Big and small things are changing every week at Queen’s Emergency Department. Things have to when more patients than expected are coming into the Emergency Room and resources are tight. No one could have predicted that the ER would see 53,413 patients in fiscal year 2009/2010, an averages of nearly 150 patients a day. During peak hours, there may be 50 to 60 patients competing for the same doctors, nurses, technicians, and rooms all at once.

When the current Queen’s Emergency Room was completed in 1999, 28,000 patients a year were coming to the old Iolani ER, which was designed for just 10,000 patients in 1960. Thus, when the new ER was built to accommodate 50,000 patients, it seemed more than adequate. However, patient visits in recent years have been climbing by about 7% a year, topping 50,000 for the first time in 2009.

Cedric Caagbay, RN, clinical operations manager, feels that the poor economy may be contributing to increased ER visits because more people don’t have insurance and they are using the ER for primary care. People could also be waiting longer to get treatment and getting sicker. Hawai’i is unique in that it has geographic challenges as well. It has no neighboring states that can take some of the load. Patients come from the neighbor islands, Micronesia, Samoa, and all over the Pacific Rim, as well as from ships.

The good news is that in spite of the significant increase in patients, the ED has managed to improve just about all of its key indicators. Length of stay (LOS) and waiting times have decreased, and patient satisfaction has been steadily climbing. “Compared to other cities, Queen’s is tied for tenth place nationally in LOS in spite of Hawai’i’s unique location,” said Cedric. To keep everyone abreast of all the changes, eight layers of communication were established—via email, schedule book, restroom and staff lounge signs, word of mouth, daily huddles, and every other avenue of communication available.

A big part of the positive gains have to do with REACT, which stands for Rapid Evaluation, Assessment, Care, and Treatment. As walk-in patients are triaged, ED admitting staff obtain the chief complaint from a patient, who then goes to a REACT exam room. There, a physician assesses the patient and initiates orders, capitalizing on time otherwise spent in the waiting room. The patient gets EKGs, labs, x-rays, and oral contrast for CT scans during this time, for example, then goes back to the wait- (Continued on page 2.)
ED REACTs

(Continued from page 1.)

ing room or is monitored and treated in the REACT room. The patient is moved to an ER room as appropriate. “REACT has definitely changed our practice,” said Shari Nakaoka, RN. “It expedites the process and patient waits are shorter.” Fast Track, for patients with less serious issues, still operates from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, and sometimes till 3:00 am as needed.

However, REACT is just one of many improvements initiated since November 2008, with a lot of the upgrades coming in the last six months to a year. To make changes that work, ED management had to ask what they needed to do by the real numbers, that is, the 53,000 patients. “We needed to be more lean, efficient,” said Cedric. “We needed to cut inefficiency, shaving the unnecessary, but with everyone at the table—doctors, nurses, social workers, techs, bed control, registration.” Instead of giving them top-down, prefab solutions, the staff was asked for solutions. Progress was by consensus, with staff buy-in.

Thus, ED improvements served not only patients, but staff. “Happy staff equals happy patients,” Cedric strongly believes. “We are listening to staff needs and supporting them with education.” He admits that in the past, staff input often fell through the cracks and didn’t get a response. Now, input and ideas are acted upon, if feasible. If not, a response is still given with an explanation.

The establishment of the 12-bed Clinical Decision Unit (CDU) in 2007 continues to help with the overflow. The CDU is designed to help with the overflow of patients in the ER by allowing physicians to observe and treat stable patients over a more extended period of time without affecting patient flow or the level of patient care in the ER. It’s like having a bigger ER, noted Cedric. More recently, the CDU has taken on other functions. For example, they also take patients who are to be admitted, but are waiting for a hospitalist to give orders or for an available bed. Others are sent to the CDU when they need periodic or further testing; instead of waiting in the ER, they are put in a more comfortable bed. At the CDU, patients have their own Queen’s hospitalist, as well as an ER physician assigned to them 24/7.

In the education department, Kathy Anzelon, RN, previously an ED manager, changed her role to become an ED CNS (clinical nurse specialist) who focuses on education and staff training. Staff training includes identifying State Department of Health and The Joint Commission standards, and SimTiki (SimMan) Trauma Training. In addition, a special accountability and patient satisfaction session by the Service Excellence Committee led by Lisa Perkins, manager of Training and Development, made a big difference in staff unity and consistency. The staff now hold each other accountable to each’s responsibilities for the good of the team. The ED has also increased its commitment to provide adequate staffing. Along with Kathy Anzelon’s new position, ER pharmacists have been added (a new phlebotomist is forthcoming), and the new graduate training program continues to provide nurses to alleviate the difficulty in finding already experienced ones.

The ED has also studied bottlenecks to find new solutions; given nurses more autonomy to treat patients; and expedited registration and banding. The patient has not been left out of the equation. A bulletin board in each room lists a patient’s physician, nurse, and techs, as well as the expected wait times for tests. “Informed patients are more satisfied,” noted Cedric. In addition, nurses make rounds on the patients to check on their comfort, pain level, and to keep them informed, while charge nurses and managers make daily rounds on both patients and staff. Although Cedric acknowledged that a patient who waited eight hours can be just as satisfied as one that waited only one, the focus is still on time efficiency. Although the ER is ever-changing, and a stable illness must take a back seat to an incoming one, studies have shown that the quality of outcomes goes down as ER stays get longer.

“There is a collaborative effort at Queen’s to move patients forward in their care,” says Cedric. The Queen’s Emergency Department is proof that creative thinking can provide successful solutions to even the tightest of problems.
Saturday in the Park with the Heart Walk

John Scherry (right), Queen's Heart coordinator makes one last effort at recruiting donors, volunteers, and participants for the 2010 Heart Walk to UH medical student Amanda Jorgenson and visitor Jenny Kimura (back). The Heart Walk will be held at Kapiolani Park on Saturday, August 14, beginning at 7:30 am. Volunteers are needed to assist during the walk and at the Queen's tent. Representatives from Queen's Heart, the Cath Lab, Diabetes Education, the Comprehensive Weight Management Program and EMS will all be on hand to provide awareness information, screenings, and demonstrations for the public. Contact John at jscherry@queens.org or at 545-8559 to volunteer. Donations can be accepted by one of Queen's team captains or at www.oahuheartwalk.org.

Service
AWARDS

June, July & August 2010

Scott Murakami
Kenneth Cazinha
Chu Hyon Cho
Orlando Damo
Jonahlee Gago
Marsha Marcinowski
Teodorica McNally
Vida Pang
Sheryl-Lynn Ribao
Samyln Rosa
Norman Sack
Robert Terrado
Daryl Yamada
15 years

July

Judy Braceros

10 years

August

Judy Braceros

5 years

June

Bonnie Brown
Kentaró Nishino
Divina Powell, MGH
Yolanda Ramos, MGH
Elba Reyes
Robert Sagisi
Michelle Souza
Clinton Takaesu
Florence Verdadero
Gayle Zane

Carmela Paola
George Quirocho
John Ramos
Neilani Siatini
Christine Smolensky
Adriane Tiangco
Kathleen Tomasa
Loida Velasco
Karen Venezuela
Anthony Zanni
Maria Zucker

Jennifer Miller
Mary Anne Hill, MGH

Michele Adams
Blessilda Abarquez
August

Raydell Damo
Jessica Chun
Raydell Damo
Benjamin Estrada
Greg Inoue
Sarah Lim
Joanne Matsumoto
Jacqueline Ramos
Kathryn Shawhan
Romela Wong
Kelli-Ann Yamada
John Zambrano

Kamala Day

Thai Dang

Pamela Poor

Dorothy Turpin

Rudy Yamasaki
CORRECTIONS: In last week’s issue, Jazzmin Singleton (caption, page 1) and Doris Hong (caption, page 2) were misspelled. Their names were correct in the respective articles.

A BLOOD DRIVE will be held on Thursday, August 12, from 7:00 am to 4:30 pm, at the old ER turnaround. Bring a current photo ID with your birth date on it.

The Queen’s Cancer Center presents “Exceptional Professional Performance, Making a Difference in Our Patients' and Our Own Lives,” by oncology educator Selinza Mitchell, PN, CNE, on August 19 at the Queen’s Conference Center, from 4:00-5:00 pm. All health care providers are invited to come and learn how to identify stressors, and find solutions to relieve symptoms of stress. Register online eww1.queens.org/education/reg/class-info.asp or call Darlene at 545-8984.

Child safety seats are installed improperly in vehicles 85% of the time. Some seemingly small mistakes can have a big impact on a child’s safety. On Saturday, August 14, from 9:00 to 11:30 am, Queen’s will sponsor a car seat fitting event at the Early Education Center (directly across from Queen’s on Bermen-tania Street). Free helmets for keiki will also be available on a first come, first-served basis. Email cspeck@queens.org or call 537-7059 for more information.

The Queen’s team is gearing up for the 2010 Alzheimer’s Association Memory Walk, to be held on Saturday, September 11. There is no registration fee, and all donations go to support the Aloha Chapter. Helen Arakaki, Queen’s Geriatric Services Director, was recently voted onto the Board of the Alzheimer’s Association, Aloha Chapter, and serves as a member of the program committee. A Memory Walk T-shirt will be given to all participants who raise $100 or more. To join the team or donate, visit www.2010memorywalk.kintera.org/honolulu/queens.

Standing meeting requests for 2011 for the Queen’s Conference Center, Harkness Board Room, Harkness 117B, and the Kamehameha Auditorium or Lounge are now being accepted. Reservation forms are on the Queen’s Intranet, where you can also find information on audio/visual capabilities, contact information for setting up events, and FAQs. For further information, email dratliff@queens.org or hmendoza@queens.org.

QHS is offering a free financial planning workshop presented by AXA Advisors to all employees on Wednesday, August 11, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the 2nd floor Harkness Boardroom. “Strategies for Recovery” will explain the economic crisis and how to handle your finances going forward. Reservations are required. For more information, email lekawamoto@queens.org or call 585-5131.

‘03 Ford Explorer Sport XLT: Silver, auto, cold a/c, CD, only 64K mi. KBB $8,800 but willing to sell at $7,500. Call 478-0448.


Rent:
Kailua: Part furn attached cottage, reduced rent (to $1,200) for help with painting, repairs & yard work. Long term lease desired (min 1 year). N/S, no pets. Call mid Sept. $1,300 incl util. Aileen @ 261-1787.
Punchbowl: 1/1 spacious, newly renov, new stove, ceiling fan in lv & BR, sec bldg, w/d, 5 min to QMC, 15 min to airport, UH, or Waikiki. NS, no pets. $1,250+dep. Call Jenny @ 258-8898.
Kalihi Valley: Lg 2/1/1 downstrs unit, 10 min to QMC. NS, no pets. $1,450 incl util, cable. 221-2381.
West Lock: Master BR w/own bath, pkg, a/c, w/d. S750 everythin incl. Call for details @ 354-6569.
Parking stall: 2 biks fr QMC. Email lur@pixi.com.
Ward: 1/1/1 pkg w/lanai, good wind flow, pool, BBQ, spacious, walking to QMC. Month-to-month ok. Avail 9/1 or earlier, no fee. $995. Alex 218-3243.

Misc:

Wanted: Plastic single kayak. 271-2162.

Place an ad: Queen’s employees only. Include name, phone and Employee ID number. Mail to Creative Services—Print Connection, fax to 547-4002 or e-mail to jkimura@queens.org by Wednesday. The Print Connection reserves the right to edit or refuse any ad. The Print Connection does not make any warranty about the fitness of any product or service listed in Q-Mart.

The Queen’s Print Connection is published by Creative Services. If you have news or wish to opine, call us at 537-7532 or e-mail jkimura@queens.org News deadline is the Monday prior to publication.

QHS/QMC President ............ Art Ushijima
Publisher ..................... Roy Cameron
Editor/Writer ............... Jason Kimura
Assist. Ed./Writer .......... Glee Stormont

The Queen’s Medical Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.