



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rapid Response Teams Enhances Patient Outcomes at Quincy Medical Center

Quincy, MA, October 31, 2006 - *A nurse reviews an 82-year-old grandfather's chart using a wireless laptop at his bedside. She notices that her otherwise jovial patient seems a bit sluggish this morning, and detects a subtle decrease in the patient's blood pressure over his last three readings. The patient is alert and all other vital signs are strong. However, for this caregiver, a gut feeling honed from more than a decade in nursing tells her that the patient is at the beginning stages of a medical emergency.*

When a patient is facing a medical emergency, every second counts. Quincy Medical Center understands this and has joined a growing number of hospitals in Massachusetts to fully implement multidisciplinary Rapid Response Teams (RRT) in efforts to prevent emergency medical situations, known as "codes."

Comprised of a Hospitalist physician, a critical care registered nurse, and a respiratory therapist, the Rapid Response Teams are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "In simplest terms, the Rapid Response Teams are like responding to a fire when it is just a spark," said Brian Dalton, MD, Chief of the Hospitalist Medicine Program. "With our critical care expertise, the Rapid Response Teams are able to quickly identify, intervene and treat an at-risk patient before the patient reaches an emergency state."

Any healthcare team member is urged to activate the RRT if they detect subtle changes in a patient's condition, such as acute changes in a patient's heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory status, oxygen saturation or mental status. "Our caregivers spend hours at each patient's bedside and are in a position to recognize subtle changes in a patient's condition long before it becomes a medical emergency," explains Elizabeth Cadigan, RN, MSN, Vice President of Patient Care/Chief Nurse. "The Rapid Response Teams are another resource to support of our caregivers in treating their patients."

Quincy Medical Center implemented the teams on January 31. "The Rapid Response Teams have a clear impact on improving patient outcomes," added Cadigan. To date, the teams have been called into action in more than 50 patient care situations. Since implementing the teams, the number of "codes" or emergency care situations requiring resuscitation has steadily declined, with just 2 codes in June.

In addition to the positive impact on patient outcomes, the RRT program has proven rewarding for staff, as well. "During a rapid response, there is a tremendous opportunity to talk through the care being given, since the patient is not in a critical "code" state," said Alice Gill-Murray, RN, a RRT member. "We work with the patient's care team, and there is a tremendous opportunity for "teachable moments" involving the interventions utilized," explained RRT member Joe Higgins, RRT.

Quincy Medical Center (www.quincymc.org) is a 232-bed acute care community-teaching hospital providing South Shore residents with comprehensive medical and surgical services. The medical center's Alliance for Quality with Boston Medical Center (BMC), formed in 1999, brings academic medicine to the community. At Quincy Medical Center, physicians from Boston Medical Center direct the departments of medicine, surgery, anesthesia, emergency medicine, and psychiatry. Additionally, physicians from BMC who are board-certified in a range of medical and surgical specialties work with community physicians to ensure the continuity of patient care.

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