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Nurses allowed to discharge patients at University Hospital of North Staffordshire

By The Sentinel (/people/The Sentinel/profile.html) | Posted: August 07, 2013

By Dave Blackhurst



Comments (6)

NURSES are discharging patients for the first time at Staffordshire's biggest hospital – to get them home sooner and free up scarce beds.

The system is being pioneered on ward 122 at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire to stop patients having to wait for doctors to discharge them.

Sixty-five patients have been discharged by senior nurses on the general medical ward in the past two months – which is almost one-third of all those treated during the period.

Now the scheme is to be extended to other wards at the 1,200-bed hospital.

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Nurses' leaders today welcomed the project which has given them more responsibility.

Some nurse specialists are already allowed to prescribe drugs and perform other tasks which were once the sole preserve of doctors.

The new nurse discharges mean many more patients are now leaving the hospital in the morning rather than having to wait until the afternoon for doctors to come on duty and release them.

It means beds become available much earlier in the day to try to stop queues in the hospital's accident unit.

Three senior nurses are trained to discharge patients on ward 122, with two more being trained.

Ward manager Jenny McLatchie said: "In the past we've had to wait for doctors to start their shifts before being able to discharge patients.

"This scheme has given us much more autonomy within our positions.

"It has streamlined the patient journey and enhanced their satisfaction."

In the days leading up to a discharge, a multi-disciplinary team of doctors and nurses agrees a medical plan for the patient.

That is signed off by a doctor and then on the day itself, the nurse has the authority to discharge, providing all the criteria in the plan are met.

Diabetes consultant Dr Ananth Nayak said: "The doctors on ward 122 have praised the entire nursing team for all their hard work which has made this project a huge success."

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) today welcomed the new system.

Chris Bourne, the hospital's RCN senior steward, said: "This appears to be a really sensible approach to speed up the discharge procedure.

"It can be really frustrating for patients to be waiting round all day before being allowed home. That is made worse by the fact there are other patients in A&E waiting for their bed.

"Nurses spend more time with patients than doctors anyway so they know their needs better."

Health campaigners have backed the scheme, as long as patients are being correctly discharged.

North Staffordshire Healthwatch co-ordinator Ian Syme said: "This is good so long as safety is at the heart of the process.

"It is also vital that patients don't have to be re-admitted and doctors aren't shuffling their workload on to nurses."

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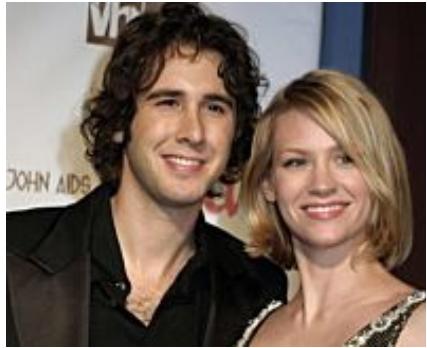
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mrb_instoke (http://legacy.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/people/mrb__instoke/profile.html) | August 08 2013, 8:16AM

elderly gentleman kept in hospital two weeks longer than necessary because family had gone on holiday and taken the house keys with them. you really could not make it up. staff - speaking from experience

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pow2gran (http://legacy.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/people/pow2gran/profile.html) | August 07 2013, 10:14PM

It is all very well nurses discharging patients for patients to sit in the discharge lounge waiting for medication from the pharmacy or an ambulance to transport them elsewhere ! In my mind the focus at the UHNS is wrong when there are other bottlenecks that need sorting. A relative - speaking from experience

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mrb__instoke (http://legacy.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/people/mrb__instoke/profile.html) | August 07 2013, 9:50PM

best to let the health care assistants discharge the patients. They know them better than the nurses or doctors !!! you would not believe some of the common sense health care mistakes these highly intelligent professionals make

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Anon_mow_cop (http://legacy.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/people/Anon_mow_cop/profile.html) | August 07 2013, 2:26PM

I would in general support this idea, as it says, nurses spend a lot time with patients , so should have a better idea about them being fit to be discharged. As it will be senior nurses, they have more experience than some doctors I would guess.

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- (http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/people/Martty/profile.html)

Martty (http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/people/Martty/profile.html) | August 07 2013, 10:24AM
I just don't get this. Once again were seeing nurses being given the responsibilities of a doctor. One of the main reasons the hospitals got into the mess they're in is because nursing staff have been elevated to quasi doctors ! The nursing profession don't think 'nursing' someone is their job anymore. The answer is not giving nurses doctors jobs, its getting doctors to do their job properly !

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miss_d_fyed85 (http://legacy.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/people/miss_d_fyed85/profile.html) | August 07 2013, 9:45AM

After all the trouble at the Hospitals, and now this. It is , as they say , an exercise to ease Bed Blocking. What happens when things go wrong, and they will. Someone would have been sent home when they should not have been. The first thing these people will say is, WHERE WAS

THE DOCTOR / CONSULTANT. Would they have sent them home. So straight away any trust will go. that you won't get the truth and they will cover for one another. Who will be held responsible ? Someone is going to end up a Fall guy when it goes pear shaped. Patient comes first ? NO. INVEST IN MORE BEDS, you are going to need them. The way this is heading it won't be care in the community it will be death in the community. I'll just ring the Doctors for a appointment, if i can one. or perhaps the receptionist can see me. More work for the nurses to do, already under pressure. More paperwork.

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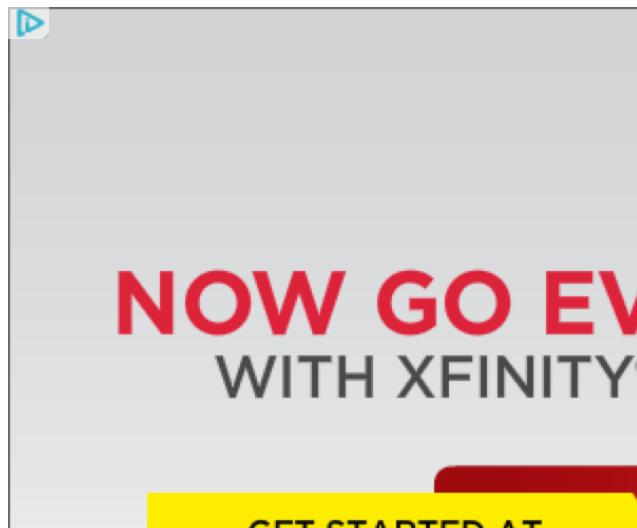
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