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The trauma charge nurse in the pediatric emergency department

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Abstract

Introduction: The Trauma Charge Nurse role at a Level 1 pediatric hospital benefits the Emergency Department, the trauma patients, the trauma service, the hospital itself and the community.

Methods: The Trauma Charge Nurses (TCN) are Emergency Department (ED) nurses who have passed off a trauma module which is made up of individual learning units, simulated skills pass-off stations and hands-on bedside nursing care of a trauma patients. The TCNs are staffed 24/7 in the ED to insure that there is an RN with a high level of clinical expertise available to take care of patients at all times. In addition to being a clinical resource to the ED the TCN is the bedside nurse for all high acuity trauma patients and coordinates the mobilization and response of the hospital trauma team to care for all trauma patients in the ED. The TCN also acts as a liaison for the ED with the hospital trauma team for communicating changes in procedures, process improvement, etc... In addition to their duties in the hospital the TCNs provide pediatric trauma education to EMS agencies and community safety fairs throughout the state.

Results: The Trauma Charge Nurse role in the Emergency Department has helped to improve the care of the trauma patients in this Level 1 Trauma center since the roles inception 12 years ago. Although the TCN role was initially set up to give the trauma team a consistent core group of nurses in the ED caring for the trauma patients, the TCN role has benefitted the ED, the hospital and the community.

Conclusion: The TCN role has strengthened the trauma program and the ED at this level 1 trauma center.

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