

Tip of the Month



Every Patient is a Pedestrian

You and Sam work in the same building and carpool to work every day. You're a better driver than he is, but today it's his turn to drive. You see someone stepping into the street ahead of you. What do you do?

Do you think *"I see that pedestrian up there looking like he's going to start crossing the street, but I'm not going to tell Sam. Telling him how to drive is none of my business."*?

Of course not.

The pedestrian could get hurt, even killed if you don't point out the risk. Not only don't you want that to happen, you don't want Sam to have to bear the burden.

Later today, you're going to see Sam labeling tubes he didn't draw. What will you do?

Will you think *"I see the potential here for someone to get hurt, to be treated, transfused, diagnosed or medicated according to someone else's blood work. But I'm not going to tell Sam. Telling him how to handle samples is none of my business."*

Of course not.

It's not just Sam. You likely have multiple opportunities every day to point out the pedestrians to anyone who draws blood carelessly before someone gets hurt and has to deal with the consequences. You are a shining light. Are you going to shine your light in Sam's direction or are you going to tell yourself "it's none of my business"?

There's a difference between being a shining light, and being brilliant. Being brilliant means you don't have a dimmer switch; you're not a three-way bulb; you're not dim one minute and bright the next. You're always brilliant. When brilliant phlebotomists see someone recap a needle, pour tubes together, or label a tube she didn't draw, they point out the pedestrian.

When you're brilliant, it's not about what's your business and what isn't. It's about the patient's business, and your employer's business. It's all your business.

Every patient is a pedestrian and every phlebotomist is driving a car.