Off-site laundry to increase productivity, reduce costs

A change is coming to Skiff laundry services that will help in the hospital’s ongoing journey toward greater efficiency and productivity. Effective Oct. 1, laundry production will be transitioned outside of the building.

Kerry Soule, Director of Support Services, emphasized that no one will lose a job due to this change.

“Production and distribution are two different laundry functions,” he said. “Washing, drying and folding will be done elsewhere, but our staff will still be responsible for the collection of soiled linens and distribution of clean, processed linens to departments.”

Reduction in staff will be done through attrition; the department recently had an individual retire and anticipates another retirement for next year. The remaining two staff members will continue to work in laundry distribution, plus rotate into Environmental Services as needed.

Laundry production is going to be taken on by Genesis

Health care future success is not a bridge too far

by Steve Long, CEO

To all who attended our town-hall meetings a few weeks ago, please accept my thanks. Your feedback regarding the presentation for the city council was invaluable and was key to the decision to take a step back and extend the process of sharing with the council the information on the rapidly changing health-care environment. The first step was taken on Monday night with a broad overview of the history behind health-care reform and some of the specific elements in the health-care reform law. The key to the whole presentation was to ensure the council understood that our industry is changing fundamentally and changing quickly. This point regarding change was driven home to me again this week when I read an article in an Iowa Hospital Association publication regarding the point of view of those who have been appointed to implement all the changes. The point was well-illustrated with the following story.

The Choluteca Bridge in Honduras was built with such design strength that it could withstand the worst of hurricanes. When Hurricane Mitch came in 1998, it dumped 75 inches of rain in less than four days and destroyed 150

Event volunteering to count toward individual 2014 goals

Annual performance reviews are coming up ... but not as fast as you may expect.

Originally slated to be completed by Sept. 27, reviews are now likely to move to early November, following a recent brainstorming session from hospital directors. More information on the change will be forthcoming, but one thing to note is that this will give both departments and individuals a little more time to complete this year’s goals.

In the category of individual goals, while employees will still be required to select (with the help of their supervisor) and complete three goals for 2014, all employees are being given the choice to fulfill one of their goals in a fairly quick and easy way: help at a designated Skiff event.

Skiff is proud to present or participate in a number of annual events, including holiday parades and the ever-popular Skiff-or-Treat at Halloween. But such events need a significant number of volunteers to be successful, and we often struggle to get enough help. Those who do help are frequently the same folks over and over, which is appreciated, but runs the risk of burning out those people. Without volunteers, our events couldn’t happen.

Therefore, starting with the 2014 goals, employees

Health care future success is not a bridge too far

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Continued on page 2

Beth Pettigrew and Amy Rogers, both of the Skiff Laboratory, were among those who helped decorate the Skiff hallways for 2012’s Skiff-or-Treat. Volunteers are vital in making Skiff events possible; by making event participation fulfill an individual goal for performance evaluations, Skiff hopes to encourage much greater involvement.
Volunteering and goals … (from page 1)

can inform their supervisor that they would like one of their goals to be volunteering at a Skiff event. These activities will be overseen by Leisa Zylstra, Foundation and Events Manager, and she will notify your supervisor upon the completion of your goal.

While you do not have to specify at the time of your evaluation which event you will take part in, you do need to contact Leisa in advance so that she knows how many people will be taking part. These activities are on a volunteer basis and therefore not on paid time, but they will still come with WeSpark points, in addition to goal completion. Employees are not required to select event participation as one of their goals, but every employee has the right to choose it. No more than one goal may be fulfilled by event volunteering.

Upcoming Skiff-related events that will qualify for 2014 individual goal completion include (additional events may be announced):

- Lighted Christmas parade float decoration (mid- to late November 2013) – minimum of two hours required
- Walking/riding with Skiff float in Lighted Christmas parade (Nov. 29, 2013)
- Santa's Workshop (Dec. 7, 2013)
- Pink Nose/Blue Toes 5K (Jan. 25, 2014) – maximum of 25 volunteers needed
- 4th of July parade float decoration (mid- to late June 2014) – minimum of two hours required
- Walking/riding with Skiff float in 4th of July parade
- Thanks with Franks (early September 2014) – maximum of five volunteers needed
- Skiff-or-Treat decorating – minimum of two hours required
- Skiff-or-Treat candy distribution and post-event clean-up
- United Way co-chair (one volunteer needed; can be completed during work hours)

If you have questions, contact Leisa at Ext. 3179 or lzylstra@skiffmed.com or PR Director Stephanie Alexander at Ext. 4339 or salexander@skiffmed.com. We’re excited to see many new faces helping to make our upcoming events a success!

Laundry changes at Skiff … (from page 1)

Development at its Indianola location. The organization, which currently does the laundry for facilities such as the Iowa City VA health care system and the Marriott in downtown Des Moines, is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides workplace rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

“We very much like the mission of Genesis,” said Brett Altman, COO, “which is to help people with challenges to get job training and assist them with joining the workforce.”

Skiff is anticipating an annual savings of $20,000 to $40,000, not only due to attrition-reduced salaries and benefits, but also supplies and utilities. In addition, this change means that Skiff will not need to invest $150,000 to replace our existing washers and dryers which, at 20 years of age, have already exceed their expected lifespan by a decade and are becoming increasingly dilapidated. “We’ve been welding dryer drums together to keep them running,” Brett said.

Switching laundry to external production also brings Skiff in line with more typical national practices.

“We’ve been operating a very different laundry model than most hospitals,” Kerry said. “The majority of facilities our size outsource their laundry production.”

From the perspective of those departments who utilize laundry services, little will change, although a turnaround time of two days will become the norm, compared to the current 24-hour cycle. In the coming weeks, the laundry staff will be in touch with various departments to review linen stock levels and discuss any service-related questions they may have.

“The laundry staff care about the product they deliver and the service they provide,” Kerry said. “That absolutely will not be changing.”
Announcing the transition of pharmacy benefits

We are pleased to announce that, beginning Oct. 1, our pharmacy benefit services will transition to OptumRx, a UnitedHealth Group company. This change applies to all employees who have UnitedHealthcare pharmacy coverage.

What you need to know about this change:

- There will be no change to your prescription drug benefit coverage as a result of the move to OptumRx. However, as your employer, we may choose to update benefit plans during Open Enrollment. Additionally, as part of your pharmacy benefit plan, Prescription Drug List (PDL) updates generally occur once or twice a year, depending on the plan. Any PDL or health and pharmacy benefit changes made during open enrollment are separate and not related to the move to OptumRx.
- You will receive a new health plan ID card with OptumRx information on it before the transition. The card will not be effective until Oct. 1, so you should keep and continue to use your current card until that time.
- You’ll have access to more than 64,000 network retail pharmacies, including all large national chains, and many local community pharmacies. There should be little, if any, disruption to members. If a pharmacy is no longer in our network and you’ve filled a prescription there in the past three months, you will be notified by mail.
- Most mail service prescriptions with remaining refills will automatically transfer. Prescriptions for certain medications, like painkillers, will not transfer. In this case, you’ll receive a letter. Prescriptions that do not transfer, including expired prescriptions, will require a new prescription. OptumRx will contact you via phone or mail when it’s time to process your refill order.
- UnitedHealthcare is working to provide a smooth transition and consistent service during this transition, and you’ll have access to a full range of pharmacy benefits and support.

If you haven’t already, you will soon receive information in the mail from UnitedHealthcare. If you still have questions, you have access to one phone number for both your medical and pharmacy questions. You may contact Julie Hodge, HR Generalist, at Ext. 4350 with inquiries.

Skiff’s mandatory flu vaccine deadline announced

As with last year, Skiff is mandating that all employees, physicians, volunteers, etc., receive the flu vaccine. Exemptions will be made for documented medical or religious reasons only. If you believe you will qualify for an exemption, please contact Christie Milligan, Employee Health Services, at Ext. 4804. The deadline for receiving the influenza vaccine is Oct. 1.

Immunization clinics for employees and volunteers will be in the volunteer office on the first floor during the following days and times:
- 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Monday, Sept. 9
- 2-4 p.m., Monday, Sept. 9
- 7-10 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 12
- 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 17

Please note that, during this clinic, the high-dose influenza vaccine will not be available for individuals age 65 years of age or older. If you prefer to receive the high-dose influenza vaccine, it will be available at the community influenza vaccine clinics provided by Public Health, or you can inquire with your primary care provider.

If any employee or volunteer receives their influenza vaccine elsewhere, such as Newton Clinic, please provide a copy to Employee Health Services. The CDC’s National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) requires that Skiff report the immunization rates for all staff and volunteers.

Getting the flu vaccine is the most effective way to protect your patients, yourself and your family from the flu. The vaccine is safe, effective and does not cause the flu.

Flu vaccine is important for health-care and hospital workers. We know:
- You are being exposed to a very contagious influenza virus every day, both in the hospital and in the community.
- The flu is dangerous. In the United States each year, 36,000 people die of seasonal influenza.
- For most healthy people, the flu will not be deadly, but it could make you miserably ill.
- If you are vaccinated, you and your family will likely be healthier this flu season. Many studies show that immunized health-care workers stay well and have decreased work absences. They are also less likely to transmit the virus to their children and families.
- If you are vaccinated, you will help stop the spread of flu. Multiple studies show that many health-care providers and hospital workers continue to work despite being ill with influenza, thereby exposing patients. Even if you are only mildly ill, you can still transmit the flu to vulnerable patients.
- If you are vaccinated, you will keep your patients safe. Unvaccinated caregivers put patients in danger. Fewer patients die when cared for by immunized health-care workers. The flu is hardest on our most vulnerable patients – infants and children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

Call Christie Milligan, Employee Health Services, at Ext. 4804 with questions.

Skiff safety survey starts tomorrow

We wish to remind you of an opportunity to share your thoughts regarding our culture of patient safety and enjoy some pizza if we have an 80 percent participation rate.

Our hospital is participating in an initiative focusing on assessing teamwork and culture.

The purpose of this initiative is to better understand the teamwork and safety climate of our hospital. There is a growing recognition of the importance of culture, climate, and teamwork in health-care quality and safety. The purpose of this survey is to gain insight about the teamwork and safety climate in our hospital and identify opportunities to improve safety for our patients.

This survey has been developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), a scientific research organization that falls under the domain of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and is being used by hospitals across the United States to assist inpatient safety efforts. Our participation in this project is part of a national initiative to help promote patient safety.
Limited-edition Skiff baseball tee

The PR department is pleased to announce a new, original, limited-edition shirt. This super-soft baseball-style t-shirt in gray and charcoal will have three-quarter length sleeves, the words “Skiff Sparks” on the front (as a pseudo team name) and, across the back, will have your last name and team number. What will your team number be, you wonder? It’ll be the two digits of the year you started at Skiff. So if you’ve been here for a decade, for example, your “team number” would be “03.” Celebrating your 25th year? Your number will be “88.” You get the idea! Cost will be $27 for sizes small through XL and $30 for 2XL.

Sign-up tables for this item will be located in the Radiology corridor at the following days and times:

- 2-3 p.m., today (Thursday, Aug. 22)
- 10:30-11:30 a.m., Friday, Aug. 23
- 10-11 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 27

Contact PR Director Stephanie Alexander at salexander@skiffmed.com with questions.

Kudos Corner

Go online to the Skiff Intranet to share your kudos! Simply log in with your user name and password, then go to https://intranet.skiffmed.com/kudos/ and click “Give Kudos” on the right-hand side.

Kudos to all Skiff staff – I wanted to say thank you to everyone who has been involved with my hiring process and the orientation process. Never have I worked in a facility that everybody was so welcoming and friendly. I feel as though I have been accepted with open arms and open hearts!! All in all it has been an inspiring and extraordinary experience! Thank you all! – Karina Verdugo

Kudos to Kelly Douglas – Thank you for always going above and beyond for not only your assigned patients but for all of the patients who need assistance. All of your hard work shows that you are going to be a great nurse. – Brenda Carkhuff

Kudos to Arlys Boyington – Thank you for helping me Tuesday in PACU. It was much appreciated. – Mary Appleby

Kudos to Karna Simms – Thank you so much for doing double duty Sunday morning. We appreciate your help in the ED. – Ramona Davis, Kristina Morgan, Lisa Dobie

Kudos to Julie Froah – Thank you for working with me in PACU on Friday and making it a pleasant day. I appreciate your smile and good attitude. – Judy Orr

Kudos to Michelle Lowing – Thank you so much for helping me and staying late when I was feeling very overwhelmed at the beginning of my shift on Thursday evening. You helped me tremendously by staying late and completing that discharge for me!! I can’t thank you enough for doing that. You are a true team player!!! – Jennifer Howard

Kudos to Susan Winecoff – Thank you for staying late and recovering patients even though you had a long day. We appreciate your team effort to help your coworkers out. – Genevieve Langmaid

Kudos to Dawn Karnes – The other night we had a challenging situation over on Med-Surg West. I really respected how compassionate you were even when it wasn’t easy. Thank you! – Adalee Blair

Kudos to Vicki Dank-Satorie – Thanks for coming in on short notice to assist with a patient in OB. – Genevieve Langmaid

Kudos to Brenda Carkhuff – Thank you for the attentive/efficient care that you give to all your patients. – Patty Habel

Kudos to Amber Pelzer – Thanks for answering my page and staying late on a Friday evening and for setting up the West scanner. – Kristina Miller

Kudos to Deb Branderhorst – Rad student Kari was very excited for the helpful tip on how to do CXR obl. Thanks, you’re the BEST. – Mary Thompson

Kudos to Angie Barnes – Thank you so much for stopping this morning on your way into work and ask if I needed any help getting the patient from the car to wheelchair. Your kindness was appreciated and didn’t go unnoticed with the family either. You are such a trooper! – Stacie Smith

www.skiffmed.com
The Public Relations and Marketing department is excited to announce a return of last year’s breast cancer awareness shirt, created by graphic designer Chris Carter. The soft, long-sleeved t-shirt is a beautiful flamingo pink and a great way to support an important cause, both in October and year-round. In addition to being a very popular limited-edition apparel item last year, the shirt also earned the PR department gold awards from both the Aster Awards, one of the largest national competitions of its kind, and the Thirtieth Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards, which is the oldest, largest and most widely respected health-care advertising awards competition.

Order sessions for the breast cancer awareness shirt will be held in the Radiology corridor on the following dates:

- 10-11 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 4
- 12:30-1:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 5
- 2-3 p.m., Monday, Sept. 9

If you have any questions, please contact Foundation and Events Manager Leisa Zylstra at Ext. 3179 or lzylstra@skiffmed.com.
I started having contractions at home, but suspected false labor. I told my husband to stay at home with our older son while I went to the hospital to get checked out. No sooner did I put on a hospital gown than my water broke and I was ready to push!

There was no time for pain meds, so I relied fully on the encouragement and support of my fantastic nurses Pam Thompson and Kyla Knudson to get me through. I was also so lucky that my physician, Dr. Leighton Frost of Newton Clinic, was close by – scarcely 15 minutes after I arrived, my new son Beau was born!

I don’t know what I would have done without my local hospital. As a former employee, I already knew what a great place Skiff is. That was proven to me again and again during my stay. The OB nurses are amazing and everyone else, including housekeeping and nutrition staff, was always prompt and courteous.

Thank you, Skiff, for being there for us and for making my unforgettable experience so enjoyable!

– Stacey Simbro
Skiff recognized for meaningful use

Earlier this summer, Skiff Medical Center was presented a certificate of recognition as a Meaningful Use Vanguard at the Iowa 2013 E-Health Conference. This signifies Skiff is a meaningful user of electronic health records and is a part of the leading vanguard furthering change in healthcare delivery. CMS has provided hospitals and providers with phases of meaningful use requirements to achieve the ultimate goal of improving health and health care for all Americans. We are in our second year of Stage I meaningful use and will begin our Stage II meaningful use reporting period the beginning of 2014. Our advanced electronic medical record (EMR) and the diligence of all the providers and staff at Skiff are what make this possible.

Our state fair is the best state fair in our state!

Cindy Brown, Angie Smith, Crystal Seckar and Tracy Hamilton dressed for the occasion during last week’s State Fair Day in the cafeteria. Congratulations to Brenda Steenhoek on getting precisely the right amount in the “Guess the Candy” game (192), winning two free fair tickets in the process.

Getting to know… Jennifer Howell

With Skiff since: 2011
Department: Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Title/job: Occupational therapist
Education: Bachelor of arts in health and sports studies, University of Iowa; master of science in occupational therapy, Colorado State University
Schedule: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday
Main duties: I mainly work in the outpatient rehab area. I see all ages, from pediatric to geriatric. I work with a lot of people who have sustained hand injuries, neurological injuries such as stroke, and pediatrics with developmental delays.
Favorite thing about Skiff: I have great coworkers who make me laugh and are always willing to help each other out.
Hobbies and interests: I enjoy all kinds of outdoor activities, including camping, boating, hiking, running and taking my dog for walks. I love spending time with my two nieces and I frequently attempt to be crafty, although the end product doesn’t always turn out just right.
Favorite thing about Skiff: I went skydiving in Switzerland when I was in college, and would go again in a heartbeat!
Favorite candy/treat: All of them … I definitely have a sweet tooth! My favorites are probably cupcakes and fruit snacks.

BIRTHDAYS

Patty Smith. ........................................ Aug. 23
Sara Wilmesmeier. ............................... Aug. 23
Linda Harrelson. ................................. Aug. 23
Lori Mallory ........................................ Aug. 24
Tara Van Rees ...................................... Aug. 24
Nancy Van Zee ..................................... Aug. 25
Pat Smith ............................................. Aug. 25
Lorrie Harter ........................................ Aug. 25
Mandi Eastin ....................................... Aug. 25
Sherry Buchmeier ............................... Aug. 26
Adam Hammer ..................................... Aug. 27
Barb Kaldenberg ................................. Aug. 27
Dave Hopkey ...................................... Aug. 27
Jane Taylor .......................................... Aug. 30
Candace Hoffman ............................... Sept. 1
Vicki Gunsaulus .................................... Sept. 2
Sarah Bush .......................................... Sept. 2
Nancy Steingreaber ............................. Sept. 3
Jane Goff-Berry ................................... Sept. 3
Melissa Main ....................................... Sept. 5
Honduran bridges, but not the Choluteca Bridge.
While the bridge itself was in near perfect condition, a wider view revealed that the roads on either end of the bridge had completely vanished, leaving no visible trace of their prior existence. Of even greater significance, however, was the fact that during the massive flooding caused by the hurricane, the several-hundred-feet-wide Choluteca River had carved itself a new channel and no longer flowed beneath the bridge at all; the bridge now spanned dry ground.

This story was told by Dr. Don Berwick, the most recent head of the Medicare program, to describe how well the current health-care system in America matches the needs of the future. In his talk, Dr. Berwick stated that today’s health-care organizations are like this bridge – built to cross a river that won’t exist in the future. “Hospitals,” he said, “are built to cure disease, not prevent it.”

We need to rebuild the health care system around prevention, not cure. He ended by saying that the current system “lets bad things happen, then fixes them. Why not simply keep them from happening in the first place?”

As we have talked many times before, the method the federal government is using to “build the new bridge” is to change the way our services will be paid for in the future via value-based-reimbursement, bundled payments, and accountable care organizations (ACOs). Because of this, as we get deeper into the implementation of health-care reform, we will feel increasing financial pressures through reduced payment for our services until we cross the threshold from our current volume-based payment system to one based on keeping patients healthy in the first place.

The need to understand the impacts of these changes is so important that the upcoming Iowa Hospital Association annual conference will be focused entirely on this issue. The description of this conference reads:

As is often said, “the one constant is change,” a sentiment that couldn’t be more appropriate than when dealing with hospital payment and reimbursement systems. Since passage of the health-care reform law in 2010, not only has there been a boon for new health-care acronyms, but payment systems and finance methodologies are seeing some of their most overarching changes in more than 50 years. Combining these major changes with the “business-as-usual” annual regulatory calendar leaves hospitals facing a seemingly insurmountable level of regulatory upheaval.

As I told the city council on Monday night, we have an exceptional team of caregivers here at Skiff who are working hard to prepare for this very different future. I know the road will be a tough one and is somewhat akin to driving across a bridge in the fog, but I am thankful each and every day to be on that journey with all of you. I can think of no better group of people to be traveling with!

Congratulations to …

- Felicia Krizman, Quality, and her husband Jim on the Aug. 2 birth of their daughter, Sarrena Meadow, seen at right. She measured 10 pounds, 5 ounces, and 22.5 inches. She was welcomed home by sisters Maryna and Michaley.
- Jennifer Howard, RN, Med-Surg, on receiving her BSN.
- Jenna Blunt, CPhT, on passing her national pharmacy technician certification exam.
- Kelli Jo Ouellette, daughter of Dale and Ann Hansen, diabetes education, for being selected as a “North Carolina Great 100 Nurse.” The Great 100 Nurses were selected from a field of 97,600 nominees. Kelli Jo started her career working at Skiff as a CNA and then attended Morningside College for her BSN and Mount Marty for her MSN. Kelli Jo is currently working at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville, NC, in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit.

The first 200 visitors to visit the Skiff table will enjoy a free S.K.I.F.F.* dog!

*Spicy Ketchup Including French Fries

5 p.m. • Thursday, Sept. 5 • Downtown square

Join us for the 2013 THANKS with Franks