

Health Connection

CARING PEOPLE...CARING FOR PEOPLE

“Telestroke” Saves Time, Brain in Stroke Emergency

When Louise Anderson began nursing more than 30 years ago, a stroke was typically devastating. It often meant permanent disability with months in the hospital and then a nursing home. Today, a powerful clot-busting medication – and a system in place to use it quickly and properly – is changing that prognosis.

Advanced Options Bring Hope

That system at Redwood Area Hospital is the Telestroke program. In collaboration with Park Nicollet in the Twin Cities, Telestroke brings the nation’s leading stroke researchers to Redwood Falls 24/7 – via high-powered communication technology and detailed imaging transfer capability.

“We offer hope to people who suffer a stroke,” says Anderson, RN, acute care project coordinator. “Many who would have lost their independence are going home after a stroke with no or minimum disability.”

Success Comes with Speed and Expertise

Telestroke helps more hospitals use the only Food and Drug Administration-approved stroke medication. Tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, can minimize disability if given within three hours of an ischemic stroke, the most common type that occurs when a clot blocks an artery to the brain.

“We expected a vast reduction in post-stroke disabilities when tPA was approved in 2006,” says Sandra Hanson, MD, a Park Nicollet neurologist who helped launch Telestroke in Redwood Falls. While stroke deaths did decrease in Minnesota, research showed the medicine had the capacity to minimize disability in more people. “tPA is a powerful medicine for ischemic stroke patients,” Dr. Hanson explains. “But because it’s so powerful and difficult to know whether it’s an appropriate treatment, the decision can best be handled through collaboration.”



Dr. Sandra Hanson (left) demonstrating video conferencing equipment to physicians and nurses in training. Photo submitted by Kevin Kotz, *Redwood Gazette*.

Working Together to Prevent Stroke Disability

Hospitals began calling specialists, such as Dr. Hanson, to discuss using tPA. “Emergency Room doctors would explain a stroke situation to me over the phone,” Dr. Hanson says. “Sometimes that was enough for me to know whether to suggest tPA, but too many times it wasn’t.”

INSIDE:



2

Streamlining Medication Delivery



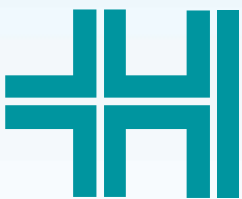
3

New Lift Systems Boost Safety in Acute Care



4

Calendar of Events



Redwood Area Hospital
100 Fallwood Road
Redwood Falls, MN 56283

507-637-4500

www.redwoodareahospital.org

... continued on page 2

Streamlining Medication Delivery

At Redwood Area Hospital we are always looking for ways to improve patient care. One of our recent additions to the hospital, Omnicell®, will help improve safety for patients, as well as increase the speed and efficiency in which they receive medication. Omnicell is a result of community support from the Monsanto Fund via donation to the Redwood Area Hospital Foundation.

Benefits to the Patients

Omnicell is an automated pharmacy system that manages and dispenses medications. The system, which was installed in May, allows nurses access to medications after hours and gives the hospital a better way to track the use of medicine. “We have access to see exactly who took the medication out of the system and for which patient,” explains Magan Rasmussen, pharmacist. “The new automated system provides added safety for patients, and also directs nurses to the right medication slot, and coaches them on double-checking high-risk medication.”

Patients will see faster delivery of medication. “Omnicell gives nurses access to medication so they don’t have to wait for the pharmacy to open if they need something at three in the morning,” Rasmussen says.

According to Jo Kremin, RN, acute care manager, the machine stores a wide variety of medication. “It holds about 60% of the drugs carried in the pharmacy, and has enough to last through a weekend until the pharmacy can restock.” The system is made up of a series of drawers and bins of

different sizes, and holds pills, injectable medications and Level 1 heart attack and stroke kits.

Making Hospital Procedures Easier

The automated pharmacy also offers many features that Redwood Area Hospital can take advantage of in the future. “We have another cabinet ordered for the ER, which is still under construction,” says Rasmussen. “Once we have them both up and running, the machines will be able to talk to each other, and the nurse will have access to medication information in both locations.”

Another feature that Rasmussen says Redwood Area Hospital will take advantage of in the future is the billing system. Doing the billing automatically on Omnicell, as opposed to by hand, will free up pharmacy technicians to do more quality assurance. It also cuts down on the time spent doing end-of-shift narcotic counts since the system does it automatically. This frees up nurses to spend more time with patients.

Both patients and hospital staff are enjoying the new automated system. “We’ve already immediately cut down



Kristen Swann, RN, uses the new automated pharmacy system.

on the time spent running to and from the pharmacy for medication,” Kremin says.

“I’m excited that it’s up and going,” Rasmussen says. “I think the nurses like the new technology, and it’s going to be a good system that helps keep our patients safe.”

“Telestroke” Saves Time, Brain in Stroke Emergency ... continued from page 1

Telestroke solved that problem. It brings Dr. Hanson to the bedside along with local physicians – via video, speakers and a shared computer system. “I can use my remote control to zoom in and see the patient’s pupils. I can rotate the camera to the family and ask about symptoms. And I can also see CT scans of the patient’s brain. All of these things help me make the best decision about whether to suggest tPA,” Dr. Hanson explains.

Code Stroke: Because Time Is Brain

The minute a patient at Redwood Area Hospital shows stroke symptoms, the entire facility goes on Code Stroke. “After we do a short stroke screening and the patient goes into the CT scanner, we start the Telestroke video conference,” Anderson says. “Day or night, we’re here when you need us for effective treatments in a caring atmosphere, close to home.”

The Signs of Stroke

Remember you have three hours to get yourself the maximum care available for stroke. Call 911 immediately if you or a loved one has these stroke symptoms:

- Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side.
- Confusion speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing.
- Difficulty with walking.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

New Lift Systems Boost Safety in Acute Care

If you've ever spent time in a hospital, you know how difficult it can be to move after injury or illness. Teams of patient care providers are constantly lifting patients to and from their beds, which can stress both patients and caregivers. Back injuries have always plagued nursing staff, but technology may have finally provided a solution.

The Redwood Area Hospital's Ergonomics Committee has been researching new lift systems to keep staff safe and free of injury. Representatives from all clinical areas are working together to establish consistent lifting policies and equipment throughout the hospital.

What Is the Lift System?

The Acute Care Department is one of the first areas to see these policies in action. Patients who are in need of assistance and lifting now have access to three rooms equipped with state-of-the-art Liko ceiling lifts. These remote-controlled lifts run along a rail system attached to the ceiling, allowing caregivers to lift and transport patients within the room. The lifts facilitate a boost up, a turn from side to side, or a transfer to a chair, cart or commode.

"The nurses, patients and families love them," says Jo Kremin, RN, acute care manager. "Because we're so pleased with them, our plan is to continue to add them to more rooms."

The Acute Care unit has been using Liko mobile lifts for almost three years, so the staff is already familiar with mechanical lifting. In addition to mobile devices to help people stand, hospital workers use gait belts to help with lifting and moving. Even the beds have features to help transfer people. With support from the Redwood Area Hospital Foundation, the hospital has acquired an air-powered transfer mattress to make the transition between cart and bed smoother and safer. This device is used for patient transfers in the ER, Radiology and Acute Care departments.

Raising Safety, Increasing Efficiency

Safe and healthy caregivers are the first step to safe and healthy patients. Back injuries are one of the greatest risks



Kim Harnack, RN, and Kelly Brown, RN, move Ergonomics Committee member Heidi Bednarchuk, RN, to a bedside chair as they learn how to use the new lift system.

to health care workers, whether an immediate injury or cumulative damage from years of improper lifting. "We want to protect our employees as well as our patients," Kremin says.

With the help of the ceiling and mobile lifts, one nurse can now accomplish with the push of a button what used to take teams of workers, freeing up time and energy for patient care. The added stability of mechanical lifting also minimizes the risk of further injuring a patient during transport, helping patients recuperate faster. Since putting the new lift system into service, the hospital staff is pleased with the ease of operating the lifts. Comments include,

"The lift system really saves our backs." The ceiling lift maneuvers also reduce patient discomfort (pain and anxiety) when being moved or turned.

Continuing Commitment

This lift system is one more way Redwood Area Hospital is keeping up with the needs of both patients and workers. Our commitment to high-quality, local health care ensures that you're in the right hands – or the right lift!

For More Information

Call us at 507-637-4500 or visit www.redwoodareahospital.org.

CALENDAR OF Events



Arthritis/Fibromyalgia Support Group

Provides information on arthritis and fibromyalgia, as well as fellowship and friendship. The support group meets the second Tuesday of the month (Sept.-Nov.) from 2-3:30 p.m. in the Redwood Area Hospital Education Room.

Adult Grief Support Group

Offers support, friendship, information and an opportunity to talk or listen with other people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Support group dates: Oct. 7, 14, 21 and 28, and Nov. 4 and 11 from 5-7 p.m. at the Redwood Area Hospital. To register, visit our Web site, www.redwoodareahospital.org, or contact Joleen Johnson, LSW, at 507-637-4616.

Alzheimer's Support Group (NEW!)

Offers support for caregivers of those living with memory loss. Respite care is offered so caregivers can attend the support group. Meeting dates: Sept. 18, Oct. 16 and Nov. 20. For information, contact Lynn Buckley, LPN, at 507-637-4508.

Bridging the Gap

Gives kids grades K-12, who have experienced the death of someone special, the opportunity to connect with others "who have been there." Meeting date: Oct. 18 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Redwood Area Hospital. To register, visit our Web site, www.redwoodareahospital.org, or contact Joleen Johnson, LSW, at 507-637-4616.

Childbirth Preparation Class

Our next one-day session is scheduled on Oct. 25 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Register online at www.redwoodareahospital.org. Session fee: \$15 per couple.

CPR and First Aid Training

CPR and First Aid classes are offered at the Redwood Area Hospital throughout the year. To register for a class or to arrange for training for your business or group, contact Shelly Pauling at 507-637-4527.

Diabetes Basics Classes

A series of four classes scheduled over six months for people newly diagnosed with diabetes. Contact Dorie Oja at 507-637-4518.

For more details on this information as well as other services provided by the Redwood Area Hospital, log on to our Web site at www.redwoodareahospital.org.

This publication does not constitute professional medical advice. Although it is intended to be accurate, neither the publisher nor any other party assumes liability for the loss or damage due to reliance on this material. If you have a medical question, consult your medical professional. Images may be from one or more of these sources: ©Jupiterimages, ©Getty Images, ©iStock, ©PhotoSpin. © 2008 Priority Publications Inc. prioritypub.com

www.redwoodareahospital.org

507-637-4500

Redwood Area Hospital
100 Fallwood Road
Redwood Falls, MN 56283

