

NEWS RELEASE



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RAPID RESPONSE TEAM REDUCES PATIENT CRISES AT HALIFAX REGIONAL

Occasionally, the condition of a patient in Halifax Regional begins to deteriorate. When that happens, a call is placed to the Rapid Response Team.

The team is available 24/7 and is composed of an experienced nurse in the Intensive Care Unit who has advanced training and a Respiratory Therapist.

The ICU nurse grabs a suitcase with medications and a portable monitor and rushes to the bedside of the patient. The Therapist also comes to the bedside, and they work with the patient's nurse as extra hands to evaluate and treat patients.

"The goal is to prevent the patient's condition from becoming severe," said Karen Daniels, RN, vice president of nursing. Examples of severe conditions are when a patient's heart stops or the patient stops breathing.

"Our patients who received the treatment from the team have fared better," Daniels added. "The program is a success."

The team is authorized to act immediately to identify symptoms of the patient and start action. Usually a team member calls the patient's physician to discuss the case. A physician always is available.

There are about 75 calls a year to activate the Rapid Response Team. "The nurses follow a protocol, so they know what to do," said Belinda Jones-Hill, RN, manager of ICU. "The suitcase is always full and ready for use 24/7.

Some symptoms of a deteriorating condition are falling blood pressure, breathing problems, chest pain, a weak pulse or a change in color, said Brenda Vincent, RN who works in the ICU and often is on the team.

Any nurse can call the Rapid Response Team through a special pager number. The designated team members leave their work stations immediately and go to the patient's bedside.

“Quite a few ICU nurses and Respiratory Therapists are on the team so we have coverage at all times,” said Daniels. “Our bedside nurses appreciate the extra hands to help in situations where urgent action is required.

“Having the team in place is an example of the importance of communication among caregivers,” continues Daniels. “At Halifax Regional, we know open communication is the key to developing a culture where the needs of patients come first.

“Our nursing staff is excellent and our patients have good outcomes because of the training and dedication of our entire nursing team.”

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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.