

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2009

pulse



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Memorial
Hospital

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A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR PHYSICIANS, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS FOCUSING ON THE HOSPITAL'S MISSION OF PROVIDING QUALITY CARE AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE TO THOSE WE SERVE

Stand up to the flu

The flu season is upon us. And this year there are two flus to contend with. To date there have been a handful of deaths in the county related to the Novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus and more than 200 hospitalizations. Throughout the state, there've been 5,886 confirmed cases of H1N1, 2,510 hospitalizations and 230 deaths. The bad news is that those numbers are expected to climb. The seasonal flu and H1N1 will be challenging for hospitals throughout the country. Already this season, the number of people with the flu is alarmingly higher than in years past. There's national concern about the ability of hospitals to cope. However, part of the national worry is focused on health-care providers themselves who are among those most hesitant to obtain flu shots. The CDC proclaims both vaccines to be safe, and while the high-risk groups for both flu strains differ dramatically, health-care providers are among the most at-risk groups for both flus. Public-health officials and health-care providers in the county and nation are encouraging people to protect themselves and get the seasonal flu as well as the H1N1 vaccine. Just last week the State of New York mandated that all health-care providers get flu shots. Please be sure to get your flu shots this year, and encourage your family and friends to do the same. If you haven't yet, check with your supervisor or the electronic-employee-bulletin board about obtaining a complimentary flu shot, (Joe Harrington, ext. 7560).

Dr. Kaur joins Millsbridge Clinic



Jaspreet Kaur, MD, joins the Lodi Memorial Community Clinic - Millsbridge on Oct. 22. Dr. Kaur is board certified in internal medicine with an interest in women's-health needs. She has been seeing patients in Lodi since July 2008. Dr. Kaur joins Drs. Grady, Kellar, Mirmira, Mullen, Freund and Shukla, and NP

Dani Bassett, (Pam Schneider, ext. 7450).

Code announcements change

In order to improve the communication of all emergency-code overhead announcements, the hospital operator will now begin each announcement with, "Attention please, attention please, code ..." The purpose of this change is to get employees' attention so they can respond to the situation, (Barbara Sams, ext. 7529).

Case-management week celebrated



L to R, case managers Nancy Shakley, Hettie Weideman, Kim Rodgers, Barbara Dodson, Dawn Addington, Jamie Cramer, Andrea Jepson and director Shelly Mason. Not shown, Mari Herman and Melinda Fields.

Case-Management Week is Oct. 11-17. This is the first time LMH has celebrated case-management week, as the case-management program was implemented earlier this year. Case managers play a critical role for LMH, ensuring patient care is coordinated, partnering with physicians to monitor the appropriateness, timeliness and use of hospital resources and assisting patients with navigating through their hospitalization experience, leading to a safe and successful discharge or transition to the most appropriate level of care. Case managers play a key role in promoting quality, cost-effective outcomes for patients and the organization. Please take a moment to thank the case managers for all they do, (Shelly Mason, ext. 7480).

Med staff approves flu treatment

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee performs an ongoing review of LMH's drug formulary. In September the committee approved the addition of an antiviral drug for preventing and treating influenza. The following drug was approved and joins Tamiflu as an alternative: generic name - Zanamivir 5mg inhaler 20 dose disk; brand name - Relenza 5mg inhaler 20 dose disk. It is an antiviral drug for the prevention and treatment of infection added as an alternative to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) 75mg oral capsules. Relenza is approved to treat influenza A and B virus infections in those seven years and older and to prevent infection in those five years and older. Recommended treatment dosage is two oral inhalations (one 5mg blister per inhalation for a total dose of 10mg) twice a day for five days, starting up to two days after symptoms occur. Recommended prophylaxis dosage for those five years and older is two oral inhalations once daily for 28 days at about the same time each day. Common side effects of Relenza include headache, diarrhea and nausea. Monitor signs and symptoms of infection, (Sandy Atwater, ext. 7555).

Every little bit counts

The Utilization-Management Department has committed to implementing simple, money-saving ideas and to become a greener department. In an effort to conserve paper, handouts and other materials are often printed on both sides of the paper. Also, paper that has been previously been printed on one side is reused in the copy machine when making copies of the daily census. Pagers are turned off when not in use (overnight when the department is closed), which greatly increases battery life, reducing battery consumption. The most significant change is the electronic submission of faxes. Previously medical-necessity reviews were printed, then faxed to insurance companies. Now, data is captured electronically and sent directly, eliminating the need for a paper copy. For fun, administrative assistant Sue Anderson tracked the number of pages she submits electronically and calculated the amount of paper saved per month. The first month of this new procedure eliminated literally thousands of pages of paper. The UM department challenges everyone to join its efforts in making every little bit count, (*Shelly Mason, ext. 7480*).

Help prevent medication errors

The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 1999 publication "To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System" reported that medical errors attributed to between 44,000 and 98,000 deaths annually and included recommendations for specific strategies to reduce medication errors. Automated dispensing cabinets (ADC) have been suggested as a technology that can assist in reducing medication errors. ADCs offer several benefits to the organization and the RN, including providing nurses with increased access to medications in patient-care areas to facilitate timely administration; ensuring the locked storage of medications on units; and tracking medications to improve inventory control. While AcuDose machines help with accuracy and efficiency, they do not prevent errors alone. According to a report, in 2003, 4.1 percent of reported errors cited the dispensing device as the error source. The highest error percentage was attributed to manual-replenishment functions, returning drugs to the wrong location in the machines, human overrides and circumvention of the machines' safety features. The following actions may decrease the risk of wrong-dose and wrong-drug errors when medications are retrieved from an ADC: Limit the removal of drugs via over-ride to emergency situations; validate that the drug name on the label of the drug-in-hand matches the drug name displayed on the patient's medication-administration record (MAR); validate that the drug-in-hand is the ordered concentration, dose and dosage form; always scan the medication's bar code if administering medications using bedside medication verification (BMV); and be suspicious of any dose that would require removal of more than three packages/ampules/vials to administer a single dose. AcuDose machines offer immediate access to drugs, facilitating timely medication administration. However, use of ADCs does not prevent medication errors. Nurses can help ensure that the five rights of medication administration are followed through careful use of AcuDose, (*Sandy Atwater, ext. 7555*).

Cash out PTO this month

It's PTO-cash-out time. Employees may receive money through the use of their Personal Time Off (PTO) by cashing out up to 80 hours. In order to qualify, an employee must have at least 128 hours in his or her PTO bank. For example, if an employee has 180 hours of PTO, he or she may cash out up to 60 hours. If he or she has 130 hours in the PTO bank, he or she is only able to cash out 10 hours. The minimum payout is eight hours. A Personnel Action Form (PAF) must be completed and turned in to human resources, indicating the number of hours to be cashed out. PAFs must be submitted to HR no later than Oct. 16. The actual check for PTO cash out is Oct. 30. This check is a separate check and will not be direct deposited. Normal taxes and 403(b) contributions are deducted, as well. Those with questions should contact HR, (*Judi Simon, ext. 7443*).

Gift shop holds big sale

Anticipating the South Wing move, LMH's gift shop will hold a clearance sale Oct. 18-31. Most gift items will be 50-percent off. Those who have been eyeing items in the gift shop, but have been hesitant to buy, should stop in to see what's on sale. The goal is to sell the majority of the current merchandise before the move. Candy, cards, flowers, balloons and some gift items are not included, (*Sarah Beasley, ext. 7616*).

Camp offers winter-break care

Camp Hutchins will provide care for children ages five through 12 for the two-week break during the holiday season. The program will run from Dec. 21-31 (closed Fri., Dec. 25). Activities include arts and crafts, indoor games and more. LMH employees receive a 10-percent discount. For information, please contact Camp Hutchins, 334-2267, (*Jillian Vanasse, 334-2267*).

Way to go, Julie



Julie Whiteley, clinical-systems analyst for Utilization Management and Evidence-Based Practice, just completed a Masters in Business Administration with a concentration in health-care management. Julie's education and skills are true assets to the department. Congratulations, (*Shelly Mason, ext. 7480*).

Stroll down School Street

On Fri., Oct. 16, 6-9p, sip, stroll and shop on School Street in beautiful, downtown Lodi. This affair brings together award winning wine, food and first class shopping in a unique, outdoor event. More than 25 local wineries will take up residence in the shops of Lodi's historic district for the evening. Merchants provide hors d'oeuvres and offer special sales while wineries pour tastings of their labels. LMH employees pay only \$25 (a \$5 savings) when they purchase tickets through the LMH HR Department. Tickets can also be purchased at the Lodi Chamber of Commerce Office, 35 S. School St., (*Judi Simon, ext. 7443*).