

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

May 19, 2011

HALIFAX REGIONAL IMPROVES EFFICIENCY IN EMERGENCY CARE CENTER.

After an intensive six month study, Halifax Regional has implemented a series of improvements that have increased efficiency in the Emergency Care Center.

Seven teams of nurses, doctors and administrators worked together to streamline the process of treating patients and decrease the time for certain patients to receive tests or treatments. There were more than 41,000 visits to the Emergency Care Center last year.

“This is a team effort with more than 100 employees and physicians involved with one common goal—putting patients first,” said Will Mahone, president. “Already the results are demonstrating the benefits of our work.”

The first change patients notice is that they are seen faster in the Emergency Care Center. After a brief registration, patients go straight back to the “triage” nurse who evaluates their condition.

If they need treatment, patients are taken “straight back” to a bed, if one is available. A nurse sees the patient and then communicates with the doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner who sees the patient.

“The streamlined process is reducing the time patients are in the Emergency Care Center,” says Karen Daniels, RN, vice president of nursing. “A surge of patients or an accident involving several people may cause a backlog, but this process prepares us better for critical patients.”

In addition, the study has resulted in changes which are improving specific times that patient receive testing or medication.

For example, 89 percent of patients who need an EKG received one within 10 minutes from the time they entered the Emergency Care Center.

Another example is the time it takes to give patients with an indication of heart attack thrombolytics, a clot busting drug. One hundred percent of the patients received the drug within 30 minutes.

“Our nurses took on these tasks as challenges,” said Daniels. “They studied how we did things and made changes to eliminate wasteful steps in the process.”

The times that physicians receive reports from the diagnostic imaging and laboratory also have been decreased significantly.

Another change is the move to zone nursing. Nurses in the Emergency Care Center are assigned to specific rooms in an area. “This change has resulted in patients seeing the same nurse more often, increasing the continuity of care.”

In the few months since the changes were implemented, Daniels says nurses have received more compliments about patients’ experiences in the Emergency Care Center and the esprit de corps of the nursing team has increased.

“This has been an intensive study over months, but it has proven to be effective,” Daniels says, “and once again demonstrates that we put Patients First.”

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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.