Central Monitoring Unit (CMU)

The Central Monitoring unit has been a vision for several years and is now a reality. After visiting Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, we held a kickoff called “Voice of the Consumer” to set the vision in motion. We created a mission statement: To establish a Centralized Monitoring Unit (CMU) in order to provide remote telemetry services to inpatient units. Key parts of this are:

- to provide an environment of exceptional care.
- to improve patient outcomes, efficiency, and enhance patient safety.
- to ensure patients will be geographically located based on disease, required nursing and physician coverage and consult patterns.
- to ensure “best practice” for hospital telemetry monitoring.
- to meet demand for increased telemetry services.
- to decrease internal transfer and handoffs improving patient and staff satisfaction.
- to improve efficiency of physician rounding time.

The CMU creation was a multidisciplinary effort involving physicians, nursing, Operations Excellence, Capital Management, Bioengineering, HCIS, NIS, Telecommunications, Admission Discharge Center, Pharmacy, Hospital Administration, Human Resource, and many other individuals. Key leaders included: Ann Williamson, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, CNO; and Senior Assistant Director Joelle Jensen, MSN, RN, NEA-BC; Medical Director Dr. Kim Staffey; Nurse Manager Carol Johnson, BSN, RN; Project Manager Joe Greiner, MSN, RN, CPHQ; and Randy Fry and Tom Persoon from Operations Excellence; and Hospital Administration intern Kelly Ferentz.

Hiring began in April and the first EKG Clinical Technicians started training in June. We currently have 21 clinical technicians hired. All have been training on 4RCW and 4JCW. Janet Hosking, MSN, RN-BC and Theresa Jennings, BSN, RN, have done an outstanding job educating them. Click here to see photos and click on the linked names below to read more about some of the new clinical technicians.

They are William Blair, Nichole Carroll, Susan Carroll, Thomas Carver, Nicole Johnson, Lucas Kennedy, Jeff Larsen, Amanda Lower, Brenda Martin, Debbie Martinson, Mandi McIntosh, Afton Newman, Christina Poock, Corinne Reagan, Yolanda Reed, Greg Smith, Mary Starks, Sandra Stevens, Rosemary Wadeya, Theresa Waite, and Shawn Zierke.

Staff nurse education began the week of September 12. Trainers from Philips were here September 19 to 22 to educate about the Philips client server, and lead training for the clinical techs and RN super users. We will be bringing up 4RC and 3BT into the CMU soon, followed by 4JCW, general care units, 6JC, RSCU, and Burn Unit.
Will Blair, LPN [Clinical Technician I]

Before working at UI Hospitals and Clinics, Will served in the U.S. Army at the Landstuhl Army Hospital in Germany and at the 4224th U.S. Army Hospital in Savannah, Georgia. Will also has been a member of the nuclear/chemical terrorism medical response team at Oakdale Prison. He has worked at UI Hospitals and Clinics since 1995, in medical psychiatry (4 SE), in IJPW, and adult psych. When asked about the CMU, Will said, “I like the idea of linking an entire hospital, and having real eyes, not unintuitive computer eyes, watch rhythms. The CMU, when linked to lab, X-Ray/MRI etc, EEG, can encapsulate a patient and give a fuller diagnostic snapshot of a person’s state of health got better health planning. Very few abnormal heart rhythms are caught until it’s very serious—this should be unnecessary in the third millennium of human civilization. The CMU can catch some heart trouble early on, which is always better.” Outside of work, Will likes to collect movies, restore cars, and fix clocks and home appliances. He also likes to plumb, do carpentry, pencil drawings, watercolor, and read philosophy. Will also is working toward completion of an RN degree.

Susan Carroll [Clinical Technician I]

Working as a clinical technician in the CMU is Susan Carroll’s first position at UI Hospitals and Clinics. She had previous experience as an EKG tech at Mercy in Cedar Rapids, as well as other health care positions.

About the CMN, Sue said, “like the concept of patients being able to receive care in the appropriate health care unit for their current needs while still being monitored for possible arrhythmia problems. I live in Washington, Iowa, and my free time is spent enjoying our dogs, going bowling, and spending time doing things with my family and friends. In the past, I have played and coached softball and volleyball. One major accomplishment was bicycling cross-country from Cedar Rapids to Albuquerque.

Thomas Carver, RT(R), BS [Clinical Technician I]

Before working in the Central Monitoring Unit, Tom worked behind the scenes in central sterilizing. He said, “Down there things are always clean, neat, organized, sterilized, and MOVING! They are a good bunch to work with. I really enjoyed learning about cardiac care. Many important decisions are made every day using the cardiac data. All diagnostic information, imaging, ECG, patient history, vitals, etc., gives the clinicians critical decision-making information for hospitalized patients. The things I like to do usually fall into one of two categories: the arcane and the time consuming. I like the old-fashioned lost art of conversation. I also burn up a lot of time on home improvement, which always
results in a new look, but usually not often much actual improvement. I also volunteer twice a week at the VA medical center. Here’s a little interesting tidbit: the only scientific journal that includes my name, the *Antarctic Journal of the United States*, was discontinued in 2005.

Nicole Johnson [Clinical Technician I]

Before coming to work at the Central Monitoring Unit, Nicole worked on 4RC from 2005–2011 as a Nursing Assistant. She works Saturday, Sunday, and Monday nights from 1900–0730. She said, “Since becoming a CMU Tech, I really notice just how much QUIETER it was on 4RC, especially at night. I enjoy spending time with my family and watching the Hawks play football. Go, Hawks!

Jeff Larsen [Clinical Technician I]

Besides working in the ETC, Jeff also has worked in the Burn Unit. “What I like most about the Central Monitoring Unit concept is that patients can be placed in an appropriate setting based on their medical needs rather than on our monitoring capabilities, which improving wait times and patient care. In my spare time, I enjoy many outdoor activities such as sailing, kayaking, hiking, and biking, just to name a few.

Mandi McIntosh [Clinical Technician I]

Before coming to work at the UI Hospitals and Clinics in spring, Mandi was a medic in the Army Reserves for six years (1997–2003). From 1998–2007, she was a stay-at-home mom and worked part time at night operating her own cleaning service. Mandy said, “In 2007, I worked briefly in the ETC, and the last four years I worked as a paraprofessional at West Liberty School. Since May 31, I have been a part of the CMU. The thing I like best about the CMU, is that it is new to UI Hospitals and Clinics, and that I am one of the “Trail Blazers” to help get it started. When I’m not at work, I am kept very busy with my four kids and their activities—all of them are in various sports and my girls are in dance. I also love to watch football—Go, Hawks!
**Sandra Stevens [Clinical Technician I]**

Before coming to work at the CMU as a Clinical Technician, Sandra was a paramedic in Dubuque, and then worked in the Medical Intensive Care Unit for three-and-a-half years. She said, “After having worked in the MICU, I became aware that some patients in the unit were unable to transfer out due to shortages of monitored beds within the hospital. This issue created possible difficulties for the MICU, ETC, and other areas in the hospital, because patients who needed the knowledge and skills of the MICU's staff could not be admitted there because of this backlog. Now, as a clinical technician in the CMU, I will be able to use the knowledge I've acquired over my years as a paramedic to help in some small way ameliorate these shortages, and, with other members of the ISS team, provide greater access to needed critical care services within the hospital. For fun, I enjoy trail running and backpacking.

**Shawn Zierke, AA, AAS [Clinical Technician I]**

In addition to being a Clinical Tech at the CMU, Shawn is a pre-PA Student (non-traditional) at the University of Iowa., hoping to start PA school May 2012 *somewhere!* “Before I came to the CMU, I was an NREMT from 2006–2008. I’ve worked as a lab tech/medical assistant/EKG Tech at the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic for two years, and I worked as an OB/Gyn medical assistant in Annapolis, MD. I also worked as an assistant to the director of emergency medicine (1999–2000), and I have logged 13,000 hours in clinical practice management/administration. What I like most about the CMU is that off-service patient are able to stay on their surgical units appropriate to their primary reason for admission and that they will receive the post-surgical care by nurses trained for those specific units. I also like that we are able to reduce nuisance alarms and other noises on the patient care units, thereby increasing patient satisfaction ratings over time. When I’m not at work I bake, and I mean, I bake, A LOT! Pie baking is especially cathartic for me and it keeps my five children and my husband (of 20 years) VERY happy, too! Oh, and I guess my co-workers appreciate it too.