It has been estimated that at least 98,000 US adults die each year from medical errors; fewer people die from breast cancer, AIDS, or auto accidents. The costs associated with preventable medical errors exceed $17 billion. To help train scientists and practitioners to effectively reduce the likelihood of preventable patient harm, the University of Wisconsin–Madison (http://www.wisc.edu/) offers the Graduate Certificate in Patient Safety. The certificate is supported by the School of Medicine and Public Health (http://www.med.wisc.edu/), School of Nursing (http://www.son.wisc.edu/), School of Pharmacy (http://www.pharmacy.wisc.edu/), and College of Engineering (http://www.engr.wisc.edu/).

Objective: To increase student knowledge about how systems engineering and systems design can be used to identify, analyze and solve patient safety research and applied problems.

The graduate/professional certificate in patient safety is an interdisciplinary effort between the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, Department of Medical Physics, and Department of Population Health Sciences. Patient safety is of national and international importance and there is a shortage of people with expertise in the design of safe health care systems and technologies that can improve patient safety. Such expertise is important to physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other health care professionals, and engineers. The certificate in patient safety provides students with knowledge and skills in an array of topics necessary for the identification, analysis, and control of patient safety programs.