

What's Inside

Progress Notes - 1
Farewell to Tammy Holloman - 1

ECU Physicians Sleep Disorders Center - 2
Holiday Safety - 2
Seasonal Flu and 2009 H1N1 - 3
Health Information and Technology Week - 4

Happy Holidays!!!

Progress Notes

We are in the midst of fall weather now, with the leaves blowing and the temperatures bouncing around. Just as the seasons change, so are we undergoing changes within ECU Physicians. For this edition of ClinicPulse, I will try to fill you in on two important changes, both of which will impact every one of us.

The change that will happen sooner is the transition from a highly centralized Patient Access Services (PAS) team to a more decentralized approach. This means that the front desk PAS staff will be incorporated into and supervised by the clinical department where they work. The aim of this change is to recognize the fact that the nurses, physicians, MOAs, and PAS staff are working in one clinic location day in and day out. They are all members of the same team at that clinic site. Combining their administrative and supervisory structures should lead to more opportunities to be successful as a team in meeting the needs of our patients.

This change will be effective on Monday, November 16, 2009. Ms. Linda Sawyer will continue in her role as Interim Director of PAS and handle many essential centralized responsibilities that will allow the PAS staff members to be effective in their roles. These centralized responsibilities will include things like training for new personnel and updates for veteran staff members, financial counseling, point of service collections, Rapid Access, coordination of adverse weather event management, and maintenance of HealthSpan functions used by PAS personnel.

Please be sensitive to the awkward moments these changes may create for the people working around you. Changes like this sometimes trigger confusion and misunderstandings. We all just need to work together to find the most effective way to make this successful.

The other major change that is in the wind is the rollout of the HealthSpan Electronic Medical Record (EMR) across our clinic sites. While we have nearly finalized the sequence for that rollout (i.e., who goes first, who goes second, etc.), the actual dates for each clinic site are still being determined. We have made the decision to take the time to build as much customization as we can for the clinics, so that the features you have gotten used to in Centricity can, whenever possible, be replicated in HealthSpan on the day you start using HealthSpan. This customization can take some time, as you can predict. We know just the change from one EMR to another will be challenging enough. We want to do our best to make sure the templates, flow charts and other features are as similar as possible. We should know more about the dates for this rollout, starting sometime in 2010, in the next few weeks.

So the process of change at ECU Physicians continues. I am convinced that both of these changes will improve the work we do and the care we provide our patients. I also know there will be some bumps in the road. I know that by working together we can all minimize the problems, support each other, and make the changes highly successful. Many thanks for all the great work each of you do, every day!

*Nicholas Benson, MD, MBA
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Farewell to Tammy Holloman



Ms. Tammy Holloman, Administrator of Patient Access Services, retired near the end of September. Tammy's commitment to patients, loyalty to ECU Physicians, and her dedication to the members of the Patient Access team serve as extraordinary role models for all the rest of us.



Farewell

ECU Physicians Sleep Disorders Center

The ECU Physicians Sleep Disorders and Research Center of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University recently received program accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

In a press release, the AASM president, Dr. Clete Kushida, was quoted as saying “The American Academy of Sleep Medicine congratulates East Carolina University Physicians Sleep Disorders and Research Center on fulfilling the high standards required for receiving accreditation as a sleep disorders center. The center is a significant resource to the local medical community and will provide academic and scientific value in addition to the highest quality care for patients suffering from sleep disorders.”

To receive a five-year accreditation, a sleep center must meet or exceed all standards for professional health care as designated by the AASM. The accreditation process involves detailed inspection of a center’s facility and staff, including an evaluation of testing procedures, patient contacts and physician training. Additionally, the facility’s goals must be clearly stated and include plans for positively affecting the quality of medical care in the community it serves. The ECU Physicians Sleep Disorders Center is a state-of-the-art clinical and research center dedicated to the eastern Carolina community. Open since December 4, 2008, over 600 patients have been evaluated in our facility. The Sleep Board Certified Physicians offer the highest level of medical expertise in the field of sleep medicine. The center’s mission is to provide the most compassionate care combined with cutting-edge technology. Dr. Sunil Sharma, a pulmonary and critical care medicine specialist at ECU, is the director of the Sleep Center.

The center evaluates and manages all types of sleep disorders, including but not limited to the following:

1. Sleep Disordered Breathing
2. Narcolepsy
3. Snoring
4. Insomnia
5. Restless Leg Syndrome
6. Parasomnia
7. Shift Work sleep Disorder

The center performs sleep studies 24-hours a day during our operational days in order to accommodate individual sleep patterns and work schedules. For night-time sleep studies, our facility is currently open Monday through Thursday each week, with plans to expand to Sunday through Friday in the future. For day-time studies, our facility is open Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. The Sleep Disorders Center is located in the first floor of the Moye Medical Center building at 521-A Moye Boulevard, across from the Brody School of Medicine. To schedule an appointment or to get more information about the sleep center, please call 744-5481.

Holiday Safety

The holidays are a special and joyous time of year. It is also a time when individuals need to be alert to the possibility of crime. Simple precautions should be taken to ensure a happy and safe holiday.

Shopping Safety:

- Go shopping during daylight hours when at all possible. If you must shop in the evening, shop with a friend.
- Park in well-lighted areas, as close as possible to store entrances.
- Lock your car, close the windows and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk
- Carry your purse next to your body with the flap against you. Men should carry their wallets in a front or inside pocket.
- Carry a cell phone and have your local emergency numbers programmed into it.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- When returning to your vehicle, have keys ready in hand, scan the area and look under and inside your vehicle before entering it.
- If you use an ATM, go during day light hours and in a well populated area.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if you become separated in a store or shopping mall.
- If you are going out for the evening turn on lights and a radio or a tv so it looks like someone is home.
- Keep your doors and windows locked and the blinds closed, even if you are only going out for a few minutes.
- Don’t advertise what you got for Christmas by putting boxes outside your house. Break the boxes down or take them to the dump yourself.
- If you are going to be away for an extended period of time from your residence, have someone pick up your mail or contact the post office to stop delivery until you return.
- If you are a victim of crime report it to the police immediately.



Seasonal Flu and 2009 H1N1

This flu season is unique and it can be difficult to keep the types of flu and vaccines straight. Pharmacy Services wants to keep you informed regarding this important health issue. Please contact one of our staff if you have additional questions.

Seasonal Flu

What is the Flu?

The flu is a highly contagious viral illness caused by the influenza virus that occurs most frequently in the winter months. It is spread person-to-person through contact with respiratory secretions (i.e. coughing or sneezing)

How to prevent the Seasonal Flu:

You can protect yourself from getting the flu by being vaccinated. There are currently two available options, the first is the inactivated flu shot which is approved in patients 6 months of age and older. This vaccine can be given to healthy patients and patients with chronic medical conditions. The other option is a live, attenuated (Nasal Spray) vaccine. This vaccine is made with live, weakened flu virus that does not cause the flu. This vaccine is approved in healthy individuals 2 - 49 years of age who are not pregnant

Target population for seasonal flu vaccination :

1. Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday
2. Pregnant women
3. People 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - a. Health care workers
 - b. Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - c. Household contacts and caregivers of children <5 years of age with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children <6 months of age (these children are at higher risk of flu-related complications)

H1N1

What is the 2009 H1N1 flu?

The H1N1 flu is a new and very different flu virus. This particular form of the flu is sometimes referred to as the Swine Flu

How does H1N1 flu compare to seasonal flu?

H1N1 is similar to the seasonal flu in symptoms however patients are more likely to experience vomiting and diarrhea. With this strain of the flu you are considered contagious beginning one day before symptoms appear until at least 24 hours after your fever has resolved. If you have had the seasonal flu in the past you likely have some immunity against the seasonal flu viruses, however this is not the case with the H1N1 strain. The H1N1 is a new strain of the virus and most people have little or no immunity to the virus.

How to prevent H1N1:

Similar to the seasonal flu, you can protect yourself from getting H1N1 by getting vaccinated. The inactivated “flu shot” requires that children up to age 9 receive two doses and is safe in pregnant women. The live nasal vaccine is approved in healthy patients 2 to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Target population for H1N1 vaccination includes:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care workers
- Patients 6 months to 24 years old
- People ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

General safety and prevention methods for the seasonal and H1N1 flu include:

- Washing hands frequently with soap and water
- Avoiding face-to-face contact with anyone while sick
- Cover the mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing
- Dispose of tissues immediately
- Wear a face mask while sick
- People who are infected should stay at home away from adults and children for at least 24 hours after their fever has resolved

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Health Information and Technology Week

“Precision in Practice, Excellence in Care”

November 1–7, 2009, is Health Information and Technology (HI&T) Week

HI&T Week is a showcase for the thousands of health information management (HIM) professionals who perform their duties masterfully throughout the year. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is honored to provide support, representation, and training to HIM professionals for these valuable contributions to the healthcare industry.

AHIMA proudly partners with the Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) in promoting our shared goals. We thank the members and facilities that make each HI&T Week a memorable addition to our rich history and for supporting HI&T Week 2009.

Quiz:

Test your understanding of the national progression from paper medical records to electronic health information.

1. True or False: The US goal of national healthcare is to have an electronic health record for Americans by 2014.
2. True or False: The new economic stimulus law progresses the healthcare industry with more prescribed direction toward enhanced use of Technology with health information.
3. True or False: Many healthcare stakeholders have worked together for five years to improve healthcare quality and delivery systems by using technology and health information synergistically.
4. When health information becomes electronic, which of the following may be necessary in healthcare operations to make the transition?
 - a. Staff may require new training
 - b. The flow of information may change
 - c. Policies and procedures should be revamped
 - d. All of these
5. True or False: The change from paper to electronic records within healthcare entities is complex, as manual and electronic systems operate together as a hybrid.

Authorization for Use or Disclosure of Protected Health Information

The Medical Records Staff at Brody Operations is receiving many Release of Information Forms that are completed incorrectly. This creates a hardship for the staff and delays the delivery of crucial information. Many times staff have to contact the patient for additional information or send the patient another form to fill out completely. Please make EVERY effort to complete thoroughly and correctly. “I authorize” means if records are being sent out by ECU you are authorizing ECU to provide information to another agency.

If you need records delivered to ECU from another facility, you must authorize the outside facility to send records to us. Please include the name of the Facility/Provider with address or phone number. If the address is not included this only delays the process. We will have to contact the patient for additional information.

Address of Receipt means the name of the provider you would like for us to send the records to.

If the patient doesn't have the outside provider's information they can call us back with the information; take the form with them; or go to the other provider and complete a form and have that provider to either send or fax the information to ECU.

Thank you in advance for making a conscientious effort to complete the forms correctly and with as much detail as possible!

Answers from the AHIMA Quiz on the previous page...

Answers: 1. True, 2. True, 3. True, 4. d, 5. True

If you have questions regarding Centricity or need a password reset please call 744-2030, option #2. If you have questions regarding Healthspan and/or need password resets please call the ECU Helpdesk at 328.9866. If you have questions, concerns or comments regarding article submission please contact Tracy Carawan, Staff Development @ 744-1793.



Send newsletter submissions to:

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