



St. John's Episcopal Hospital

Press Release

St. John's Episcopal Hospital Launches Fast Track in Emergency Care

(FEBRUARY 23, 2009) Far Rockaway, NY - - - The Emergency Department at St. John's Episcopal Hospital recently launched a Fast Track program. The seven-bed unit is dedicated to patients with non-critical conditions such as colds, small cuts or sprains. Sicker patients are triaged to the Emergency Department. At Fast Track, patients are examined first by a competent and caring physician's assistant; then every Fast Track patient is seen by a doctor.

"We know many in our community rely on the good services of our Emergency Department. Fast Track will reduce waiting time for the less sick where they will be seen in more pleasant surroundings while the critically ill, on the other hand, will receive the complete attentions of the Emergency Department," says Eric Nazziola, MD, Chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine. "We have it as our goal to have the Fast Track patients in the Emergency Department only half as long as the sicker patients, Because of Fast Track, everyone - both the less sick and the more critically ill - will be seen in a shorter amount of time." Currently about 25% of the patients are being triaged to Fast Track. Dr. Nazziola believes the final number will settle near 40% within a few months.

Spared the sight of monitors and more critically ill people while in a coral-hued environment, Fast Track patients have a less traumatic experience. "When a person presents to the Emergency Department in a horizontal position (lying on a stretcher), that person generally needs more patient care," says Dr. Nazziola. "When a person presents to the Emergency Department in a vertical position (ambulatory), that person may need more customer service."

In that spirit, Dr. Nazziola has ordered snacks for the Fast Track such as sandwiches, popcorn and beverages. "Emergency Department patients can always get a meal tray, but it feels less 'sickly' to have the more portable snack," he says.

The Fast Track has increased the comfort in the main Emergency Department. "There is more room for patients in the main Emergency Department now, making patients there more comfortable too," says Dr. Nazziola. "We're looking forward to improving service all-around with Fast Track," he adds.

Recently the Hospital became partners with Mount Sinai School of Medicine for clinical oversight of emergency care and to provide physicians. Also the Emergency Department recently received designation as a Hypothermia Center from the New York City Fire Department to provide cooling therapy to specific heart attack patients.