



St. Clair
Hospital

Code Care

Patient Safety

The Patient/Family Activated Care Team: Code Care

Because no one knows our patients as well as their own families, St. Clair Hospital has developed a new program designed to provide additional assistance and support to patients and their families. The team can also provide support to the bedside nurse with communication and problem solving issues. The Family Activated Care Team, or Code Care, is a way to empower families, giving them a sense of security and control.

This program is designed to increase communication between families and Hospital staff, and provide patients and families a way to call attention to a situation that they believe needs additional support.

Modeled on the Rapid Response Team, Code Care gives patients and families a way to alert a similar team who will respond and provide support.

Hospitals across the country are embracing families as valuable and contributing partners in the care of their loved ones. Sorrel King knows this too well. Her 18-month-old daughter Josie died at Johns Hopkins Children's Center in March 2001 from a combination of medical errors, all of which would most certainly have been avoided with better communication. "When I talk with other families who've been through this, they all say the same thing: 'They didn't listen to me,'" says Sorrel King, who, along with her husband and other family members, has turned her grief into action by establishing the Josie King Foundation for improved patient safety through better communications.

Sorrel King and The Josie King Foundation established the Josie King Pediatric Patient Safety Program at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center to improve the quality of communication between families and caregivers and provide safeguards for families if and when that communication breaks down. (Continued next page).



St. Clair Hospital

Code Care (continued)

Research shows that the number one complaint that families have is related to communication within a health care system. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement shared responses from families and, "To be listened to, taken seriously, and respected as a care partner" was top of the list. When the program was initiated at a local hospital, they received 21 calls in the first nine months, most of which were related to communication issues between patients and clinicians; only three were mistakenly called by a patient. Overall, the patient and family response to their program was favorable. Typically, the call rate is approximately two a month.

- Who responds to a Code Care?
 - The Nurse Intensivist, the Unit Manager, the Patient Placement Manager (PPM) in the absence of the Unit Manager, and the patient's nurse.
- How is a Code Care called?
 - From any Hospital phone, a family member can dial 5555 and ask for a "Code Care."
- What are the guidelines for families to call for a Code Care?
 - If they believe their loved one is not receiving adequate medical attention;
 - If they believe there is a noticeable medical change in their loved one and the health care team does not appear to be addressing their concerns;
 - If a family member or patient perceives a problem in how care is being given and/or uncertain over what needs to be done; and
 - If there are unanswered questions, or a breakdown in communication.



St. Clair Hospital