

THE HUM

The Holy Cross Medical Center Newsletter

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Stephen Lucero, MD
Urology & General Surgery

Update From Bill Patten



As we start a new year, one of the big changes that we are making will be in our business office departments (Patient Financial Services and Professional Billing Services). We are making these changes as part of our overall efforts to help assure the long-term financial stability of our organization.

This article will summarize the contract that we have signed with TruBridge, a sister company of Evident, and will give an overview of how the staff in these departments will be affected. I have had a meeting with the PFS and PBS staff to review this information.

What does the TruBridge Contract mean? For what will they be responsible?

TruBridge will oversee the operation of all aspects of the Holy Cross Medical Center (HCMC) Business Office (PFS and PBS) and Patient Access. This includes the education of hospital personnel, including ongoing supervision of business office personnel, in accordance with established HCMC policy and the current collective bargaining agreement.

TruBridge will be responsible for the billing and related collection activities of all patients, to include inpatients, sub-acute patients, outpatients (including clinic patients), emergency room patients and all professional fees. They will produce and mail statements and collections letters for private pay portions, manage cash receipts and our accounts receivable.

They will follow-up on all unpaid insurance claims. They will determine what accounts should be moved to "Bad Debt write-off" status using the hospital designated collection agency based upon hospital policy and mutually agreed upon timeframes.

What is the effective date of the transition?

The effective date of the transition is January 7, 2019. Beginning January 7, some of the old AR (>60 days) will be worked by TruBridge staff so that HCMC staff can focus on the current billing/collection activities.

To whom will these departments report?

Lisa LaPean is the Interim Revenue Cycle Director until May, 2018. She has been on-site for the past 2 months, working to fix system set-up and process issues. Kawanza Wright is the TruBridge Project Implementation Manager who will assist Lisa in this conversion effort. She will be onsite for the conversion week of January 7th. PFS, PBS, and Patient Access will all report to Lisa. In addition to her reporting responsibilities to TruBridge, Lisa will report local to Shea Brock, Interim CFO. Oversight of this conversion project is Shea's #1 responsibility.

TruBridge has not completed their evaluation of PBS so we cannot yet say what changes will take place there which includes changes to Barbara Miera's role. TruBridge has completed their evaluation of PFS. Karin Monaghan will remain as the Patient Accounts Manager and will report to Lisa.

Hitana Espinoza will move into a new role; Revenue Integrity Manager. Working out of an office in the HIM area, Hitana will be responsible for our charge master, oversight of insurance contracts, and accurate charging processes for all billable services.

How will the jobs of affected employees change?

We fully anticipate that, as new work processes are implemented, that the job descriptions of our employees will change. We will work through the normal job description update process which, as appropriate, will include the 1199NM Union. For example, it is my understanding that in the future, billers will be doing more of their own follow-up.

Will there be layoffs?

No one is being laid off during this process. We will receive a credit on our monthly bill for all PFS and PBS staff. Other than Lisa, everyone will be a Holy Cross employee, their employment will still be directed by hospital policies, and union membership options will be unchanged.

There are a few non-business office related benefits that we will receive from this contract.

These include: All support costs related to our Evident software will now be included in our monthly business office invoice; we get all Evident software at no charge (this includes modules we currently do not have as well as new products that are developed); and all interfaces will be at no charge (the Evident side of the interface).

A brief summary of why we signed this contract with TruBridge can best be described in the following three points:

TruBridge will help us get the Evident software set-up (fixed) so that it works properly, they will guide us in revising/setting up our processes; and they will train our employees on the system and related processes.

Thank you,

Your Mill Levy Funds at Work!

As part of our ongoing effort to keep the community informed about Holy Cross Medical Center, we will be releasing regular updates regarding the use of the mill levy money in this quarterly publication and online at www.HolyCrossMedicalCenter.org

Project Updates: Cytoscope Machine

Cytoscopy is a procedure that can be performed by a urologist in-office and allows the physician to evaluate the lower urinary tract of patients.



The purchase of this equipment will enable physicians like Dr. Lucero to check patients for bladder cancer, blood in urine, bladder stones and enlarged prostate, Minor bladder biopsies along with Ureteral stent removals after kidney stone procedures can be performed in office.

Additional 2018 Projects:

11/14/2018

Wireless network upgrade

\$105,360.00

12/6/2018

Hot Water Make-up

\$6,309.60

12/6/2018

Air Handling Unit #3 Coil

\$15,164.00

What is the Flu?

By Kelly Reagan, Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness that occurs throughout the winter and early spring. The flu is more dangerous than the common cold and can be detrimental to children and babies. The flu is usually spread through sneezing and coughing, but can also be spread via contaminated surfaces. Children that are in day cares are at increased risk, as well as children with chronic illnesses, such as asthma.

What are signs of the flu?

Sometimes parents have a hard time telling if their child has the flu or the common cold. It is important to note that the common cold and the flu have different symptoms. The common cold typically includes no fever or a low-grade fever, the child still has energy, a stuffy nose with rhinorrhea and sneezing, headache, and the child's appetite is typically the same. The flu typically includes a high fever, the child has very low energy, a headache, decreased appetite, body aches, chills, and a dry cough. If you have any doubts as a parent, it is important to take your child to see the doctor, especially if the child seems dehydrated, listless, or confused.

How long does the flu last?

The flu starts being contagious about 24 hours before symptoms start and typically last for 5-7 days. However, it is important that your child does not have a fever for 24 hours before taking them back to day care.

What are ways to prevent the flu?

1. The flu vaccine
 - Children 6 months and older can get the flu vaccine
 - Pregnant women can get the flu vaccine, which can help protect their babies from the flu for the first few months after their birth
2. Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizer
3. Cover a cough or sneeze in your sleeve
4. Stay away from people who are sick
5. Clean surfaces in the home and toys often

How do I treat my child if they get the flu?

The goal of treatment is to prevent and ease symptoms. Typically the flu is treated with rest, hydration, and acetaminophen/ibuprofen. However, some children may be candidates for Tamiflu, so you should discuss your child's treatment plan with their provider.



Kelly Reagan is a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner with Holy Cross Pediatrics and Primary Care.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

By Dr. Stephen Lucero, M.D.

Kidney stone disease is a common urologic condition. There are more than 3 million cases per year in the United States, accounting for over half a million Emergency Department visits.

It has been said that there is nothing more painful than passing a kidney stone. In fact the FAA grounds pilots who are diagnosed with kidney stones until they are properly treated and if they form a second stone, they are grounded for life.

Kidney stones occur in approximately 10% of men and 8% of women but the gap is closing. The reason people form kidney stones is due to genetics and environmental forces. Here in New Mexico we live in the high desert, and nobody drinks enough water. We are taught from infancy not to waste water, so many of us are in a constant state of dehydration.

This may be OK if you don't have the genetic predisposition to form stones, but you are a walking time bomb if you are a stone former.

The function of the kidney is to filter the blood. 20% of the blood from each heartbeat goes through the kidneys. In a state of dehydration your urine becomes concentrated allowing the minerals to crystallize. These crystals then bind to each other forming bigger crystals and eventually stones. When a stone starts to pass and blocks the kidney, the crystalline structure of the

stone rips the delicate tissues causing it to bleed and severe pain. If it completely blocks the kidney and the urine becomes infected, the infecting bacteria can easily get into the blood stream causing urosepsis which carries an up to 50% mortality. For decades the only option for treatment, outside of passing a stone was open surgery. There are still people walking around with scars on their sides that look like a shark bit them.

The development of fiber optics made it possible to look inside the urinary tract and treat many stones without an incision.



On February 7, 1980 Dr. Christian Chaussey used a revolutionary device to successfully treat a patient with a kidney stone from outside of the body using shockwaves. He called this effect an *Extracorporeal Shockwave Lithotripsy* or *ESWL* for short and it revolutionized the treatment of kidney stone disease. The early machines had a dedicated building and a huge water bath with a large gantry to immerse the patient for the treatment. It looked like a strange carnival ride. You may still see one if you look up *Extracorporeal Shockwave Lithotripsy* on Youtube. Over

the years the machines have become more compact and more precise.

I am pleased to announce that Holy Cross Hospital has the newest most up to date *ESWL* machine in the state and we are offering this treatment to the people of northern New Mexico.

As great as this new technology is, it is only as good as the people using it. I am proud to be a part of a highly dedicated, knowledgeable, compassionate team in Holy Cross Surgical Specialties and the Holy Cross Hospital operating room staff. The treatment we offer here is second to none but it shouldn't be a surprise, we are treating our family, friends and neighbors.

That's what we are here for.



Stephen Lucero is a board certified urologist who has practiced in northern New Mexico for 33 years. In addition to treating kidney stones he also treats genitourinary cancers, impotence fertility and infertility issues and pediatric urology. He is an associate professor at the University of New Mexico and Kansas University Schools of Medicine.

