MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center
innovating care with virtual nurse program

COVID-19 has accelerated the acceptance of virtual care. MercyOne has expanded on that acceptance by providing virtual care teams to hospital patients. Team members from nursing, pharmacy, care management and providers, help support patients and other colleagues. All with one goal in mind – to provide patients with quick, personalized service. MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center is the only place in Iowa where virtual nursing is being implemented in a hospital setting.

The nurses, not physically at the hospital, but at a remote digital center utilizing video conferencing, are doing everything from charting, calling in labs, connecting with physicians, to explaining instructions to the patient and their families. These nurses have an eye on patients when they and the floor nurse need it most.

"Anything we can take off their plate, and do for them, so they can take care of the patients," says Cari Taylor, Registered Nurse, who now works as a MercyOne virtual nurse.

The virtual nurse is in charge of fewer than 20 patients, and facilitates all care communications, such as calling for test or lab results, reviewing charts, handling discharge duties and anything else the care team needs.

MercyOne’s program also allows the patient’s family to easily participate in care meetings with doctors and specialists as they explain the diagnosis and treatment, share test results, and discuss treatment options.

“This really is our new normal,” says Dr. Joel Ward, chief medical informatics officer for MercyOne Central Iowa Medical Group. “It makes us run more efficiently and allows bedside nurses to spend more time with patients.”

MercyOne has plans to expand the program to include more patient floors and support critical access and acute facilities in the system.
Connecting with the patient with one question

MercyOne care teams are known to ask new patients a lot of questions. One question in particular, “What Matters to You?” is helping to connect what is really important to the patient and allowing the care team to discover what the driver is for each individual.

This opens up a discussion about what is important to the patient and makes it possible for the team to incorporate that into each care plan.

It’s a small way to make a big impact in patient care. This allows us to follow the MercyOne mission to deliver quality, compassionate care to each and every patient.

Please, click on What Matters To You to better understand the impact you can make by asking one little question.

Pause before you post

Because we work in health care, we have to be extra careful with social media.

When using Social Media:
- NEVER Post patient photos for any reason. This includes photos with patients in the background.
- NEVER Talk about patients (even without mentioning the patient’s name).
- NEVER Include patient names or other PHI in any posts.
- NEVER Include any details that could indirectly identify patients, such as “rough night due to stabbing victims.”
- NEVER Include patient information in any posts.
- NEVER Violate patient confidentiality or privacy or degrade or embarrass the patient.
- NEVER Take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, such as your personal cell phones.

Report inappropriate social media posts immediately to the Privacy Officer at 515-643-4557, 515-358-9221, or the Integrity Line at 866-477-4661 or www.mycompliancereport.com Access Code: THO

You Said It, We Did It!

Take a look at just a few of the initiatives MercyOne has completed since our last Colleague & Provider Engagement Survey, based on your feedback and suggestions.

Focus on Well-Being: over 500 1-month Health and Fitness Center memberships offered to colleagues free of charge.

Employee Assistance Program (Vital Worklife): Free and confidential resource to support overall well-being, both at work and at home. Vital Worklife can help manage all of life’s challenges.

Celebrating MercyOne PCTs and SNTs

MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center celebrated Patient Care Tech week with a truckload of ice cream. The cold treats were delivered to the campus for all patient care techs and student nurse techs to enjoy.

More than 125 PCTs and SNTs were hired in Central Iowa since April.