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How Mather Hospital Cut ER Wait Time to Under 30 Minutes

If you haven’t been to the Contessa Nadia Farber Emergency Pavilion at Mather Hospital this year, you may not know that something’s missing... a long wait. The previous hour and a half wait time for a patient to be seen by a provider in Mather’s Emergency Department (ED) is now down to an average of under 30 minutes.

“We’ve made a big push to improve the patient experience in our Emergency Department starting with how quickly our patients are seen by our physicians,” said Joan Faro, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Mather. “By shortening wait times, we can provide the speed patients expect from a walk-in clinic while delivering the complex testing and treatment that is only possible in an acute care hospital emergency department.”

In September 2008, Mather’s ED average “door to provider” time was 90 minutes. That time has steadily been reduced, with an average of under 30 minutes as of February 2010. Nationwide, the time that hospital emergency department patients wait to see a doctor has grown to an average of one hour, according to a 2008 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report.

“Patients are here to see a doctor, but typical registration and triage processes can slow the ‘door-to-doc’ time,” said Lorraine Farrell, FNP, RPAC, Director of Allied Health Professionals at Mather. “All of the members of our team focus on getting patients in front of a healthcare provider as soon as possible.”

One factor contributing to the decreased wait time has been the institution of a mini-registration process. When patients enter the Emergency Department, they are only asked for key information, such as name and social security number (critical pieces of information to ensure their records are accurate) and their chief medical complaint. The new process is designed so that full registration occurs after a patient has seen the provider.

“We know that there are some conditions for which time to treatment is critical. In these circumstances, patients have better outcomes when they are treated faster. So our initiatives really have contributed not only to a better patient experience but also to improving patient outcomes,” said Dr. Mitchell Pollack, Director of the Emergency Department.

Prompt treatment is particularly important when managing patients with cardiac complaints. Although some cardiac patients report chest pain, others have less obvious symptoms such as throat discomfort, vomiting or arm pain. Mather has recently focused on cutting the time to have an EKG to five minutes from when the patient arrives. Those who have signs of a heart attack can quickly be given time-sensitive, life-saving treatment.

New Processes Drive Patient Satisfaction

Since the implementation of the new ED processes, Mather has seen patient satisfaction soar. According to a recent independent survey* about emergency department experiences, patients put Mather at the 99th percentile when compared to hospitals with similar ED patient volumes, expressing superior satisfaction with the care and service they received. These results represent the success of the ED staff’s comprehensive, ongoing effort to marry the best medical practices with creative thinking and proven process engineering methods.

Mather’s Emergency Department Improvement Initiative evaluated nearly every step a patient takes in the department in an effort to improve on both quality of care and the time it takes for that care to be administered. More than 44,000 patients are seen in the ED each year, or an average of 120 patients per day. Because processes are more streamlined, the patient volume creates fewer bottlenecks.

The nursing staff has been critical to the suc-
cess of ED initiatives. Specially trained in critical care, Emergency Department nurses use a set of “first line orders” to help physicians get a jump start on the evaluation process. Liz Devine, RN, Nurse Manager of the ED, gave this example: “If a patient comes in with stomach pain, the nurse can choose a pre-formulated list of appropriate tests to present to the physician. If the physician agrees, the patient can start getting labs or other studies immediately. This process helps the physician make an accurate diagnosis in less time.”

“Almost 85 percent of our admitted patients come through the Emergency Department and best practices such as these help improve the process,” said Theresa Grimes, RN, Associate Vice President of Nursing Services.

Once a patient is examined and tests ordered, the major concern of the Emergency Department staff is that the patient and his or her loved ones understand what is happening with the patient’s care. Key to addressing that concern is MEDHOST, an electronic medical record and management system that tracks every patient through the ED until discharge or inpatient admission. Each time a patient is seen by a member of the staff, that contact is entered into the system. MEDHOST is monitored by the nursing and medical staff taking care of the patient in the ED and helps everyone keep an eye on the progress of care. The hardest part of many ED visits is waiting for test results. With MEDHOST, staff can see how long a patient has been waiting and ensure that someone from the team is checking on the patient’s comfort level and providing timely information.

Even though wait times have been dramatically shortened and patient satisfaction is at a very high level, the Emergency Department at Mather Hospital plans to continue its initiative to improve its practices and procedures. The efforts in the ED will help Mather to achieve its goal of being the best community hospital in New York State.

“By shortening wait times, we can provide the speed patients expect from a walk-in clinic while delivering the complex testing and treatment that is only possible in an acute care hospital emergency department.”

One Patient’s Story

One morning last May, April Victor walked through the halls of Terryville Road Elementary School where she is principal, and into her office, chatting with co-workers and greeting the youngsters along the way. She mentioned her acid reflux was acting up and a colleague offered her a drink to lessen the discomfort.

Instantly, things changed. The drink prompted an adverse reaction and Victor immediately felt her throat close and breathing become difficult. To counter the reaction, she drank some water, which helped open her throat. Yet, something still wasn’t right.

“It was hard to breathe because my chest was tight and I was wheezing,” she said. “By the time EMS came, my oxygen level was very low.”

The Terryville Fire Department EMS, which she describes as “kind, thorough and extremely professional,” transported Victor to the Emergency Department at Mather Hospital. Within minutes, she was receiving treatment.

“They immediately took care of me and they kept it light and helped me relax,” she said. “I had never been to Mather before and was impressed by top notch care and the wonderful rapport.”

Because her throat had closed, the water entered her lungs and resulted in aspiration pneumonia. Victor needed to remain in Mather for six days for treatment, but said the experience was made better because of the “consistent and excellent care” she received as a patient.

*Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction Survey of hospital emergency departments with patient visits 35,000-45,000, for quarter ended June 30, 2010
Total joint replacement of the knee or hip is helping countless people move past the pain that plagues them and reclaim their lives.

For Cathy Springer of Aquebogue, having a hip replacement was—literally—about getting back in the saddle. The veteran horsewoman had been experiencing pain for some time, but when it began to impede her ability to ride her beloved horses safely, she knew it was time to consider joint replacement surgery.

“I was in a lot of pain and it was waking me up at night,” said Springer, 63. “I was courting disaster being on my horse, because I didn’t have the strength to keep myself where I needed to be."

Marian Moldan’s pain was not only keeping her from spending more active time with her daughter, Lily, but it was also impacting her work. As a child psychologist who specializes in selective mutism, Moldan of Miller Place needs to reach out to her patients. However she found that her hip pain was preventing her from interacting with her young patients.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans opt for total joint replacement each year when non-operative treatments, such as reduced activity, medication or physical therapy, fail to provide relief.

When reviewing nationwide patient satisfaction survey results for elective surgery, joint replacement is consistently ranked number one.

“During surgery, we remove damaged or diseased bone surfaces and replaced them with synthetic joints of durable, wear-resistant plastic and metal,” explained Michael Fracchia, MD, Director of Mather Hospital’s Orthopedic Department.

“Technology has helped joint replacement surgery become less and less invasive in recent years, which is extremely beneficial to patient recovery. We now use smaller incisions and, don’t cut the muscle, have less blood loss, and faster recoveries.”

Driven by the goal of successful and timely patient recovery, Mather Hospital’s operating suites are specially equipped for orthopedic surgery and feature computer-navigated systems that assist in minimally invasive knee replacements. Additionally, Mather has developed a comprehensive pre-and post-operative program that provides patients with everything they will need to achieve a successful outcome.

It was the pre-operative process that most impressed Springer, who underwent her hip replacement on March 31, 2009. She, like all patients, had to complete a series of tests to ensure that she was a good candidate for surgery, and as a registered nurse with a full-time job as a risk management consultant, the idea of going from place to place for a series of tests didn’t appeal to her.

“I’ve worked with more than 30 hospitals in the Long Island area and I know what’s involved in undergoing surgery of this kind and the attention to detail and the organization at Mather was outstanding,” she said.

The same was true after surgery, according to Moldan, who, when she was initially contemplating surgery, hesitated for fear of a long and difficult recovery period.

“I thought I was going to have to worry about insurance, homecare, aftercare and that I was going to have to make all these phone calls,” she said. “But, I didn’t have to deal with anything but getting better. They took care of everything for me.”

Just one day after surgery, Mather’s physical therapy team had Moldan walking up steps and she’s been walking ever since.

“I walk every day and I’ve lost 55 pounds since my surgery 15 months ago,” she said. “I can do everything now, more than I was before. I don’t take my mobility for granted now. The whole experience was life altering.”

For both patients, the very best part of total joint replacement is the absence of pain.

“It’s been so freeing. It’s freedom that I didn’t have before,” said Springer. “I know what pain is and I had pain before my hip was fixed. I don’t have pain anymore.”

“I can do everything now, more than I was before. The whole experience was life altering.”

- Marian Moldan
It’s not just a bedtime story: You really do need to sleep.

Research shows that a lack of quality sleep, which 70 million Americans report, has a negative impact on just about everyone. Poor sleep has been linked to medical challenges—increased risk of diabetes, obesity, heart problems and depression. Some adults who repeatedly sleep less than six hours a night have been found to perform at the same levels of those impaired by alcohol and drugs.

“The key to a good night’s rest is finding out what’s keeping you from falling or staying asleep and treating or managing that cause,” said Dr. Peter Ottavio of the Sleep Disorders Center at Mather Hospital. “Undergoing a medical evaluation can identify what has been impacting your sleep and help improve not only your health, but also your quality of life.”

There are 84 known sleep disorders and three of those most widely known are:

**Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA):** Defined as pauses in breathing during sleep, sufferers can stop breathing from 10 seconds up to a full minute and a half. It can deprive the body of the oxygen it needs. The brain, in its instinct to survive, jostles the body into waking, if not completely, enough to take a breath. That pattern repeats throughout the sleep period.

**Restless leg syndrome (RLS):** A movement disorder, RLS is an intense urge to move the legs at bedtime and a constant need to stretch or move, prevents sufferers from falling or staying asleep.

**Narcolepsy:** Defined by constant sleepiness and a tendency to sleep at inappropriate times, narcolepsy affects approximately one in 2,000 people. If not identified and managed, narcolepsy poses serious difficulty for sufferers.

Those who suffer with such sleep disturbances should be evaluated by a certified physician. Mather’s Sleep Disorders Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine for meeting nationally recognized standards of excellence in healthcare, education and research. The physicians on staff are sleep medicine certified.

“As a hospital-based program, we can better handle emergencies that may arise,” said Dr. Mohamed Sameen, Director of the Sleep Disorders Center. “Our staff is dual-certified in both respiratory therapy and sleep and we have the current technology and state-of-the-art equipment.”

At the center, overnight polysomnograms can diagnose the causes of sleep disruption. Patients stay overnight in a private room, complete with a comfortable queen-sized bed, flat screen television and private bath. Staff technologists, who are licensed respiratory therapists and registered polysomnographic technologists, attach monitoring equipment to the patient, who is then permitted to go about his/her nightly routine. Most insurance plans cover sleep studies when prescribed by a primary care physician. Studies can also be done during the day for those patients who work nights.

“Our sleep specialists place a great deal of emphasis on compliance following their sleep studies,” said Dr. James Bruno, neurologist. “Troubleshooting compliance issues shortly following initiation of therapy is crucial to successful long-term treatment and outcome.”

For information about the Sleep Disorders Center, call (631) 476-2721.

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**Sleep Disorders Center**

**For a Good Night’s Rest**

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**Learn More About Sleep Disorders**

**Join us for a FREE Sleep Seminar**

on Thursday, September 30th at 6:30 p.m.
in Conference Rooms 1 & 2,
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital.
Call to register at (631) 474-6030

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Arif Ahmad, MD, Director of Bariatric, Surgery Center of Excellence

matherhospital.org/bariatrics • 75 North Country Road, Port Jefferson, NY 11777
Teens and Adults with Eating Disorders: Innovative Program Offers Help

Experts estimate that 10 million females and 1 million males in America are afflicted with an eating disorder, such as bulimia, anorexia nervosa or binge eating. As the numbers continue to climb, Long Islanders are turning to Mather Hospital’s Eating Disorders program for help.

Mather Hospital offers the only partial hospitalization, wherein patients return home daily after treatment and sessions, and intensive outpatient programs for adolescents with eating disorders in Suffolk County, and the only one of its kind for adults on Long Island.

The Eating Disorders Program treats patients through a comprehensive program designed to treat the physical, psychological, and nutritional aspects of eating disorders. Through a structured schedule of therapies, the program assists individuals in managing their emotional, social and behavioral symptoms. The experienced professional staff, which includes a psychiatrist, social worker, psychiatric nurse and nutritionist, focuses on the reduction of symptoms through the development and utilization of healthy coping strategies.

Each patient receives an individualized treatment plan that is coordinated with his or her primary care physician and other outpatient treatment providers.

Mather Hospital offers free and anonymous eating disorder screenings from 12:30 to 2 p.m. every Wednesday at Mather’s outpatient program offices, located at 208 Route 112, Port Jefferson Station (in the Blockbuster Video retail complex). Screenings can also be scheduled by appointment.

On the first Monday of each month, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Mather Hospital offers a free Eating Disorder Support Group in conjunction with the Long Island Chapter of the National Eating Disorders Association. This professionally led support group is offered to people with eating disorders, their friends, parents and spouses.

For more information on the Eating Disorders Program at Mather Hospital, call (631) 473-3877, extension 57, or go to www.matherhospital.org/pages/services_eating.asp.

Seven Days a Week: Lab Offers Precision and Convenience

For outpatients, Mather Hospital’s Lab is open for business—even on Sunday.

Accredited by The Joint Commission, the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in healthcare, the Lab at Mather specializes in comforting anxious patients and difficult draws. Experienced phlebotomists and a sophisticated robotic line, the first of its kind in a community hospital, combine to make many results available in a mere 20 minutes and sent to your doctor the same day.

The Lab’s hours are:
Monday to Friday - 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Lab offers comprehensive diagnostic testing, performing more than 500 different diagnostic procedures.

10 million females and 1 million males in America are afflicted with an eating disorder.

Find a Doc Online at www.matherhospital.org
A listing of more than 500 primary care physicians and specialists.

Free Valet Patient Parking

Mather Hospital is pleased to provide free curbside valet parking service for patients and their escorts at the Main and Emergency Department entrances. For visitors, valet parking is just $5 for the day.

Valet Parking Hours Monday through Friday
Main Entrance - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Emergency Department Entrance - 12 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The next time you need an x-ray, lab test or other healthcare service, make your appointment at Mather and take advantage of our free patient valet parking.
Wound Care Center® Recognized for Excellence

In recognition of high patient satisfaction rates, exceptional healing results, and outstanding clinical outcomes, the Mather Hospital Wound Care Center® was presented with the Center of Distinction award.

For nearly 20 years, Mather Hospital Wound Care Center has worked closely with primary physicians to provide quality care and patient education. In 2009, 98 percent of the Center’s patients surveyed rated overall care as good/excellent and said they would recommend the Center to others, thus garnering the center the award from Diversified Clinical Services (DCS), a national leading wound care management company.

Wounds that have not improved significantly in two to four weeks or healed entirely in eight weeks are a cause for concern. These wounds are often the result of diabetes, poor circulation and other problems. Mather’s team of specially trained medical and surgical specialists, nursing and support staff use proven clinical practices in developing each patient’s treatment plan. Interventions may include specialty wound dressings and compression wraps, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, living skin equivalents, topical growth factors and other evolving therapies and technology.

For more information about services at the Mather Hospital Wound Care Centers® call (631) 474-4590 in Port Jefferson and (631) 249-2347 in Melville. ☎

Community Support Helps Thrift Shop Thrive

Outstanding community support has helped the Thrift Shop at Mather Hospital set sales records year after year which has resulted, most recently, in a $150,000 donation to the hospital’s programs.

Managed and operated by a team of creative and retail-savvy volunteers, the Thrift Shop features nearly new merchandise, from designer clothing and handbags, to charming bric-a-brac and home furnishings. The shop is organized into departments, making it easy for shoppers to find exactly what they are looking for and uncover treasures they didn’t expect. To encourage frequent visits, the Thrift Shop team replaces its merchandise monthly.

The Thrift Shop is located adjacent to Mather Hospital at 75 North Country Road in Port Jefferson. Shopping and donation hours are Monday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To donate your time, call the Volunteer Office at (631) 476-2749.

Early Detection Saves Lives

In the battle against breast cancer, early detection is the strongest weapon. However, the recent press about mammography may be confusing. The Fortunato Breast Health Center follows the guidelines established by the American Cancer Society:

- First mammogram by age 40; yearly mammograms after that;
- Clinical breast exam at least every three years beginning at age 20; annually after age 40.
- Monthly breast self examinations.

To make an appointment for a mammogram, please call the Fortunato Breast Health Center at (631) 476-2771.

4th Annual Pink Rock Classic

Thursday, October 7, 2010

Rain Date: 10/12/2010

For information call: 631-476-2723
www.pinkrockclassic.com
Mather Hospital’s Fortunato Breast Health Center is one of only three facilities on Long Island that has earned certification through the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). And only 11 centers in New York State have achieved this distinction.

Mather Hospital’s Fortunato Breast Health Center
75 N. Country Road
Port Jefferson, NY 11777

Invites you to

BREAST CANCER VICTORY DAY™ 2010

A Celebration of Life

Saturday • September 25, 2010 • 12 noon
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital • Port Jefferson • New York

To register or for more information, call 631-474-6030 or visit www.matherhospital.org/victory
Deadline to register: September 22, 2010

The Long Island Rail Road will operate special Breast Cancer Victory Train Cars on September 25, 2010. A healthy boxed lunch will be provided to all guests.

Victory Day Guest Speakers

Geralyn Lucas
Author, Why I Wore Lipstick to My Mastectomy
Geralyn faced her diagnosis, mastectomy and treatment by arming herself with knowledge and recognizing the power of hope, support and lipstick.

Irene Trelfa
Breast Cancer Survivor
First diagnosed with breast cancer at 29 and continuing to battle the disease, Irene Trelfa of Sound Beach will share her story of hope and the strength of family and friends.

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