

Improvements Enhance Service to Physicians and Patients

In Surgical Services

BY TODD HENDERSON
Division Director, Surgical Services

It's my pleasure to inform you of some new processes in Surgical Services. These improvements are being implemented to enhance the services we provide to patients, physicians and staff.

First, surgical scheduling for next-day booking has been extended from noon until 3:00 p.m. to provide the surgeon with more time to add cases on the elective schedule.

Secondly, block time is now released four days prior to surgery (vs. seven days previously) in order to give surgeons more time to book in their assigned blocks.

In addition, we have added a large c-arm at Century Surgical Services (CSS); by

providing an outpatient setting option for these patients, we open up more time in the Main OR for inpatient cases. We have also improved laboratory response at CSS and can facilitate frozen section procedures in a timelier manner.

We will be making additional services available to minimize disruptions during the OR #6 construction project, May 24 through August 23. These include (1) opening all rooms for elective booking until 7:00 p.m.; (2) opening one room on Saturdays for elective booking from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon while providing a dedicated on-call team for emergencies; and (3) utilizing L&D OR #2 for select cases when needed during the construction phase.

If you have any questions about our new procedures and process improvements, please give me a call at 703-670-4609.

Registration Process Improvements

BY MARIAN McCOY
Director, Patient Access and Financial Services

The Registration Department has made several improvements that have significantly reduced the time from check-in until registration is completed for our patients. To improve the registration cycle time, we are scheduling additional registrars during peak hours; reducing the amount of required information from patients; and providing dual front desk check-in for scheduled and walk-in patients.

We have also improved pre-visit communication, giving more information to patients about co-pays, insurance requirements and procedure preparation. In addition, the new Referral Management Solutions process is providing additional support to participating physicians' offices.

Introducing Referral Management Solutions

BY MARTY WARD
Director, Radiology and Imaging Services

Sentara Potomac Hospital is pleased to announce the implementation of Referral Management Solutions (RMS). This new system improves patient access and simplifies and expedites the registration and pre-authorization process for patients scheduled for a radiology or imaging exam.

RMS also provides additional support with patient registration to physicians' offices. The physician office faxes the required script and pertinent patient information to the Registration Department and the hospital schedules, pre-registers, assists with obtaining the pre-authorization, and notifies the physician's office when the patient is scheduled.

If your office is interested in more information or wants to participate in RMS, please contact Michele Eckhardt, director of Physician Support Services, at 703-680-2578. ■

Please join us for a General Medical Staff Forum

Thursday, June 3, at 6:30 p.m.
in the Hylton Education Center

The National Quality Agenda and Transparency of Performance Data

By Dr. Gary Yates, Chief Medical Officer

Strategic Planning Update

By Megan Perry, Senior Vice President,
Business Development

Hors d'oeuvres, beverages & dessert will be provided

Data will drive our future

It comes as no surprise that the mainstream media has realized the benefits of reporting medical outcomes to their audiences.

Consider Consumer Reports' recent article, "Deadly Infections", on ICU central line days and infection rates, based on data that's publically available from CMS, the AHA, and other organizations. Sentara Bayside Hospital in Virginia Beach had no infections, which resulted in a very positive article in The Virginian-Pilot newspaper. Contrastingly, data that revealed more infections than average can generate negative publicity and concern from patients, employees and the Medical Staff.

We do not want to find ourselves in the position of defending our results and safety ratings in the media, much less be caught off guard with performance ratings that are lower than expected.

To assist us in improving performance, patient care and safety, Sentara brings a wealth of expertise in coding, identifying outliers that may skew data, and sharing best practices, along with the systems necessary to analyze our data, often before it is submitted to the required regulatory agencies. Our forthcoming electronic medical records system will greatly assist in these efforts, which is one of the reasons that Sentara has committed to bring this valuable tool to Potomac.

Our ability to improve performance by analyzing outcomes is even more critical when you consider the future national agenda for healthcare reimbursement and performance. Reimbursement will be tied to meeting (or exceeding) expected outcomes. Payers will not reimburse physicians or the hospital for poor results. Although doing "as expected" may meet reimbursement criteria, it may not be enough to retain our patients. They and their families will have access to cost information and data – all data, not just that which is selected for reporting – and will be choosing providers that offer superior performance in most, if not all, areas.

You will have an opportunity to learn more about the national quality agenda and transparency of performance data at the General Medical Staff Forum on Thursday, June 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the Hylton Education Center. Sentara's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Gary Yates, will provide an overview as well as touch on ways Sentara is assisting physicians to prepare for the changes ahead. I encourage you to attend this valuable discussion. ■



Denis Halmi, M.D.
President,
Medical Staff

Physical healing may be enhanced through prayer

BY CAROL WILLE, *Hospital Chaplain*

The importance of intertwining spiritual care with healing care during a patient's admission is relevant for an optimal outcome. It is a holistic approach in providing the best, comprehensive care we can offer our patients and their families. Healing of the body involving a positive relationship with the mind and spirit is one aspect of spiritual care. Prayer is another component.

There is much written and some controversy about the subject of prayer and healing. According to a study by Robert Shmerling, M.D., Harvard Health Publications, 85% of physicians polled believed religion and spirituality (including prayer) have a positive influence on health and recovery. Skeptics, looking for scientific proof, are critical. A 2005 study from researchers at Duke University showed no benefit from distant prayers for patients undergoing high-risk heart procedures.

Many physicians practice a religion and some visit our Worship Room daily to offer prayers and meditate. We may have different rituals and traditions. What we share is the healing of our souls and troubled minds when we seek prayer from our Healer, our Source of Strength, our Comforter and our Environment. When we experience the benefit of prayer in our own lives we can assume prayer to be beneficial for our patients. Our prayers often lead us to a closer connection with our God and a clearer understanding and acceptance of things beyond our control. So, too, when patients

See **Prayer** on page 4



Radiology & Imaging Services' lead nuclear medical technologist, Sam Rolley, is Sentara Potomac Hospital's Customer Service Employee of the Year. Sam received the most recognition forms submitted from visitors, patients and staff members to recognize outstanding customer service.

Welcoming our New Medical Staff Coordinator

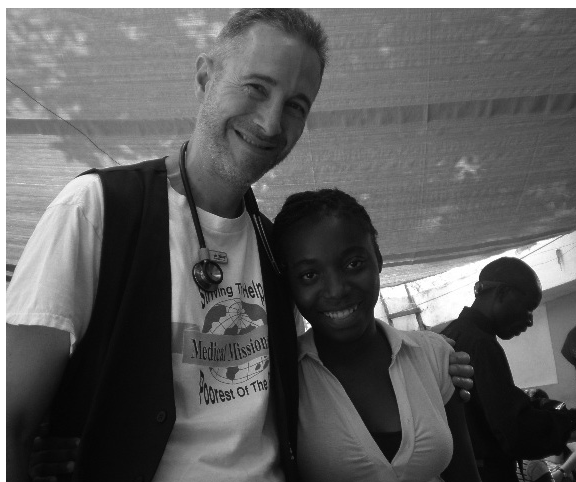
BY VALERIE KEANE, Vice President, Operations, Interim Administrator

I'm pleased to announce that Kela Casey has been appointed the new Medical Staff Coordinator at Sentara Potomac Hospital, effective June 1. She has been employed at the hospital since November 2002 as an executive assistant in Administration. She most recently served as executive assistant to the president and was instrumental in coordination of the strategic partnering process with Sentara.

Prior to coming to Sentara Potomac, Kela worked in acute care facilities within the Inova Health System and Universal Health Services, Inc. as a health and fitness coordinator, service excellence coordinator and patient advocate. She earned her bachelor's degree in Health and Fitness from George Mason University and is currently pursuing a graduate certificate in Health Care Management and Master of Business Administration at the University of Mary Washington.

Physician alignment has been identified as a top priority in the Sentara Potomac Hospital strategic plan and Kela will lead the Medical Staff Office and collaborate closely with Physician Support Services to help achieve this goal. Kela brings a vast knowledge of hospital operations, excellent office management skills and a new perspective to this role and looks forward to working with the Sentara Potomac Hospital Medical Staff.

I have every confidence that Kela will provide the leadership and skills we need to enhance physician alignment and other medical staff affairs. Please join me in welcoming Kela in her new role and in thanking Mary Ann Phelps for her service as our interim coordinator, as well as Ellie Dunlap and Linda Campisano who will both continue to support the senior leadership team. ■



Dr. Mark Bartolozzi recently returned from a medical missionary trip to provide much needed care to the residents of earthquake-ravaged Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Dr. Bartolozzi provided medical care at a clinic that treated 400-500 patients a day and performed surgeries at the city's Adventist Hospital. When he had time during his visit, Dr. Bartolozzi walked

the streets of Port-au-Prince to see the devastation. He was both amazed and disheartened by the tragedy of it all, but is very glad that he was able to make the trip and lend a hand to people who really needed it.

In The News

Sentara Potomac Top Docs

Congratulations to the following Sentara Potomac Hospital physicians who were named Top Doctors in the March issue of Washingtonian magazine: Ali R. Assefi, M.D., Nephrology; Charles Azzam, M.D., Neurosurgery; Amir Bajoghli, M.D., Dermatology; Mark A. Bartolozzi, M.D., General Surgery; Susan E. Boylan, M.D., Radiation Oncology; Robert L. Castle, M.D., OB/GYN; Robert Cohen, M.D., General Surgery; Robert Greenspan, M.D., Nephrology; Homayoun A. Hashemi, M.D., Vascular Surgery; Daniel Katcher, M.D., Oncology/Hematology; Zachary A. Kaye, M.D., Endocrinology; Eugene Kim, M.D., Nephrology; Paymaun Lotfi, M.D., Orthopedics; Jey A. Maran, M.D., Oncology/Hematology; Jin Hyuk Park, M.D., Pediatric Cardiology; Rashida K. Rahman, M.D., Nephrology; Ali M. Safa, M.D., Endocrinology; Carol S. Shapiro, M.D., MBA, Plastic Surgery; Neil I. Stahl, M.D., Rheumatology; Keith M. Sterling, M.D., Interventional Radiology; and John S. Symington, M.D., Infectious Diseases.

Dr. Greenspan, The Author

An article entitled "Fascinated by Medicine's Past" was recently published in *Rheumatology News* and in *Internal Medicine News*. It featured Dr. Robert Greenspan's passion of collecting historical medical books and artifacts. Dr. Greenspan's book, *Medicine: Perspectives in History and Art*, which he published in 2006, was also reviewed in the article. The article can be found at rheumatologynews.com (April issue) and at internalmedicineneeds.com (May issue).

PHCN.com Update

Sentara Potomac Hospital's IT team and PHCN work group are pleased to announce that physicians and registered, authorized users can now access the Emergency Department charts on PHCN.com.

Under "Results Reporting," click on "Search" and enter search criteria, then click "Search Results." You will recognize that an ED Charts link has been added to your choice of selections. You can locate the ED Wellsoft chart by clicking on the ED Charts link. *Note: Only ED charts for patient visits May 1, 2010 and later are available.*

Prayer *from page 2*

pray and are prayed for, they can find solace and meaning even without answers to their questions.

Regardless of faith tradition, physicians can choose to reach out to patients through prayer. We are providers of spiritual care when we are present to patients in their suffering. We do not have answers, do not inflict our beliefs and do not make decisions.

A physician joined me in prayer at the bedside of a patient who was having difficulty coping with a new diagnosis. Holding hands while we

prayed provided a physical connection and a tangible memory that remained long after we left the room. Later, the patient shared with me that it was meaningful to have his doctor, the physical healer, participate in prayer to his Spiritual Healer. This was not **distant** prayer.

Healing words—healing touch—healing care. ■

Healing Strings – How Sweet the Sound

Pastoral Care Services is pleased to bring Healing Strings, a new music therapy program, to Sentara Potomac Hospital. Debbie Doyle, M Ed., a choir director and music teacher, is now playing her Paraguayan harp for patients, visitors and staff in public areas of the hospital, in the Worship Room and on patient care units a few hours one afternoon each week. Healing Strings is comprised of musical selections that are chosen without religious nuance. One of the goals of providing therapeutic harp music in a hospital setting is to bring peace, solace and comfort to the body, mind and spirit of the listeners.

Pulse is the newsletter of the Sentara Potomac Hospital Medical Staff. Contributions are welcome and may be submitted to the Medical Staff president, Denis Halmi, M.D., via email at denis.halmi@potomachospital.com

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