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New patient process

By Sgt. Joe M. Battle
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The Department of Emergency Medicine at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center will begin a new process of receiving, treating and releasing patients to help cut their length of stay at the hospital beginning Oct. 1.

"We are excited about this new way of doing business, which was started with an idea initiated by Capt. Sharon Scott who arrived here from Keesler Air Force Base," said Maj. Stephen E. Fecura, nurse manager for LRMC's Department of Emergency Medicine.

The Department of Emergency Medicine Team developed plans for the patient process by adapting practices from the Emergency Nurses Association's Emergency Severity Index Five Level Triage. The new method is used by only 10 percent of ERs worldwide.

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NEW PATIENT 2-2-2-2-2-2-2

“Our ‘KMC’ family can expect to see a whole new way we handle patients who visit the Emergency Room,” said Fecura. “The first person you will see will be a registered nurse, who will conduct a quick assessment and give the patient a questionnaire.”

Depending on the number of people simultaneously arriving at the E.R., the patient will be directed to the waiting room or directly to a primary assessment area where vital signs will be checked and the questionnaire reviewed. Once the assessment is completed, patients will be separated into triage categories ranging from three through five. Triage categories one and two are reserved for the patients who come in requiring immediate lifesaving procedures. Category three will be seen with a targeted wait time of no more than a 30-60 minutes.

“All the great changes to give patients better care couldn’t have been done without the help of Master Sgt. John Cronin, DEM NCO-in-charge, Maj. Scott Metzel, assistant nurse manager for the DEM, Melanie Hungate, a RN for the DEM and Staff Sgt. Martin Jensen, an experienced Independent Duty Medical Technician,” said Fecura. “Also, along with the help from the medical clerks, nursing staff and providers, this process will be worthwhile to the patients of LRMC.”

New nursing documentation and assessment forms were adapted for our use by Capt. Susan Frisbie, an Army nurse for the DEM. Forms were created from samples taken from various ‘Best Practice’ ER documents from the top 100 stateside health care centers.

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NEW PATIENT 3-3-3-3-3-3-3

“We are excited to benchmark this new process for the European Theater,” said Fecura. “Also, with the support to our new DEM Chief, Col. Fredric Plotkin, we predict an improvement in our patient’s satisfaction, reduction in our patient’s length of stay and a significant reduction in patients who leave without being seen.”