More help for many: Social Worker joins the ED

While trauma, critical illness and other severe situations bring thousands to the emergency department (ED) each year, many patients are checking in for non-clinical reasons.

Historical data shows a growing number of people come to the ED because of substance abuse or psychiatric issues, a lack of primary care or dependable support network, access to safe, affordable housing, and other socioeconomic challenges.

To help these patients connect with community resources, and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and readmissions, Mercy’s care coordination department has assigned a social worker to join staff in the ED, providing an expanded level of support to individuals and families.

Since August 2018, Emily Walton, MSW, has interacted with more than 100 patients, and has helped avoid more than 30 admissions by finding more suitable assistance for those in need. Closely collaborating with ED nurses and physicians has also allowed Emily to help jumpstart the discharge process, when appropriate, allowing ED exam room beds to be available sooner for patients requiring immediate care.

WHEN TO REQUEST HELP

There are a variety of reasons a physician or other health care professional may request a social work referral for a patient, including:

- Addressing behavioral health issues
- Assisting patients who are high utilizers of the ED
- Facilitating outpatient follow-up
- Coordinating placements for skilled and hospice care facilities
- Educating on outpatient resources and community connections
- Assisting patients who are uninsured and/or experiencing homelessness
- Providing support resources for victims of domestic violence or other crimes
- Coordinating home health referrals
- Researching options for medication coverage assistance

Questions or referrals? Please contact Mercy Care Coordination Director Ann Marvelli at (515) 643-2836, or Emily Walton at (515) 805-5003.

Food drive benefits DMARC

The generosity of the Mercy Family was on full display with the incredible response to the food drive for the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC). Mercy Transportation Manager Patrick Maher and the team of couriers and drivers collected eight watermelon boxes full of food, all of which have been delivered to DMARC. Additional funds were also raised in cash donations. Thank you for hearing the call of the Sisters of Mercy to serve those in need in Polk County.
Spotlight on Mercy Clinical Laboratory client services

Mercy Clinical Laboratory’s (MCL) client services department serves as a centralized call center for in-house departments - including inpatient units, outpatient departments, emergency, employee health and infection control – as well as laboratory outreach clients, which includes more than 300 hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. The client services team consists of 10 colleagues providing coverage 24/7/365.

The client services team was formed about 10 years ago to centralize laboratory phone calls to a core group of well-trained individuals who are able to provide the appropriate level of assistance to callers. This team takes approximately 5,800 incoming phone calls and makes about 7,500 outgoing phone calls each month.

The MCL client services team is responsible for calling all critical values – a test result that may require rapid clinical attention – within 30 minutes at a 99.9 percent success rate, in addition to delivering other prompt laboratory notification values. The team is also responsible for faxing or mailing results, answering questions around specimen acceptability and turnaround time for test completion, and taking courier requests for laboratory courier pickups. All of these tasks help ensure positive patient outcomes and contribute to MCL’s mission of “providing accurate, accessible, and timely laboratory results to patients and providers.”

DAISY Award winner announced

Sean Chicoine, R.N., Mercy’s newest DAISY Award® recipient, was surprised with the award at a ceremony Sept. 17, with several of his colleagues and Mercy nursing leadership in attendance. Sean, who is part of Mercy’s critical care resource pool, was nominated by the mother and sister of a former patient to recognize the compassionate, remarkable care Sean provided to the patient and her family. The patient and several members of her family were also in attendance.

Following is an excerpt from the nomination form: “Doctors gave us a pretty grim outlook when our daughter/sister was transferred to ICU in a coma and on a ventilator. We were devastated and had lost hope. Sean gave us hope. He gathered our family and told us not to give up on her, and there was reason to have hope and pray, and that he would be there for us. He gave us laughter. He gave us encouragement. He gave us his promise to do everything he could for her. Today, she is alive and well with no brain or cardiac damage. Sean was there for our family during one of the darkest days of our lives. I cannot begin to tell you how big of an impact he has had in our lives in a short timeframe.”

Find out more about the award or submit a nomination at mercy.dm/daisy.

Shoes That Fit kicks off this month

For 14 years, the Mercy Family has been one of the leading groups participating in OnMedia’s Shoes That Fit program. During that time, the number of area children in need for warm winter clothes has continued to grow.

This year’s Shoes That Fit campaign starts Friday, Oct. 26. Mercy Family members can stop by the Marketplace and Grille on Friday, Oct. 26, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., to pick up needs cards for winter coats, shoes and boots. Departments and clinics not located at central campus can request needs cards to be sent via interoffice mail starting Oct. 26 by emailing Melissa Jones at mjones01@mercydesmoines.org. Mercy West Lakes Administration will have cards available starting Monday, Oct. 29. If you wish to donate money, please drop it off at either the Public Relations and Marketing department at Mercy’s central campus or West Lakes Administration. Checks can be made out to Shoes That Fit.

Fulfilled cards must be returned with the new clothing item to Public Safety at Mercy’s central campus or the receiving dock at West Lakes by Monday, Nov. 26. Clinics and off-site locations need to call Patrick Maher, x-38269, to arrange a pick up for their items. Questions about the program can be directed to Sarah Todd, at stodd@mercydesmoines.org.