Inspectie Volksgezondheid Aruba

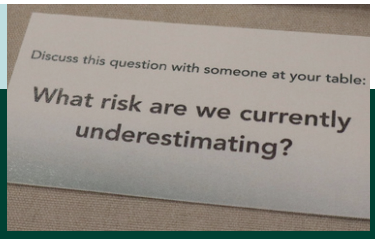
Quality of Healthcare
CONFERENCE IVA 2026
"Risky Business"

October 13th 2026

# Risky Business: Key Conference Insights

## Introduction

The theme of the Health Inspectorate of Aruba's conference this year was risky business. This was inspired by healthcare providers' annual quality reports. Based on these annual reports, the Inspectorate has established that risk awareness is widespread across Aruba's healthcare sector. The reports also indicate that risk management has not yet been embedded in a systematic, measurable, and sustainable manner across all healthcare organizations. The further development of systematic and proactive risk management is an important priority for the Inspectorate to ensure the quality, safety, and continuity of healthcare in Aruba.




## Conference Objective

The main objective of the conference was to inspire participants to critically reflect on how risks are identified, managed, and evaluated within their own sector and organizations. The presentations and breakout sessions provided practical insights and tools to further strengthen risk management and embed it sustainably in daily practice.

## Summary Keynote Presentations

### What If Tomorrow Doesn't Go as Planned? Managing Disruption Before It Manages You

Emily Ras, MSc - Risk Manager, Aruba Airport Authority N.V.



> Can we continue delivering critical care when something goes wrong?

Emily used a practical example outside the healthcare industry to illustrate that risk management principles can be applied to any type of business. Unexpected disruption is an opportunity to evaluate how prepared an organization is to respond when normal operations are affected. Key points to consider are clear communication, defined responsibilities, identifying stakeholders and appropriate continuity measures to minimize impact and prevent future disruptions.

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## From Human Error to System Resilience: Applying Safety Science in Healthcare

Ian Leistikow, PhD - Inspector, Dutch Health and Youth Care Inspectorate & professor, Erasmus University

> It is easier to say the individual makes the mistake than it is to say that you need to change the environment

In his presentation, Ian emphasized that safety science needs to be more integrated into healthcare and that risk management is not always applied systematically. He introduced three perspectives for understanding issues: behaviorism, cognitive psychology, and joint cognitive systems. The joint cognitive systems approach focuses on the broader context and environment, asking what conditions and system factors contributed to an event rather than who made a mistake. He also presented the Safety-II approach, which examines what goes right in everyday work. According to Ian, this perspective is not widely used in healthcare because it receives limited attention in medical training.



## Flirting with Risk: A Driver for Learning and Change

Sulima Geerman, PhD - Director at SABA & Lecturer, Master's Program in Governance and Leadership, University of Aruba



Sulima shared that effective risk management requires strong governance, as governance provides the structure, accountability, and oversight necessary to support organizational learning. For organizational learning to occur, collective intelligence needs to be the goal, requiring enough teams to learn collectively. She emphasizes the importance of addressing cynicism within organizations due to its influence on others.

> Don't avoid risk; learn and adapt

Some exposure to risk is necessary for learning, innovation, and improvement, while strong foundations enable organizations to anticipate risk, adapt, learn, and respond safely. She also explains that a learning organization must foster psychological safety and that learning occurs when information is understood, reflected upon, shared, and translated into change.

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## From Risk to Results: Keeping it Simple

Ingmar Ramharakh Quality & Safety Coordinator LABHOH and Founder of Vigoris QSE

### Complexity creates shortcuts and shortcuts create risk

Ingmar states that before being able to manage risk, people need to understand risk, as understanding creates awareness, which leads to actions and safer decision-making. He emphasizes that simplicity should be an important principle in effective risk management, built on essential priorities, clear communication, practical training, teamwork, and shared ownership. Organizations should shift their mindset from being reactive to proactive and develop risk-management tools and processes with the people who will use them. He also highlights that psychological safety, trust, communication, and leadership commitment are essential foundations for sustainable improvement and a strong risk management culture. The key message is to keep solutions simple, practical, and sustainable.



## Health Risk Management and Colorectal Cancer Screening in Aruba

Chris Franca, MD - Consultant Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Aruba Gastro Clinic




Dr. Chris Franca provides a practical example of risk management from a physician's perspective through a colorectal cancer prevention and screening program. Colorectal cancer screening demonstrates how risk management can support prevention and early intervention by identifying, assessing, reducing, and monitoring risk.

### Data-driven decision-making is key

Data-driven decision-making is key to understanding populations at risk, evaluating outcomes, and maximizing resources. Health in all policies is important. Moving towards prevention requires coordination, teamwork, and consideration of social factors that influence access, participation, and follow-up care. The limitations of a small-island healthcare system should also be considered as they influence how risks can realistically be managed.

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## Walking the Talk: Risk Management

Carolina Thiel-Span & Dorylee Pappers-Lopez Penha, MBA, ML, LL.M

"How can our supervision contribute to better care and greater societal value?"

Effective supervision requires more than identifying risks in the healthcare system. It also requires structuring processes, clarifying roles, strengthening planning, and continuously evaluating strategy to align with the realities of the Aruban context. The Inspectorate is translating these insights into a more systematic internal approach and moving towards risk-based, value-driven supervision, while the client remains the moral compass guiding decisions, priorities, and actions. The definition of client has broadened to include families, healthcare professionals, organizations, communities, and society as a whole. Effective supervision requires continuous reflection on how supervision can contribute to better care and greater societal value, creating meaningful and lasting value for healthcare and society.






## Observation Ambulance Test

The Ambulance service of Aruba assisted in a simulation exercise where risk management was put into practice. For the simulation, one of the keynote speakers feigned feeling ill. The objective was to assess how participants would respond to a medical incident and to evaluate their situational awareness and ability to recognize risks in their surroundings. During the exercise, it was observed that a few doctors responded immediately and provided direct assistance, while other attendees either left the room or remained seated calmly. Although several participants stepped in to help, there was also a strong focus on protecting the patient's privacy, with some responders expressing the wish to move the patient outside the room. From the dispatch perspective, the exercise yielded notable findings: only one person placed a call, reporting that the ambulance had already arrived, while no other attendees contacted emergency services. Ambulance personnel highlighted that clear, timely, and accurate information is essential for an effective response. They must also continuously assess risks while carrying out their duties, considering both the condition and safety of the patient, as well as the circumstances and potential hazards within the environment. Overall, the exercise reinforced that patient safety is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration, communication, situational awareness, and coordinated action.

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# Summary Breakout Sessions

## Breakout Session, Room A

Emily Ras & Carolina Thiel-Span

The exercise simulated a high-pressure blackout and brownout scenario, challenging participants to make rapid decisions and present their response plans. Key lessons included the importance of having contingency plans that are specific to the type of healthcare organization involved. The exercise also highlighted the importance of preparing before an emergency occurs, rather than relying on ad hoc decisions. All groups mentioned using backup generators, developing protocols, and strengthening collaboration.





## Breakout Session, Room B

Sulima Geerman & Eromil Bakmeyer



Participants were placed in multidisciplinary leadership teams managing a newly established hospital. They had to address competing organizational risks using limited resources. It was noticeable that participants approached the exercise from their own professional experience and background. Most groups prioritized investment in staff, while patient safety and medication-related risks were also considered important. IT investment received comparatively less priority. Several groups indicated that they would wait for additional data before committing resources, highlighting the challenge of balancing sufficient evidence with timely action. Many groups finished the exercise with finances remaining, suggesting a relatively high tolerance for retaining risk. The exercise demonstrated that risk management requires teams to prioritize, make trade-offs, use available evidence, communicate effectively, and determine which risks to reduce, accept, or continue to monitor.

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## Breakout Session, Room C

Ian Leistikow & Chris Franca

Merging Ian Leistikow's presentation on safety science and Chris Franca's focus on shifting from treatment of advanced disease to prevention and early intervention, participants were tasked with designing an obesity prevention policy using one of three approaches: behavioral, cognitive psychological, or joint cognitive. The exercise aimed to inspire healthcare providers to implement changes within their own sphere of influence. Across all groups, recurring themes included early education and prevention, healthy school environments, access to affordable healthy food and physical activity, and supportive policies such as sugar taxes, restrictions on unhealthy food marketing, and incentives for healthy choices. Participants also stressed a whole-of-society approach involving families, schools, healthcare providers, businesses, and government, supported by awareness campaigns, data-driven decision-making, and community engagement. The ideas mentioned during the breakout session will be shared with important stakeholders.





## Common Thread

Across the conference, the sessions consistently pointed toward:

- transitioning from reactive risk management to proactive and predictive approaches;
- moving from documenting risk to understanding it;
- shifting from individual responsibility to shared learning;
- system-wide improvement–while keeping the client, safer care and societal value at the center
- risk management depending on more than policies, accreditation, reporting systems or data. But also on governance, leadership, staff involvement, psychological safety, shared ownership, open communication.



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