

Speeding Patient Recoveries

Hospitalist Service at Salina Regional grows to enhance inpatient care **BY JOHN BERGGREN**

Easy access to a doctor during hospitalization has been shown to improve the patient experience and shorten hospital stays. For these reasons and more, Salina Regional Health Center implemented a Hospitalist Service in 2009, which today has grown to serve about half of all medical and surgical patients who have been admitted to the hospital.

Hospitalists are doctors who specialize exclusively in managing patient care for those in the hospital.

"The specialty was really born in metro areas about 15 years ago where doctors might have patients admitted at more than one hospital and they found there simply wasn't enough time to round on all their patients and see patients in the clinic, too," says Jon Richards, hospitalist on staff at Salina Regional and medical director for the program. "The concept grew from there,



Hospitalist Jon Richards, medical director for the Hospitalist Service, evaluates Gerald Rebel, Manhattan, during his hospital stay.

and today it's a nationwide thing. Most hospitals have hospitalists and more and more primary care doctors are switching their focus to treating patients in the clinic."

Hospitalists are available on-site around the clock, which gives them an advantage in addressing issues that may arise. Many patients and their family members under hospitalist care also find it's easier to get updates from a doctor.

"Historically, doctors rounded on patients before and after clinic so they were in the hospital early in the morning and later in the evening," Richards says. "Hospitalists are in the hospital rounding all day long, so we can usually accommodate meeting with family members when they're here if we miss them during regular rounds."

Doctors from around the region often admit their patients to hospitalists who can be reached by a dedicated phone line to facilitate transfer of care. Many local primary care doctors also use hospitalists to manage inpatients, and many specialists use hospitalists to co-manage patients for their general medical needs.

Hospitalists work with a patient's primary care and specialty physicians to obtain medical histories and develop plans for care. They also work closely with primary care doctors when patients are discharged from the hospital to ensure all follow-up care will be completed for a successful recovery.

"Our role really allows us to focus on all aspects of inpatient care and issues and nuances that can arise," Richards says. "We help subspecialists like cardiologists and neurosurgeons do their jobs better and we help primary care doctors so they can hopefully treat more patients in the clinic." ■

MEET THE HOSPITALIST TEAM

- Jon Richards, MD, Medical Director, Internal Medicine
- Suhair Mugawish, MD, Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Diseases, Critical Care
- Carl Anschutz, MD, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics
- Andrew Humpert, MD, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics
- Brenda Schewe, MD, Internal Medicine
- Raul Morffi, MD, Family Medicine
- Christine Schaffer, DO, Family Medicine



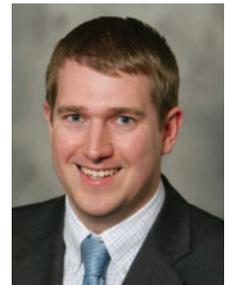
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