

HEALTH Messages

SPRING 2003

WARREN HOSPITAL



Warren Hospital's nursing and support staff now wear "color-coded" uniforms for ease of identification. From left are Jana Arden, nurse assistant on One North, in dark teal; Carolyn Stueber, unit secretary on Three South, in navy blue, and Sandra Patterson, RN on Three North, in royal blue.

Photo by Peter A. Keady

The Many Colors of Caring

"We want our patients to instantly know who's caring for them," says Magdalene Figuccio, MSN, BSN, RN, Vice President of Patient Care Services. "That is their right and it also contributes to their level of satisfaction."

While all Warren Hospital staff wear name badges, the nursing department felt uniforms are also an important source of recognition for patients and visitors.

As a result, beginning in January, all Warren Hospital nurses and support staff adopted a new color-coded dress code.

Registered and licensed practical nurses on most nursing units now wear royal blue uniforms with white

jackets. The nursing staff also has the option to wear an all-white uniform. Obstetric and surgical nurses wear light blue scrub suits. Support staff, including specialized technicians and nurse aides, wear dark teal scrub suits. Unit secretaries wear navy blue.

"We live in a color-coded society," says Mrs. Figuccio. "Having nurses wear the same color provides instant recognition."

Diane Kerr, MSN, RN, a nursing director, headed the nursing team that designed the new dress policy.

"Today, patients are often in the hospital only a few

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News Briefs

Free Shuttle Service

For area residents who don't have access to public transportation, getting to Warren Hospital for therapy and other appointments is no longer a problem.

Warren Hospital, in partnership with Easton Coach Company, now offers a free door-to-door shuttle service for senior and disabled residents who need transportation to the hospital for outpatient services and live in a community without bus service. Qualified riders should have no other transportation and should not need medical supervision.

The shuttles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. The service operates weekdays 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call the hospital's Geriatric Services Department at (908) 859-6722. 📞

ER Nurses Share Insights

A powerful program for teenagers about the dangers of drinking and driving is now being offered to area schools and community organizations by Warren Hospital emergency department nurses.

The nurses share their first-hand observations about the symptoms of excessive drinking and the tragic effects of drinking and driving with the teens.

Emergency Nurses CARE (ENCARE), a nonprofit organization founded by emergency nurses, developed the program curriculum. Warren Hospital's speakers have received ENCARE training. They also offer presentations on other safety issues including the use of helmets.

Schools and community organizations may call (908) 859-6700 ext. 2417 for more information. 📞



From Warren Hospital's nursing archives

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hours or days," says Mrs. Kerr. "With things happening so quickly, we wanted an easy way for them to know who was providing their care."

Within one hour, a patient may encounter as many as five different types of care givers including their primary nurse, an EKG technician, a transporter, a phlebotomist to draw blood and radiology staff, for example.

"The different colored uniforms help patients become familiar with who is coming into their rooms," Mrs. Kerr says.

The new dress policy also reflects the changes at the hospital, such as the current \$6.2 million renovation project. Creating a professional image is part of advancing the hospital's services, facilities and staff to the next level of care. 📞



News Briefs

Health Center Opens

A new health center for women and children recently opened in downtown Easton as a joint venture of Warren Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital & Health Network.

The St. Luke's Health Center—Easton provides pediatric, obstetric and gynecological care. It is located on Northampton Street, across from the State Theatre, in the former Tucker's Yarn store.

Future plans for the clinic include providing dental care for low-income

families. Dental services, requested by state Rep. Robert Freeman, will open when the hospitals have the funding to purchase dental equipment and hire a dentist.

Pictured below, during the December grand opening are, from left, state Rep. Robert Freeman; Dr. Joseph Merola, chief of obstetrics at St. Luke's; Jeffrey Kelly, senior vice president, Warren Hospital; Vincent Joseph, executive vice president, St. Luke's and Glenn Reibman, Northampton County executive. 🌿



Board Room Named for Trustee

Warren Hospital's new Board Room in the recently completed administrative office building has been named in honor of long-time trustee, Edwin J. Roble.

Mr. Roble has served on the Board of Trustees since 1963. A resident of Easton, Mr. Roble retired as an executive from Bell and Howell Company in 2000 where he worked since 1943.

Mr. Roble has served as chairman of the following committees of the hospital's Board of Trustees: Personnel, Long Range Planning and Executive Performance Evaluation. He was Vice President of the Board from 1976 to 1978.

The Board Room was named in Mr. Roble's honor by resolution at the Board's December 9, 2002 meeting. 🌿

Physician is Honored

Howard Swidler, M.D., medical director of Warren Hospital's Emergency Department, received a "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the New Jersey Division of the American Heart Association (AHA).

Dr. Swidler was honored for 20 years of contributions to the AHA including training and educating healthcare professionals at the state, national and international levels. He also received the AHA's "New Jersey Chain of Survival Award for Outstanding Service for 2001-02," recognizing his contributions to promoting an important link in cardiac survival—early advanced care.

He is currently concluding a four-year appointment as a national faculty representative for New Jersey. 🌿

Mindful Parenting



Sheri Angstadt, LCSW, a marriage and family therapist, is also the behavioral scientist for Warren Hospital's Family Practice Residency Program. She shares her thoughts on a parenting approach that provides a nurturing environment and allows children to develop their unique personalities.

During the holiday season, I met my daughter and three-year-old granddaughter, Payton, for a hectic shopping trip. Wanting to do something special for Payton, I said, "Let's go to the candy store for a piece of chocolate."

"Could we go instead to the toy store to look at toys?" she asked excitedly.

"The toy store is a place for grandma to go to get you gifts for Christmas," I said.

Looking back, I realized I missed a chance to be totally present with Payton. I wasn't listening to what she thought would be fun—I had my own agenda. In a more mindful approach to parenting, I would have stilled my mind to listen to her ideas and let her know that I heard what she was saying. Creating a non-judgmental environment where children feel safe to express their feelings is so important.

Ms. Angstadt and Julie Celeberti, M.D., pediatrician, conduct an eight-week workshop, "A Mindful Approach to Parenting: Getting Ourselves Out of the Way." Call (908) 454-6303 ext. 161 for more information. 🌿



Waking Up Tired? It Could Be A Sleep Disorder

With four children, 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, Dorothy Sandford, 61, of Phillipsburg is always on the go.

"I'm up and out early in the morning and keep going all day long either visiting one of my daughters or coloring with the kids or taking a ceramics class," she says. "I have arthritis and I don't like to sit still for long."

But about two years ago, Ms. Sandford began having trouble sleeping.

"I'd wake up early, go to work and then need to take a nap when I got home," she says. "If I napped for more than 20 or 30 minutes, though, I'd blow a whole night's sleep."

Ms. Sandford also found that she sometimes dropped off to sleep during conversations. Her physician recommended a sleep test at Warren Hospital's Center for Sleep Medicine.

Opened in August 2002, the Center combines state-of-the-art testing technology with comfortable hotel-

like accommodations to evaluate a variety of sleep problems.

Pauses in Breathing

Most of the patients tested at the sleep center, including Ms. Sandford, are eventually diagnosed with sleep apnea. During sleep apnea, a person stops breathing for periods of time during sleep. It can happen dozens to hundreds of times a night. Each time, the person stops breathing for 10 seconds or more, then suddenly gasps for air. Between each gasp and the next time breathing stops, the person almost always snores loudly.

"Obstructive sleep apnea is the most common form of this condition," says Suryakant Patel, M.D., pulmonologist and medical director of the Center for Sleep Medicine. "It is caused by a blockage of the airway. Generally, the soft tissue in the back of the throat collapses and closes off the airway during sleep."

Other types of sleep disorders

tested at the Center include:

- Insomnia.
- Restless leg syndrome.
- Narcolepsy (suddenly falling asleep during the day).

Diagnosing the Problem

Patients arrive at the Center for Sleep Medicine about 7:30 p.m. A polysomnographer, who is certified to conduct sleep studies, helps patients complete a detailed questionnaire about their sleep habits and medical history.

Then, the polysomnographer attaches a number of small sensors to the patient's head and chest.

"These sensors provide a wealth of information throughout the night while the patient sleeps," says Lawrence Bauer, Director of Pulmonary Services. "They measure heart rate, brain activity, eye movement and oxygen levels, among other things."

A video camera also provides the
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technician with an audiovisual record of the patient's leg movements, snoring pattern and periods of wakefulness.

The Center for Sleep Medicine provides private hotel-like accommodations with queen-size beds, elegant bedspreads, televisions and private baths with matching linens and accessories.

"We try to create a restful ambience," says Joann L. Hassan, the Center's coordinator. "Patients are offered a snack before lights out in the evening. In the morning, they can shower and have breakfast before leaving for home."

For Ms. Sandford, the Center's atmosphere was "very comfortable and pleasant. The staff really put me at ease and I had no trouble falling asleep."

Diagnosis and Treatment

The Center's physicians, who are trained to evaluate the readings, interpret the sleep study results and provide a report to the patient's primary care doctor.

Treatments depend upon which type of sleep disorder is diagnosed. Narcolepsy and restless leg syndrome are treated with medications. Insomnia is treated primarily by behavioral approaches including re-establishing good sleep habits. Sleep apnea, the most common sleep disorder, may be treated by one or a

What is a Sleep Disorder?

Do you sleep like a log but feel unrefreshed in the morning and tired during the day? Do you toss and turn all night? If so, you may be one of almost 50 million Americans who suffer from a sleep disorder. Most are unaware of their problem and may only be alerted to it by a bed partner.

Symptoms of sleep disorders include:

- Snoring, usually loud.
- Gaps or irregularities in breathing during sleep (usually noted by bed partner).
- Unrefreshing sleep.
- Daytime sleepiness or napping.
- Restless sleep.
- Difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep.
- Painful or crawling sensations in the legs while lying in bed.



combination of therapies including a breathing device called a CPAP.

"With the use of a CPAP, a mask is worn over the person's nose and sometimes also the mouth to gently push in a steady stream of air that keeps the airway open," says Mr. Bauer.

Patients who are diagnosed with sleep apnea and for whom a CPAP device is recommended come back to the Center for a second sleep study to properly fit the mask and assess its effectiveness.

"Sleep disorders are very common and contribute to a variety of problems including traffic fatalities, depression, fatigue and, with sleep

apnea, high blood pressure and heart disease," says Mr. Bauer. "I'm proud we're able to offer such a sophisticated testing service right in our own community."

The Center, currently located within the hospital, will be moving into separate facilities near the hospital campus this summer.

The medical staff for the Center for Sleep Medicine includes pulmonologists Suryakant Patel, M.D., director; Kishor Nar, M.D. and Michael Nekoranik, D.O.

Call the Center for Sleep Medicine at (908) 387-9130 for more information. 🐦

Recipe File

Quick and Healthy Soup

Serves 6. Calories: 53; Fat: 1g; Fiber: 1g

- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth, heated
- 1/2 medium cucumber or 1 medium zucchini, sliced very thin
- 4 fresh medium mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cups shredded fresh spinach, lettuce, or cabbage
- 1 medium tomato, cubed
- 1/2 cup cooked chicken or lean meat, shredded

Put all ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve immediately.



Cholesterol Testing

Warren Hospital's health educators are now equipped with computerized testing units that can analyze a drop of blood for both total cholesterol and high density lipoprotein (HDL) in 10 minutes.

"With the earlier units, we could only test for a total cholesterol level. It might be 160, which is considered normal, but your HDL might not be as high as it should be and we had no way of knowing that," says Sue Himmelreich, RN, BSN, health educator. "With this new unit, we have that vital piece of additional information."

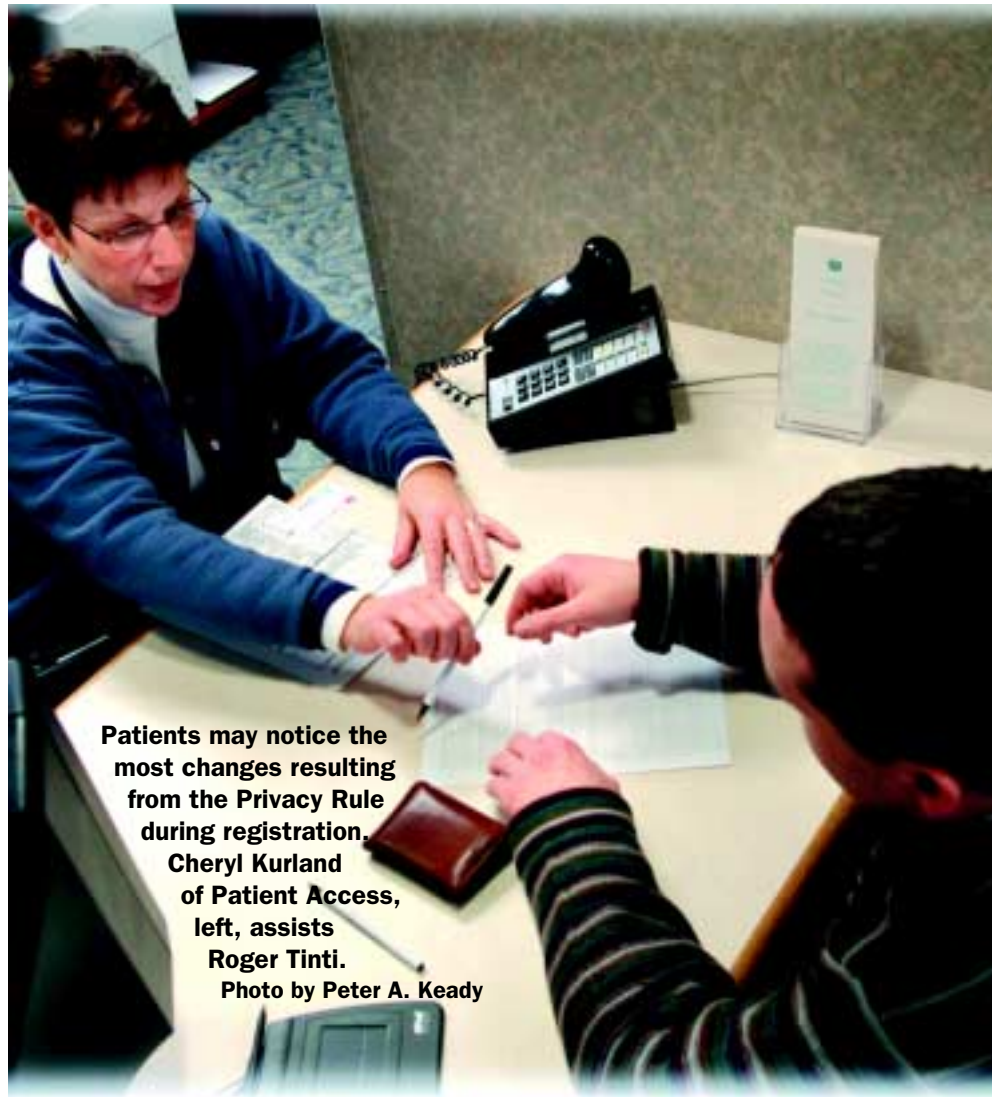
A total cholesterol reading includes a combined measure of both harmful and helpful lipoproteins. A total cholesterol reading of less than 200 milligrams per deciliter is considered desirable.

HDL is a helpful lipoprotein that removes excess cholesterol from your arteries and moves it to the liver where it can be eliminated from the body.

"When we know both a person's total cholesterol and HDL, we can discuss ways to lower their levels, if needed, with some lifestyle changes," says Leslie Washuta, RN, BSN, health educator. "This includes achieving a healthy weight, exercising and eating foods low in saturated fats and cholesterol."

Warren Hospital's health educators can provide the test at employee health fairs, at senior citizen centers and for other organizations. The test costs \$10 per person. Because the test takes 10 minutes to process, events which can accommodate appointments in advance or sign-up sheets work the best.

Call the Health Education Department at (908) 859-6777 for information. 🌱



Patients may notice the most changes resulting from the Privacy Rule during registration.

Cheryl Kurland of Patient Access, left, assists Roger Tinti.

Photo by Peter A. Keady

Protecting Your Privacy

Safeguarding the privacy of patients has always been a priority at Warren Hospital. Like most hospitals and doctors offices, Warren Hospital has a long tradition of protecting private health information. But today, the old system of paper records locked in file cabinets is not enough.

With information broadly dispersed and transmitted electronically, the federal government determined additional laws were needed. Work began when the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was enacted. The resulting regulation, the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information, is known more simply as the Privacy Rule.

The Privacy Rule creates, for the first time, national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other per-

sonal health information. It became effective in April 2003. The Privacy Rule:

- Gives patients more control over their health information.
- Sets boundaries on the use and release of health records.
- Holds violators accountable.
- Strikes a balance when public responsibility requires some forms of data to be disclosed—to protect public health, for example.

"At Warren Hospital, we've had a policy protecting patient confidentiality for at least 10 years that is signed by employees when they are hired and annually from then on," says Barbara Balas, Director of Quality Management and the hospital's Privacy Officer. "In many ways, we're already practicing much of what the Privacy Rule spells out."

Warren Hospital has taken a number
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of additional steps to ensure that all aspects of the privacy rule are met. Each employee is trained in ways to further protect patient privacy including turning computer screens so that they cannot be viewed by the public, keeping voices low during phone conversations and securing all patient charts.

Also, a number of registration and treatment areas have been redesigned to further ensure confidentiality. The privacy officer oversees this important function.

Information Sharing Needed

Patient information is shared for many reasons with many people. Often these disclosures are needed to treat patients, process claims, measure outcomes and fight disease.

For example, when your physician schedules you for a test at the hospital, the results are shared with him or her. Your insurance company receives information on the test so that the hospital and physician can be reimbursed. If your doctor prescribes medicine, a pharmacy also has access

to some of your medical information.

However, access to that same information by employers or lenders, for example, could invite misuse. Until the Privacy Rule was developed, there was no real limit on the use of patients' medical records.

"Our yardstick is to disclose the minimal amount of information necessary to provide optimal care to our patients," says Mrs. Balas.

As a patient, the Privacy Rule enables you to make informed choices about how your personal health information may be used. The Privacy Rule:

- Ensures that you can find out how your information may be used and what information has been disclosed.
- Generally limits the release of information to the minimum amount reasonably needed.
- Gives you the right to examine and get a copy of your own health record and to request corrections.

"The Privacy Rule as of April 14 is the law and we have a responsibility to our patients as a result," says Mrs. Balas. "Confidentiality is something we've always taken seriously and will continue to do so." 🌸

Things That Will Change

The next time you come to Warren Hospital for a test or procedure, you'll probably notice a few changes resulting from the Privacy Rule, mostly during registration. You'll be given a copy of Warren Hospital's privacy practices. Patients who are being admitted for an overnight stay or longer will notice one major change right away. They now will be asked if they'd like their name, room number and general condition to be included in the hospital's general listing known as the patient directory.

If you choose to be included in the directory:

- Visitors will be given your room number when they call or stop by the information desk.
- Callers will be given your general condition report (good, fair, etc.) when they provide your name.
- Florists will be given your room number when they deliver flowers.
- The hospital's information desk staff will have access to your name and room number.

If you choose not to be included in the directory:

- You will be responsible for letting your family, friends and other visitors know that you are in the hospital and what your room number is.
- The hospital information desk staff will not have access to your name and room number and will not be aware of your presence in the hospital.
- Florists will not be provided with your room number. Friends, family and others who you have notified will need to bring flowers themselves. 🌸

Balance Check

Before beginning an exercise program, such as walking, older adults should make sure they are steady on their feet.

Poor posture, diabetic nerve damage, arthritis, limited vision and inner ear problems can all result in impaired balance and increased risk of falls.

Warren Hospital physical therapists Michelle Barnhart, PT, and Lisa Ott, PT, suggest these tests for checking your balance. Have a friend or family member help you:

■ **Reaching.** As you stand, reach as far forward as you can without losing your balance. If you cannot reach further than seven inches, your balance may be impaired.

■ **Romberg Test.** Stand with your arms crossed and eyes open, then closed, with your feet in the following positions: shoulder distance apart; together with the insides touching; together with the ball of one foot snugly against the arch of the other; and finally one foot directly behind the other. Move on to the next position only if you are safely able to maintain your balance for 30 seconds in the preceding position.

■ **Get up and go.**

From a seated position, stand up and walk 10 feet and then return and sit down. If it takes longer than 10 seconds to complete this you may need to have your balance checked. 🌸

