

Advocacy

Acute Directional Unit (ADU) Offers Patients Better Options

Digestive Disease Center (DDC) Outpatient Nurse Manager KellyAnne Lee, BSN, RN, CCRN, observed a backlog of patients needing short term intravenous fluids and blood transfusions. Lee proposed the concept of an observation unit to DDC Service Line Administrator Brian Sloan, MBA, Chief Nursing Officer and Administrator for Clinical Services Marilyn Schaffner Ph.D., RN, NEA-BC, CGRN, and Chief Executive Officer Pat Cawley M.D. A business plan was approved and the Acute Directional Unit (ADU) opened in May 2013. The throughput of patients has since increased significantly resulting in an increase of bed availability for patients that need to remain longer allowing more rapid transfer of patients from outside facilities, clinics, endoscopy units, as well as the Chest Pain Center (CPC).

Plus, the ADU has been successful from patients' perspectives. One example involves an oncology patient at the CPC that required two units of blood. This patient did not want to be admitted and voiced his desire to return home. Pennington facilitated the patient's transfer from the CPC to the ADU. After two units of blood, the patient was discharged home to be with his family.

The ADU serves patients suffering from chronic pancreatitis, a disabling disease causing pain, nausea and vomiting. These patients are able to bypass the CPC and are directly admitted to the ADU where staff members are prepared to handle their acute needs. Before opening the ADU, these patients were frequently readmitted with acute exacerbations, but are now able to receive care without admission to the hospital. Readmissions for patients with acute pancreatitis have decreased by 30 percent, which can be attributed to the ADU.



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