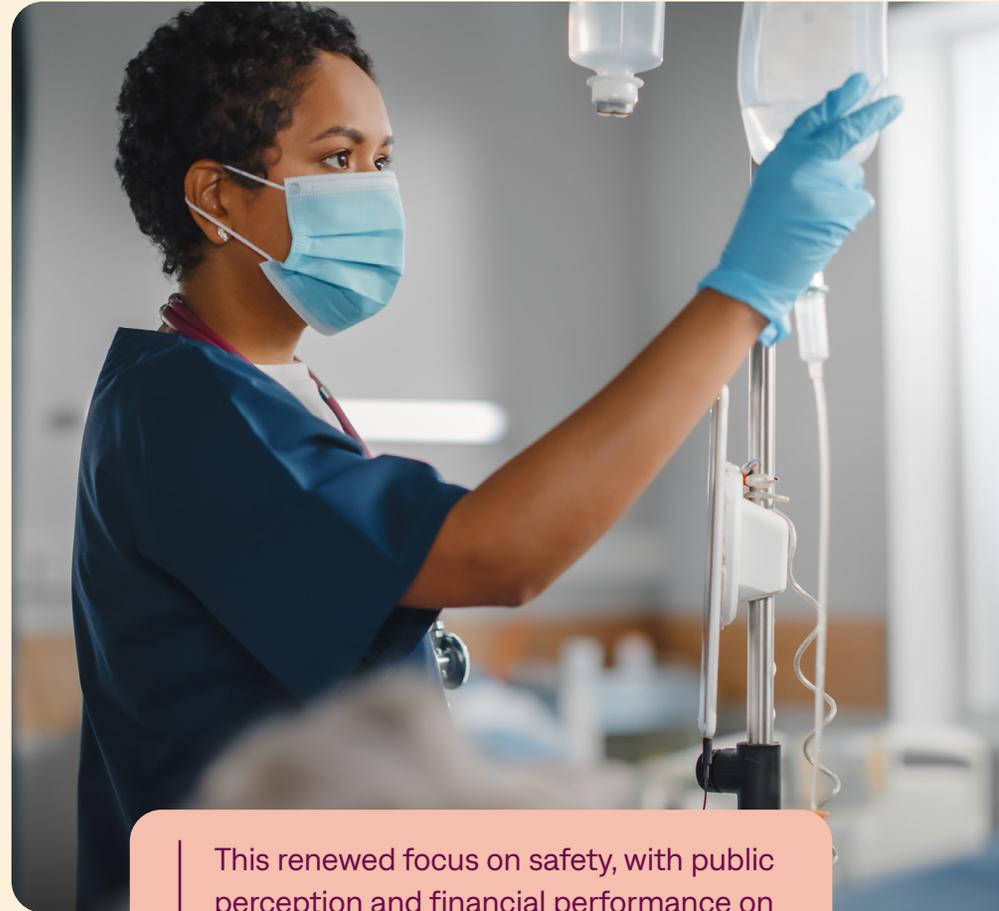
INTRODUCTION:

Beyond the direct financial implications, hospitals' reputations are also on the line.

For instance, The Leapfrog Group assigns Hospital Safety Grades that can significantly impact patient choice and trust.³ Hospitals with lower grades may experience decreased patient volumes and challenges in payer negotiations.



Also, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Hospital Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program adjusts payments to hospitals based on the quality of care they deliver.⁴ This program incentivizes hospitals to improve care quality, patient experience, and safety, directly tying financial performance to Quality outcomes.



This renewed focus on safety, with public perception and financial performance on the line, means that executing PI activities and action planning are no longer optional, **THEY'RE IMPERATIVE.**

In this eBook, we explore:



- Identify the challenges and limitations of traditional action plans
- Explore how technology can radically reshape how hospitals approach PI and action plans
- Introduce Vastian's APPIL as an essential solution that integrates technology to help hospitals overcome the shortcomings of traditional action plans.



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL ACTION PLANS

Many hospitals still rely on some combination of spreadsheets, Word documents, and email threads to manage Quality and PI initiatives, with manual logs and printouts stacked in binders for accountability. These legacy systems barely check the box during a survey or audit, and they make measurable improvement difficult to achieve and sustain. These outdated methods are riddled with issues that restrict effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.

HERE ARE THE MOST COMMON PITFALLS THAT UNDERMINE TRADITIONAL ACTION PLANNING METHODS:

1 Fragmented Processes

Have you ever tried to paste information from a PDF into a Word document and couldn't figure out why it won't format correctly? Or maybe you've grown frustrated with the green bubble in your text message thread from the friend who doesn't have an iPhone. These minor inconveniences speak to a larger problem in today's digital-first world: **disparate systems don't produce consistent results.**

Now magnify these problems to the level of managing Quality and PI initiatives in a large hospital setting, and you can immediately understand the need for a centralized system. When different departments manage their action plans in silos, it leads to inconsistent documentation, duplicated efforts, and missed opportunities for improving outcomes and education.

Fragmented systems also fail to deliver an organizational-wide view of the hospital's Quality Assessment & Performance Improvement (QAPI) program performance, requiring leaders to patch together an action plan that is difficult to implement and measure across departments.



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Manual Inefficiencies

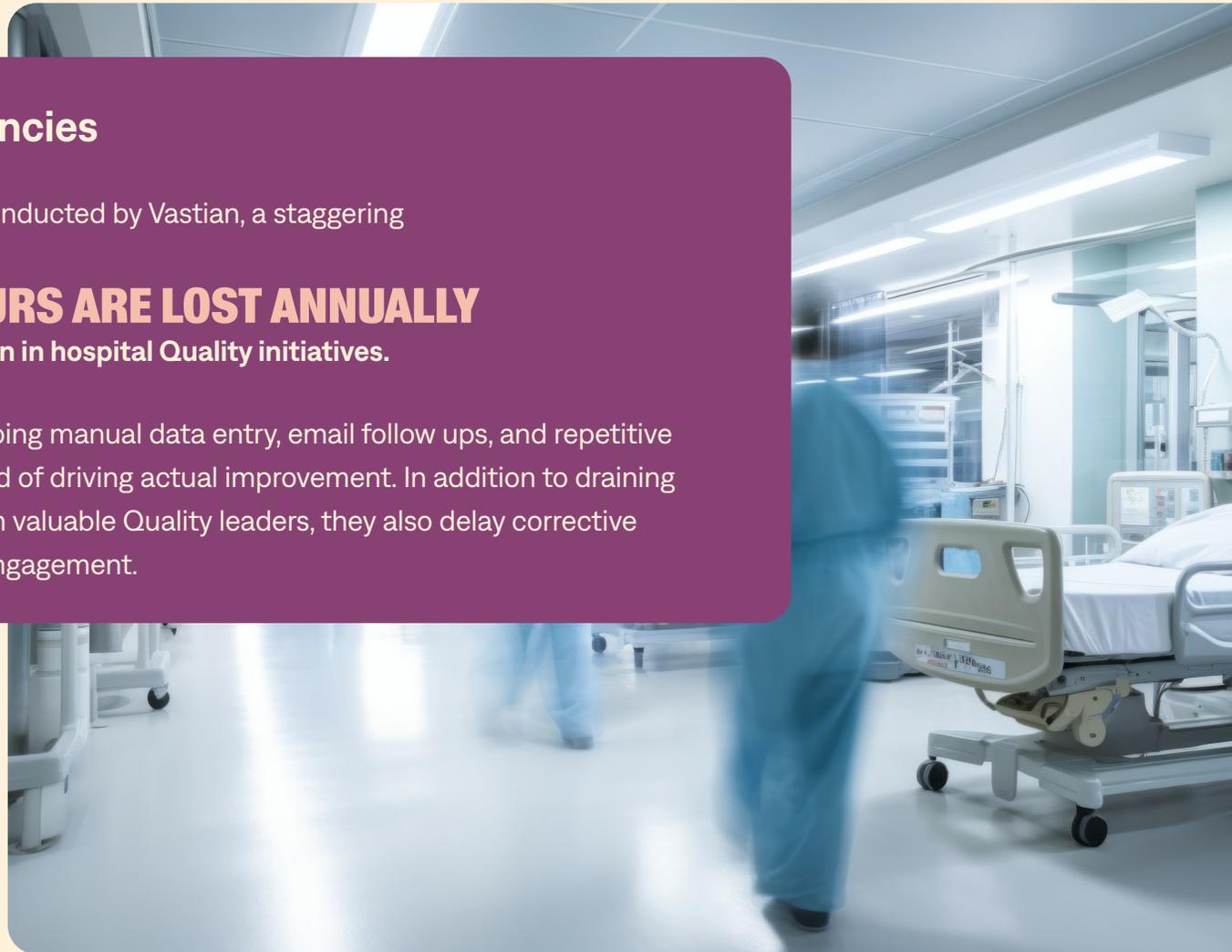
According to research conducted by Vastian, a staggering

19 MILLION HOURS ARE LOST ANNUALLY
due to lack of automation in hospital Quality initiatives.

These are hours spent doing manual data entry, email follow ups, and repetitive template creation instead of driving actual improvement. In addition to draining the time and energy from valuable Quality leaders, they also delay corrective actions and stifle staff engagement.

“Currently, we spend a lot of time building our own templates. Having a menu to select from that aligns with what’s applicable to our hospital would streamline our processes significantly.”

-AVP Quality & PI for a 400-bed hospital.



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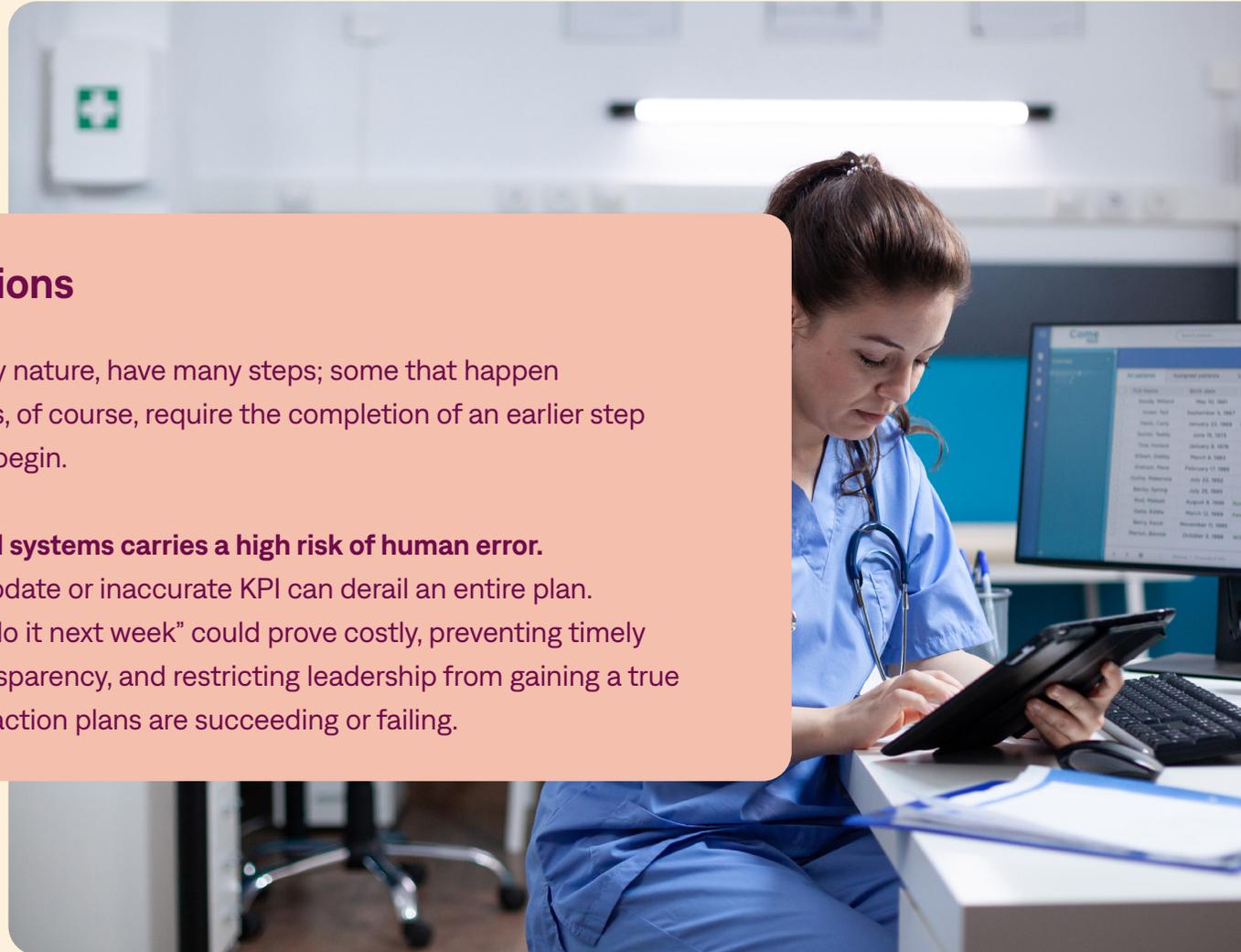
Tracking Limitations

Action plans, by their very nature, have many steps; some that happen concurrently while others, of course, require the completion of an earlier step before the next one can begin.

Tracking these in manual systems carries a high risk of human error.

A single missed status update or inaccurate KPI can derail an entire plan.

A simple “I forgot” or “I’ll do it next week” could prove costly, preventing timely escalation, reducing transparency, and restricting leadership from gaining a true understanding of which action plans are succeeding or failing.



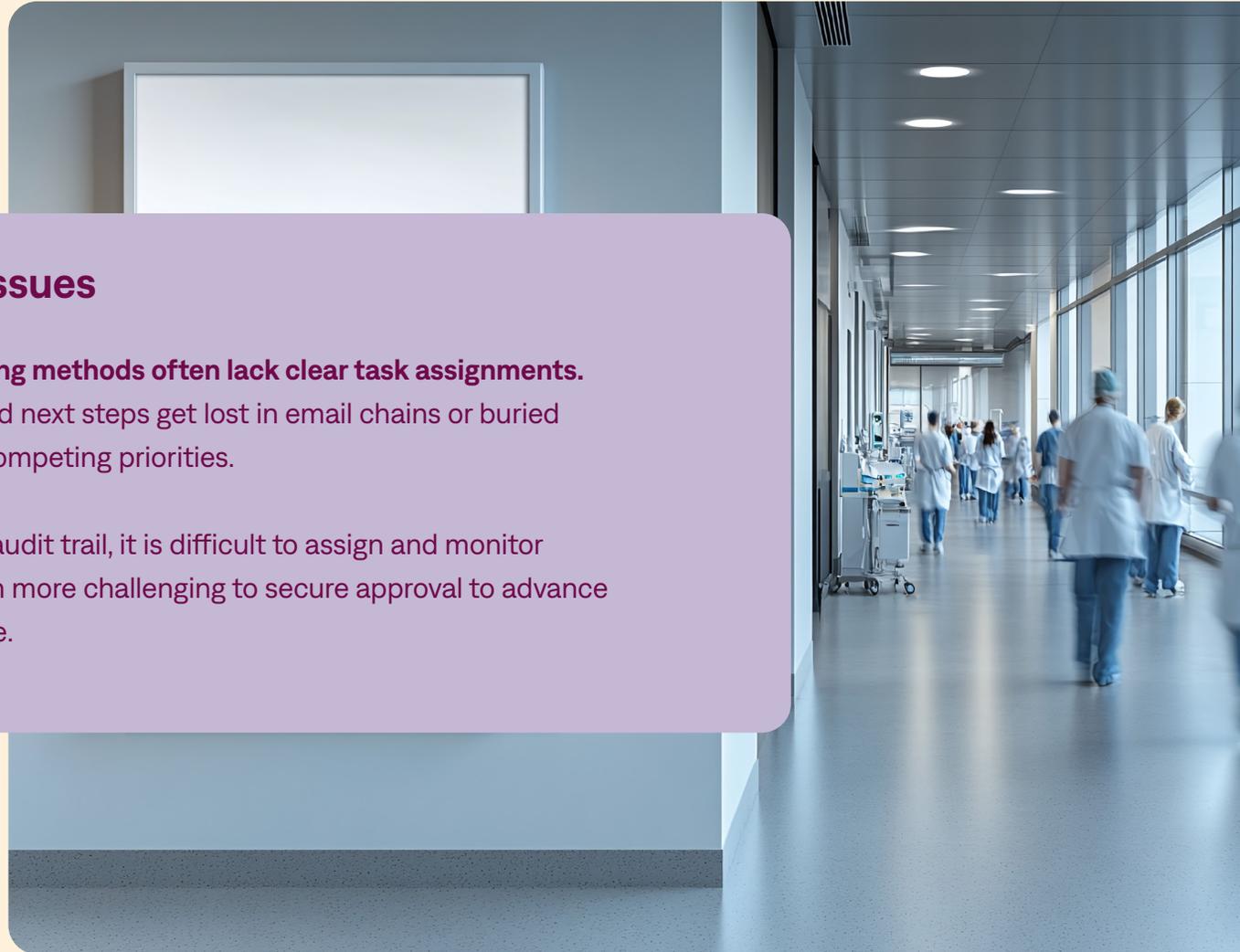
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Accountability Issues

Traditional action planning methods often lack clear task assignments.

Roles, responsibilities, and next steps get lost in email chains or buried beneath a pile of other competing priorities.

When there is no digital audit trail, it is difficult to assign and monitor individual tasks, and even more challenging to secure approval to advance the plan to the next stage.



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

With so much riding on safety and risk mitigation, it's time for hospital Quality leaders to retire the manual logs and email reminders and embrace new technologies that streamline action plans through automation, analytics, and integration.



Automation Advantages

Automated workflows ensure tasks are assigned, monitored, and completed without relying on manual check-ins. Hospitals can use digital triggers to notify staff when actions are due (or overdue), escalate unresolved issues, and initiate a follow-up plan automatically. This streamlining reduces turnaround times and ensures consistent execution of improvement plans.



Data-Driven Insights

Digital platforms can harness the power of analytics to identify trends, highlight systemic issues, and guide data-informed decision-making. When historical performance data is linked with current action plans, leaders can pinpoint what interventions worked in similar scenarios, enabling more effective and tailored solutions.



Integrated Systems

A major technological advantage is the consolidation of Quality management tools into a unified platform. When hospitals centralize regulatory compliance tracking, corrective actions, KPI monitoring, and audit documentation, they gain a single source of truth. Integration with systems like incident reporting, competency assessment, or accreditation tools further enhances visibility and traceability.



“Automation and real-time audits would help a lot; audits take A LOT of time.”

– Manager of Ambulatory Quality Operations & Population Health at a hospital with more than 11,000 beds



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CON'T)

A renewed focus stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic has already helped the healthcare industry improve in patient safety and Quality measures, with the American Hospital Association™ (AHA) reporting significant growth compared to pre-COVID times.⁵

In fact, the AHA states that

“Hospitals’ efforts to improve safety led to 200,000 Americans hospitalized between April 2023 and March 2024 surviving episodes of care they wouldn’t have in 2019.”

This shows that the groundwork has been laid and there’s a strong desire for hospitals to continue improving their performance.

Now’s the time to adopt the technology that will carry action plans and PI to the next level.



“Having a central solution would help guide where you should tackle what.”

– System Chief Quality & Safety Officer at a hospital with more than 10,000 beds

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PLANNING AND EXECUTION

Recognizing the pitfalls of legacy approaches and the opportunity new technology presents for hospital Quality leaders, Vastian developed APPIL as an integral part of its Quality Management System for hospitals striving to embed continuous PI into their daily operations.

APPIL stands for Action Planning, Performance Improvement, and Long-term Effectiveness.

Designed in collaboration with Quality professionals, APPIL brings structure, consistency, and scalability to hospital action planning processes and monitoring of KPIs and high-risk processes.

It is not just a digital task list; it is the only comprehensive, automated Quality management application that empowers healthcare providers to navigate CMS, Joint Commission, DNV, and Leapfrog standards and best practices, and internal risk reduction efforts.

The screenshot displays the Vastian APPIL interface. At the top left is the Vastian logo and 'Action Planning' header. Below it, a diagram shows a 'Stained Tile (Rm 203)' incident leading to a 'Work Order' which is managed by 'Safety' and 'Facilities' departments. To the right, an 'Action Plan Performance' dashboard shows the status of three action plans: EC-112 (Initiated), CM-131 (In Progress), and PS-211 (Completed). Below this is an 'Action Plan Dashboard' listing various tasks: Hygiene Stations (ED) - Initiated, Surg Equipment Sanitation - In Progress, Physical Enviro (ICU) - In Progress, and Crash Cart (Cardiac) - Completed. A detailed view of an 'Action Plan: Physical Enviro (ICU)' is shown at the bottom, including owner (Facilities), location (ICU Room 203), incident initiation details (initiated by ICU Rounding/Melissa Smith, 2 days ago), and remediation details (owner: Facilities/John Johnson, due tomorrow).

VASTIAN APPIL

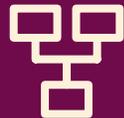
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PLANNING AND EXECUTION

APPIL offers several key features and benefits allowing Quality teams to:



Simplify Digital Action Plan Management

APPIL makes it easier for hospitals to create, execute, and keep track of their action plans. Its structured framework helps ensure that no safety measure slips through the cracks so every task is completed and patient safety stays front and center.



Automate Workflows for Greater Efficiency

With built-in automated workflows, APPIL ensures that tasks are clearly assigned, actively monitored, and completed on time. This reduces the time and resources spent on manual follow-up, enabling teams to work smarter and faster.



Support QAPI and Proactive Risk Management

With built-in tools like QA monitors and tracers, APPIL helps hospitals spot areas that need attention. By turning data into clear insights, it empowers teams to make smart, informed decisions that lead to better processes and outcomes.



Promote Team Awareness and Accountability

APPIL brings everyone onto the same page. Its centralized platform supports transparency and collaboration, making sure all team members (both clinical and administrative) stay informed about KPIs and Quality initiatives.

VASTIAN APPIL

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PLANNING AND EXECUTION

APPIL offers several key features and benefits allowing Quality teams to:



Stay on Top of Compliance and Best Practices

Tracking compliance doesn't have to be a headache. APPIL helps hospitals stay aligned with safety standards and best practices, offering continuous monitoring that supports high-quality, safe patient care.



Tailor Real-Time Reporting to Your Needs

APPIL takes the hassle out of reporting by automating the entire process. Reports can be tailored to suit the needs of different teams, from frontline staff to executives, so everyone gets the information they need when they need it.



Customize Dashboards to Fit Your Goals

Real-time dashboards let hospitals zero in on the metrics that matter most. APPIL's dashboards are fully customizable, so you can keep a close eye on progress toward your Quality and patient safety goals.



“This is what we need. It’s a gap.”

– AVP of Quality & PI for a 400-bed hospital after previewing APPIL

ELEVATING HOSPITAL QUALITY AND ACTION PLANNING

As regulatory pressures rise and patient expectations evolve, hospitals can no longer afford to rely on outdated manual action planning methods. Quality leaders need modern tools that not only track actions but also drive meaningful, measurable improvement.

Vastian's APPIL platform empowers hospitals to replace inefficiencies with automation, insights, and integration, helping them deliver safer care, improve compliance, and ultimately, elevate the patient experience.

By transforming the way hospitals plan, execute, and evaluate Quality and PI initiatives, **APPIL ensures that action plans don't just check a box, they create real, lasting impact.**



READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

See how Vastian APPIL can modernize your approach to Quality and Performance Improvement.

Visit [Vastian.com](https://vastian.com)
or request a personalized demonstration.

BOOK A DEMO



1. <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-020-05428-7>
2. <https://www.definitivehc.com/resources/healthcare-insights/hospitals-highest-hac-penalty>
3. <https://ratings.leapfroggroup.org/>
4. <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality/value-based-programs/hospital-purchasing>
5. <https://www.aha.org/news/headline/2024-09-12-aha-report-hospitals-improving-performance-key-patient-safety-measures-surpassing-pre-pandemic-levels>

SHOW YOUR HIGHER STANDARDS™



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