

Rapid Response Team Saves Lives

“Beep, beep, beep!” Northridge Hospital Medical Center’s Rapid Response Team’s (RRT) pagers sound off and they rush into action. Each of them knows that every second counts because someone’s life may be at stake.

Northridge Hospital created this team in response to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s 100,000 Lives Campaign, an effort to enlist our nation’s hospitals to implement changes in care proven to prevent avoidable deaths—and it’s working.

“The Rapid Response Team has been very successful in decreasing the number of Code Blues (cardiac or respiratory distress) outside of the Intensive Care and Critical Care Units since the team was implemented in October 2005,” states **Elsie Crowninshield, RN**, Clinical Director of Critical Care and CardioVascular Services.

That’s because the RRT responds at the first sign of a patient’s worsening condition and BEFORE a serious medical emergency can develop. The responding team consists of two highly skilled and trained specialty critical care nurses and a respiratory therapist. The moment a patient’s vital signs begin to decline, a nurse will initiate an emergency page to the RRT. The team arrives within three to four minutes, assesses the patient’s condition and offers care above and beyond the unit nurse.

This new approach to healthcare increases patient monitoring and exemplifies the Hospital’s commitment to provide safe and immediate care.

“We are specially trained to identify and respond to patients before a cardiac arrest—assessing their airway, breathing and consciousness, and administering appropriate treatment to stabilize them,” explains **Paul Solovay, RT**.

“With the Rapid Response Team, we’ve seen a reduction in the number of patients transferred to the Intensive Care Unit with anoxic (without oxygen) brain injuries as a result of cardiac arrest,” adds **Gordon Dowds, MD**, Medical Director of Critical Care. In fact, the RRT is not only effective in preventing cardiac arrest, but it is also improving patient outcomes by reducing the chances a critically ill patient will experience an unplanned complication during their hospital stay.



Ready to respond at a pager’s notice, RRT day shift members include: Front row: **Gina Moss, RN**, Relief Charge Nurse; **Leela Skorstad, RN**, Clinical Supervisor; **Maria Price, RN**, Relief Charge Nurse; second row: **Lori Preciado, RN**, Program Manager, Critical Care Services; **Ed Lopez, RT**, Director of Cardiovascular Services; **Alla Melman, RN**; **Joe Tongson, RT**; **Judy Fong, RN**; third row: **Greg Cousin, RT**, Program Manager, Respiratory Services; **Elsie Crowninshield, RN**, Director of Critical Care Services; **Paul Solovay, RT**; and **Marirose Vacarro, RN**, (l-r).



The Night Shift RRT members are **Cornelius Dudusola, RT**; **Karla Waterhouse, RN**; **Jessica Michinock, RN**; **Esther Hallowanger, RN**; **Jigna Kumar, RN**, Clinical Supervisor; and **Mary Garcia, RN**, (l-r).

Learn the early warning signs of cardiac arrest and CPR Basics in our Health & Wellness Library at www.NorthridgeHospital.org.