

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



August 7, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Emergency Room is our front door. And our goal is faster and better service for all concerned – for admitted patients, discharged patients, families, all caregivers and support personnel.

Working to redesign and improve the ER process are 26 colleagues including ER nurses, ER physicians, radiologists, pathologists, hospitalists, admitting people, laboratory folks, and operations managers. They're all being led by Phil Dutcher, System COO, Dr. Aurora Estevez, CMO, and Dr. John Lewis, Head of Emergency Physicians of Naples. Here are some of the new ideas that have been implemented, and others that are coming soon:

- “Express admit,” is a new process brought to us by CNO Linda Gipson whereby patients identified to be admitted are fully worked up by an admitting nurse located in a quiet area near the ER. Direct admit patients are also shunted past the ER, which can be hectic, to this quiet area. Then the patients are transferred to the floor nurse who receives a patient who has already been cared for with his/her treatment in progress.
- Rapid Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA) screening will be handled in the ER later this month on high- risk patients so that results will be available in less than four hours as opposed to one day. This will allow a MRSA positive patient to be isolated much earlier in his/her visit. This protects all concerned against what is becoming one of the most difficult problems in modern hospitals -- namely, hospital-acquired infection.
- Social service now has both ERs covered from 11 AM to 11 PM. These compassionate folks help all concerned with the very important non-medical issues.
- New contrast material will soon be used for abdominal CT scans. That will save about two hours of patient preparation time. And this material tastes better too.
- Next season we will have 32 more beds available at the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging along with a few more downtown for 3S. These beds should help decompress both campuses.
- There are two pilot studies on 3N to discharge patients earlier in the day and predict 24 hours ahead of discharge as to when they can go home.

Caring for ER patients in a timely manner is of paramount importance to the community. Downtown, about one of three people who come to the ER is admitted. At North Naples, about one of six people is admitted. (Many more people who are not as ill use the North Naples ER.) As we continue to look at ER issues and brainstorm potential solutions, this competent team will remain focused on upgrading “our front door.”

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

Allen S. Weiss, M.D.