Split-flow system streamlines emergency care

**Triage trio.** One of the keys to the split-flow system is immediate triage at check-in. That's where skilled, experienced nurses like (from left) Sharon Salisbury, RN, Henry Loria, RN, and Kim Weaver, RN, are invaluable to getting patients assessed and headed for examination and treatment.

In Sparrow Hospital's busy emergency room, no two days are alike. Patients arrive with varying degrees of illness or injury and managing this unpredictable flow is always a challenge. Sparrow's new “split-flow” approach is helping to address this challenge by helping to streamline care and significantly reduce waiting times.

One of the features of the split-flow approach is immediate assessment (triage) by a registered nurse upon check-in. The most seriously ill or injured patients go for expedited treatment. Less serious patients are examined and then sent to a “results pending lounge,” where they are monitored while awaiting the results of diagnostic tests.

First piloted in August, the split-flow system went live on Sept. 1, and has already reduced waiting times by more than 30 percent, and nearly 50 percent better than the national average.

“Split-flow is designed not to leave patients in the waiting area,” said ER manager Stacey Peacock, RN. “Getting patients quickly assessed by a nurse and examined by a physician is very important to get a treatment plan started and to move them through our system effectively.”

Peacock explained that the new system is still a work in progress. There are regular staff meetings each week that address issues and help to fine-tune the system.

“I love the new system,” said attending physician Amy Blasen, DO. “We’re all dedicated to making this the best care we can possibly provide, and it’s satisfying when we can have patient see a provider within minutes of when they walk in the door.”

**Care and comfort.** Another feature of split-flow is the results pending lounge, where patient care technicians like Michelle Christensen provide care and monitoring while patients await diagnostic test results.
Drilling sergeant. » Security Supervisor Jerry Dumond directs team members while setting up a decontamination tent in the parking structure outside the Sparrow Hospital Emergency Room. In September, Sparrow participated in an emergency preparedness drill with Sparrow Clinton Hospital and Ingham Regional Medical Center to test decontamination processes and capabilities.

Courtenay Beattie, RN, » has accepted the position of department manager of Sparrow Hospital’s Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. Most recently, Courtenay served as a clinical manager for Allegiance Health in Jackson.

Sparrow joins statewide initiative to prevent blood clots

Building upon an award-winning partnership program that has helped improve the quality of care in other medical areas, Sparrow Hospital has joined Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Blue Care Network, and 16 other hospitals throughout the state to launch a new quality improvement initiative aimed at reducing the risk of blood clots in hospitalized patients.

Blood clots (venous thromboembolism or VTE) are a common risk of hospitalization due to the lack of movement a person experiences while remaining in a hospital bed. Patients who develop hospital-associated blood clots often experience poorer clinical outcomes, extended hospital stays, and ongoing treatment to address potential long-term ramifications of the blood clot.

To combat this, the Michigan Blues and the participating hospitals will collect and share data to help develop best practices for preventing blood clots in high-risk medical inpatients.

This initiative is part of Value Partnerships, a collection of collaborative initiatives among physicians, hospitals and the Michigan Blues, all aimed at improving quality in medical care. To learn more about this comprehensive effort, go to www.valuepartnerships.com.
Harsha Allu, MD, has joined the Sparrow Hospitalist program. Dr. Allu completed his Internal Medicine residency at St. Barnabas Hospital, an affiliate of Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York. He joins us from his recent position as hospitalist at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

John Truscott has joined the Sparrow Foundation Board of Directors. For over a decade, John served as director of communications and press secretary to Michigan Governor John Engler. Since 2001, John has been president of the John Truscott Group, a leading public relations and issue management firm.

Ikjot Kaur, MD, has joined the Sparrow team as a hospitalist. Dr. Kaur recently completed her internal medicine residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia.

Pretty in pink. Sparrow Children’s Center manager Sara Cecil, RN, recently relocated her office from 5-South to 5-Foster and had the walls in her new digs repainted a child-friendly color – pink. When she arrived the next morning, her staff had decorated the stunning pink office with all sorts of like-colored objects, from dolls and lip gloss to a bottle of Pepto-Bismol. Sara also found a Barbie Doll tiara which she graciously modeled for our Sparrow News photographer.

Public flu clinics offer vaccinations for $25

Sparrow Hospital has scheduled 11 walk-in, flu vaccination clinics for adults in the hospital main lobby during October and November with a cost of $25 per vaccination. “This is an easy way for associates or volunteers to get their spouses or other adult family members vaccinated,” said Chris Nemets, RN, who is managing the clinics. Only cash will be accepted. The dates and times are as follows:

- Tuesday, Oct. 19: 4-7 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 21: 4-7 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 23: 9 a.m. – noon
- Monday, Oct. 25: 4-7 p.m.
- Wednesday, Oct. 27: 4-7 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 31: 9 a.m. – noon
- Wednesday, Nov. 3: 4-7 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 5: 4-7 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 9: 4-7 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 11: 4-7 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 13: 9 a.m. - noon

Buckling up little bundles. Carson City Hospital Service Excellence Manager Daniyel McAlvey, buckles in twins Tristyn and Treas Dean Arrell of Ionia after showing their mother, Sherie Arrell, how to properly install their car seat during Child Passenger Safety Week in September. McAlvey, is one of a group of certified car seat installation technician at CCH who offer free car seat instruction throughout the year.

Home of the best cuisine. British Columbia? Sparrow-Clinton Hospital’s first “Taste of Diversity” food challenge was a spirited competition in which nearly every hospital department offered cultural dishes from places around the world. Approximately 125 associates participated, with the “best taste” award going to the Surgery Department for their British Columbia recipes. Celebrating their victory are, front row, from left: Martha Croswell, Kathleen McElroy, Sue Singer and Nancy Jenkins. Back row, from left: Jean Fedewa, Theresa Thelen, Connie Phelps, Wendy Denovich, Janet Pline and Alejandra Vergara.
Sparrow ranks 22 in InformationWeek 500

The 2010 InformationWeek 500, the magazine’s annual listing of the nation’s most innovative users of business technology was recently released and Sparrow ranked 22 in the nation, above such giants as Hewlett-Packard, Procter & Gamble and Lockheed Martin. The business technology periodical based the ranking the hi-tech infrastructure of the Sparrow Tower and on several IT projects completed in recent years. “The innovation that Sparrow is delivering directly enables clinicians to save lives,” said Thomas A. Bres, Sparrow Vice President and Chief Information Officer. “That’s a powerful use of technology that I’m sure contributed to our ranking.”

Red Wings stars visit Children’s Center. Detroit Red Wings and former Michigan State University Spartan hockey player Drew Miller holds 2-year-old patient Logan Ewell during a visit to the Sparrow Children’s Center in September. Miller and Red Wings teammate Justin Abdelkader (below) who also starred at MSU, visited patients and staff members and also presented a check for more than $22,000 to the Sparrow Foundation from the Spartan Buddies, a program Miller began in 2006 that promotes visits to the Children’s Center by Spartan athletes and raises funds to help support pediatric services.