New Faces in the CCMH Emergency Department

Patients in the CCMH Emergency Department (ED) may have noticed some new faces recently. Mandy Griffin, PA-C, and Ray Skelton, PA-C joined the ED team in late 2010.

Mandy comes to CCMH with two and one-half years of emergency care experience. She received her physician assistant training at the University of Utah. Mandy enjoys the variety and challenges of caring for patients in emergencies. “Every patient requires me to consider a broad range of issues. I’ve been very impressed with the CCMH ED - everyone is very friendly and patients are so appreciative of the care we provide,” Mandy noted. “I am amazed how quickly things get done here. When I had a surgical patient, Dr. McCance was at the hospital ready to go just 15 minutes after the patient arrived!”

Ray came to CCMH after two years in the Creighton University Medical Center Emergency Department. He had previously worked as a cardiology PA in Arizona after completing his training at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. He also enjoys the variety of the ED. “We see very sick

Recruiting an Ongoing Process at CCHS

Some jobs never end – and Sara Nelson has one of them. Sara is the recruiter for Cass County Health System. She works to bring qualified physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to CCHS.

“We are always looking for quality medical providers,” she noted. “Recruiting is a very lengthy process, and we often work with people for over a year before we bring them into our medical community.”

Sara notes it is difficult to designate an exact number of providers needed for a particular clinic or hospital. “There are so many variables,” she explained. “In addition to population, we have to consider other services available in the area, acute and chronic disease rates, age of the community, and practice styles, among other things.” While Cass County does fall within the federal government’s recommended physician to population ration, it is important to keep recruiting in order to be prepared for future needs.

As a recruiter, Sara’s job involves sourcing and screening candidates, and referring qualified candidates.
Recruiting an Ongoing Process at CCHS

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to the CCHS medical staff and administrators for consideration. After numerous phone calls and reference checks, if both the candidate and local physicians feel they are a good fit, an on-site visit will be arranged. The candidate will have an official interview, but also spends a lot of time with their family exploring the community.

“Recruiting the family is as important as recruiting the provider,” Sara said. “We tour the community, schools, recreation facilities – whatever our guests are interested in. I always get very positive feedback about our medical facilities and community!”

The past two years have been very positive in recruiting, as Atlantic Medical Center hired Dr. James Brown, their first OB/Gyn specialist, Sarah Brend, physician assistant, Dr. Vanessa Cook, family medicine physician, and Dr. Brian Fiedler, a family medicine physician who will complete his residency training in June 2012. The CCMH Emergency Department has also recently hired two new physician assistants.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, fewer medical students are choosing to specialize in family practice (FP) at a time when close to 30% of FP physicians are 55 years old or older. The result is a critical shortage in primary care, with a 37% deficit of primary care physicians projected by 2025.

“It’s important to stay proactive in recruiting,” Sara said. “We are very selective – in fact we turn away far more providers than we choose to interview. We never want to rush just to fill a spot; we wait to find the right person for our community.”

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CCMH Building Project Moves Forward

At first glance, it may seem as though nothing is happening with the CCMH building project. Actually, there is a lot going on in preparation for the first dirt to be moved in late March.

Plans are being closely examined and finalized. One recent change has been the addition of some remodeling at the Atlantic Medical Center. “This portion of the project was one of a number of possible alternates that were dependent on budget,” explained Pat Markham, CEO. “We are very pleased to be able to include this important component in the project.” The AMC will be expanded by 1240 sq. ft., with some additional remodeling of the former laboratory space. The new OB/Gyn practice will move into the new suite off the north end of AMC, and the remodeled interior space will provide additional exam rooms for family medicine patients.

Plans are also being made for dealing with temporary displacement of services due to the construction. The most immediate challenge will be the construction of a new landing pad for air ambulance services. In order to relocate the current landing pad, which is necessary because of the addition off the emergency department, there will be a 10 – 12 week period when helicopters will not be able to land at CCMH. During this time, the helicopters will land at the Atlantic Municipal Airport. The crews will go to the hospital, finish preparing the patient for transport, and then accompany the patient by road ambulance to the airport and during the helicopter flight. “Fortunately, we only have about 40 – 50 helicopter transfers a year,” Pat said. “We are working with the Atlantic Airport and Medivac Ambulance to ensure these transfers go smoothly.”

Another more immediate disruption will be parking. The construction area will eliminate about 100 parking spaces; a similar number will be added back with the addition of the parking area outside the new Rehabilitation Services Department. In

And We’re Off!!

As we go to press, construction plans are being finalized and visible work should begin in late March 2011. Watch this space in every Seasons newsletter for quick construction updates, as well as the CCHS website, www.casshealth.org. As we go through this 30-month project, information will also be publicized with local newspapers and radio stations. We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we work to improve the medical facilities and healthcare services for the people of Southwest Iowa.

An official groundbreaking ceremony is being planned for May. Please watch for details closer to that time, and join us as we celebrate the beginning of this exciting project that will leave a lasting impact on our community for years to come!

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New Faces in the CCMH Emergency Department

people on a daily basis,” Ray explained. “In the ED, I have the opportunity to work with a great team to provide critical care and do procedures, which I really enjoy.”

Last year, 5,122 people were treated in the CCMH ED. Of those, 3,728 were treated and released, 1,019 admitted to the hospital and just 323 were transferred. Patient needs in the ED can range from something as minor as a sprained ankle, to a life-threatening allergic reaction, to a critical brain injury. “In an ED, seconds can be the difference between life and death,” explained Darci Young, RN, CCMH ED Director. “Having a medical provider on-site at all times makes an incredible difference.”

CCMH Building Project Moves Forward

the meantime, CCHS staff will be parking at Walmart, with a shuttle transporting them to the hospital. “We so appreciate Walmart donating this parking space for our employees, and having the SWITA bus service to utilize for a shuttle,” Pat noted. “We want to be sure our patients have adequate and convenient parking during this process.”

Of course, as the construction project progresses, different areas of the hospital will be affected at different times. Patients and visitors should watch for updates in local media and on the hospital website, www.casshealth.org. “We are very excited to update our facilities to ensure state-of-the-art medical services for our community, now and in the future,” Pat said. “The new building itself will be an improvement, but it will also allow us to accommodate the newest technologies and continue to recruit outstanding medical providers.”

MEDICAL STAFF

Ear, Nose, and Throat
Tracey Wellendorf, M.D.

Family Practice
Todd Bean, M.D.
Elaine Berry, M.D.
Vanessa Cook, M.D.
Mark Johnson, M.D.
Angie Weppler, M.D.
Tressa Wilcox, M.D.
Stacey Bean, PA-C
Sarah Brend, PA-C
Mary Fuller, PA-C
Eleanor Greenwall, ARNP
Scott Hixson, PA-C
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