



Ms. Helen Haskell



For Helen Haskell, patient safety is a calling to which she was brought by the death of her fifteen-year-old son Lewis Blackman, who died in 2000 of preventable errors following elective surgery. As founder and president of the South Carolina-based [Mothers Against Medical Error](#), Helen has worked since 2001 to improve healthcare quality and provide support for patients who have experienced medical injury. In 2005, she helped put together a coalition of patients, policymakers, and healthcare providers to pass the Lewis Blackman Patient Safety Act, the first of several South Carolina legislative initiatives addressing healthcare safety and transparency. In 2007, the state of South Carolina created the Lewis Blackman Chair of Patient Safety and Clinical Effectiveness, an endowed professorship named in honor of her deceased son.

Helen is actively involved in statewide patient safety and quality improvement efforts and sits on a number of South Carolina patient safety committees, among them the Hospital Infection Disclosure Act advisory committee and the South Carolina Hospital Quality Council.

Nationally, she collaborates with a variety of consumer and professional organizations on patient-oriented quality improvement programs including infection disclosure and prevention, patient-activated rapid response systems, and disclosure of medical error, among others.

Helen is a World Health Organization Patient Safety Champion and has been a member of CAPS since 2006.

Helen holds degrees in Classical Studies from Duke University, Anthropology from Rice University, and Museum Management from the University of South Carolina. Her earlier career as an archaeologist included research and fieldwork in the United States, Europe, the Near East, and Africa.