

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

NURSES SPENDING MORE TIME WITH PATIENTS

Halifax Regional Installs Computer in Every Patient Room

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (April 1 2012)—Halifax Regional has completed a \$500,000 upgrade in computer technology to enable nurses to spend more time with patients in their rooms.

A total of 78 computers has been installed in cabinets in patient rooms to enable nurses to complete their required documentation for the patient's record.

"Our nurses now are spending more time with patients in their rooms," said Karen Daniels, RN, vice president of nursing. "Conversations have increased with patients, and our nurses have more opportunity to observe patients' conditions."

Nurses scan the bar code on each medication to make certain the right medication in the right dosage is given at the right time to the right patient, said Chris Lehman, director of pharmacy services.

"Once the pharmacist enters the physician's prescription in the computer system, the bar-coded dose of medication is dispensed to the patient. The information needed by the nurse is in the computer in the patient's room," Lehman said. The nurse scans his or her badge, the armband of the patient and the bar-coded dose of medication to make sure the patient is receiving what the physician ordered.

"This also gives us an opportunity to educate patients on the appropriate use of their medications," Daniels says.

More than 40 percent of a nurse's time is spent in documentation responsibilities, Daniels explained. "Our analysis of time showed that nurses spent only 25 percent at the bedside; with this change, that time has increased significantly."

In the past, patients did not understand that nurses were working on their behalf because they were performing their documentation duties outside the patient's room. They used to push a cart with a computer around the hallways but could not place the cart inside the small patient rooms.

"The benefit is that our nurses will know their patients better and have a stronger rapport with them," said Daniels. "It is enhancing the quality of care."

"Having computers in each room is making a world of difference," said Ashley Bennett, RN. "I am no longer running back and forth to the nurses' station, because I can perform all the tasks in the patient's room.

"I am more organized and can answer patients' questions better," she adds. "I enjoy spending more time with my patients."

Physicians also are using the computer, Daniels says. "They like the new system and say it is leading to improved patient care."

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.