A DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN PATIENT SAFETY

Computerized Physician Order Entry Offers Huge Safety Benefits
Catching Lung Cancer EARLY

New scan reduces mortality rate by 20 percent

As part of its commitment to early detection and saving lives, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital has added a highly specialized new scan to its list of available screenings.

A newly available lung scan may enable detection of cancerous lesions at an earlier, more treatable stage in certain high-risk patient populations.

A study of more than 53,000 smokers at high risk for lung cancer found that low-dose computed tomography (CT) scans decreased the risk of cancer mortality by 20 percent in comparison to standard chest X-rays.

But experts say screening with low-dose CT should be part of a multidisciplinary approach to improving lung health and preventing lung cancer that includes smoking cessation.

“Smoking cessation is critical,” says oncologist Greg Henkelmann MD of Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. Adds Cheryl Cartwix, center director: “If someone has a strong enough history of smoking to warrant the low-dose CT screening, then smoking cessation is certainly warranted.”

The test, available at St. Tammany Parish Hospital Paul D. Cordes Line at 985-898-4468. For details about the cost of the test, the self-pay cost of low-dose CT at St. Tammany Parish Hospital is $245.

Physicians Blanco and Henkelmann say low-dose CT scans are appropriate for high-risk patients who meet certain criteria and where research has shown a proven benefit. According to National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines, the screening is appropriate for heavy smokers between the ages of 55 and 74 who do not have symptoms of lung cancer and have a smoking history of 30 or more pack-years.

Dr. Blanco notes that low-dose CT scans, like traditional chest X-rays, have a high rate of false positives—about 95 percent—which can prompt biopsies and other invasive procedures.

Because insurance does not yet cover the cost of the test, the self-pay cost of low-dose CT at St. Tammany Parish Hospital is $245.

Information on free, tobacco-cessation programs is available by calling the Lung Health and Smoking Cessation Education Line at 985-898-4468. For details about whether you or your loved one is a candidate for the low-dose CT screening, contact Bryan Burdson at 985-871-6080.
St. Tammany Parish Hospital will soon embark on its biggest construction project in a decade, expanding its emergency department and adding 10 new private rooms to its inpatient bed complement. The three-year, $21 million project is publicly bid and financed by bonds issued at the end of 2012.

“This is the next chapter in our care of the community,” says Patti Ellish FACHE, president and chief executive officer. That next chapter reflects the growing needs of families on the Northshore, where population growth is among the fastest in Louisiana. The project will add an additional 8,000 square feet to the hospital’s emergency department and create new space dedicated to emergency pediatric care.

Construction will begin in late 2013. The expansion will include new capacity to provide trauma and pediatric emergency care increasing the number of regular treatment rooms from 14 to 30, according to Kerry Milton, chief nursing officer. Overall, the project will boost to 28,000 square feet the size of the emergency department, which will continue to operate throughout the construction period.

Ellish notes the emergency department’s crucial role in the treatment of patients: More than half of patients admitted to the hospital on any given day first come through the department, she says.

“It’s really the front door of our hospital,” Ellish says.

The project’s second component will boost by 10 the number of private rooms. The inpatient addition will “stack” atop the existing two-story wing of the hospital at the corner of South Tyler and 11th Ave. It will add approximately 15,354 square feet of new construction atop a building originally constructed to grow to three stories.

The resulting 21 private patient rooms will be called 3North and will be built on the principles of a healing environment to provide comfortable private space for the patient, caregivers and family. As part of the emergency department expansion, an 11-bed inpatient unit will be eliminated for a net gain of 10 private rooms to current capacity.

“Increasing the number of private rooms reflects our commitment to patients and their families,” Ellish says.

Hospital Chief Earns Regional Accord

Patti Ellish Named Woman of the Year

“Patti Ellish is the heartbeat of the North Shore...She lives and breathes health care, making sure the patient comes first.”

Regular surveys of patients, employees and physicians reveal a highly respected, much loved institution. Healthstream data indicates 100% of physicians responding would recommend STPH to their family, and 95% give our nurses the highest rankings. Likewise, nurses rank our physicians in the top 10 percent. And patients highly recommend, in the 91st and 95th percentiles nationally, our doctors and nurses respectively.

“A native New Orleanian with nursing, bachelor’s and master’s of health administration degrees, Ellish began her career in health care at West Jefferson Hospital in 1974, rising to Director of Nursing by 1986. She left to become Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Memorial Health System of East Texas where she led significant growth and improvement before joining St. Tammany Parish Hospital as CEO. Ellish is a fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives, the prestigious national credential symbolizing professionalism, ethical decision making, competence, leadership and commitment to lifelong learning in health care.

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“Patti Ellish is the heart of the North Shore,” says Christian Moises, news editor of New Orleans CityBusiness. “Patti Ellish lives and breathes health care, making sure the patient comes first.”

His observations bear out in the accomplishments of St. Tammany Parish Hospital’s president/CEO of 12 years and counting.

Patti Ellish transformed a small community hospital into a thriving regional system with an exceptional level of safety and quality. Under her leadership, the hospital tripled in size and multiplied its outpatient resources to serve the fastest growing parish in the state. Thanks to her vision, STPH achieved recognition for quality, safety, patient experience, physician and employee satisfaction. STPH and the healthcare community on the Northshore bear measurable results of Patti Ellish’s influence.

STPH is a private, not-for-profit community hospital for the service district of western St. Tammany and surrounding areas. It receives no tax funding and has approximately $1 billion gross revenues, 222 licensed beds and 1,700 employees. Its systems include the main hospital, outpatient surgery center, diagnostic centers, women’s center, home health, hospice, sleep disorders center, parenting center, community wellness center, primary care physician offices throughout the district and Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital.
Until last October, hospitalist Patrick Torcson MD ordered scans and medications for his patients by writing them on paper. He would then hand those paper orders to a nurse to be entered into the hospital’s computer system or faxed to the in-house pharmacy.

But on October 16, Dr. Torcson, head of St. Tammany Parish Hospital hospitalists, helped launch a digital transformation in the way STPH physicians order drugs and tests for patients.

That day in October is when Dr. Torcson and the hospitalist team put away their pens and began directly entering orders into portable Apple iPad tablets logged into the hospital’s information systems.

Computerized Physician Order Entry, or CPOE as it is commonly known, has huge implications for patients, physicians and nurses alike. It is also a change that reflects this hospital’s commitment to adopting best practices in patient safety and its embrace of technology that results in real improvements to patient outcomes.

“It’s an exceptional tool for improving the quality of care and patient safety,” says Dr. Torcson, who is physician champion of CPOE at the hospital. “It creates orders that are precise, harmonized with care (provided by other physicians) and that are based on evidence-based best practices.”

CPOE’s benefit to patient safety is hard to overstate. A study at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital found rates of medical errors dropped 88 percent utilizing CPOE.

CPOE’s safety benefits pivot on the technology itself. For starters, having physicians directly enter orders eliminates potential misreading or confusion of handwritten orders. Medical mistakes tied to illegible writing and misplaced decimal points are a serious concern that can have adverse effects in patients.

“We don’t have to interpret writing when the doctor enters orders directly,” notes Kerry Milson, STPH chief nursing officer. “This is faster, more efficient and safer for patients.” Adds Christopher Darcey MD, hospitalist. “Getting rid of handwritten orders is the number one benefit to patient safety.”

There are multiple, additional benefits to both patient safety and care. CPOE includes automated, real-time prompts that warn physicians against possible adverse drug interaction, allergic reaction or overdose as they enter patient orders. That gives physicians the opportunity to verify the dose or drug in real time—before a possible error is made.

“Depending on the technology, it’s a double check to make sure that’s the dose and drug you want,” says Dr. Torcson.

Other automated elements tell physicians when lab results and scans like X-rays will be available for examination. Orders for tests and medication are processed faster because the “lag time” for manual transcription is eliminated.

CPOE includes decision support to help physicians make optimal decisions about patient care. The new system’s decision support includes instantaneous access to research in best medical practices and automatic dosing and testing alerts, says Cherie Faucheux of STPH’s information technology department.

The hospital’s 13 hospitalists were its first group of physicians to adopt CPOE, which will be rolled out to other hospital physician groups by mid-2013.

The hospitalists’ involvement in CPOE represents a yearlong effort that required hands-on testing of what technology would work best. Dr. Darcey tried out a number of laptops and tablets while making rounds at STPH to see what device would work best. Doctors Darcey and Torcson say finding an easy-to-access and portable platform was key because of the nature of physicians’ work and because the shift to CPOE represents a big change in physicians’ daily practices.

The physicians worked closely with the hospital’s technology team to customize the order entry system to maximize its effectiveness and ease of use.

“We tailored the system to the doctors’ needs,” says Jamie Romage of the IT department. “They really did much of the research into what would work best, because it’s a system that the doctors themselves will use.”

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“A DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN PATIENT SAFETY

“IT creates orders that are precise, harmonized with care and based on evidence-based best practices.”
**Excellence in Stroke and Cardiac Care at STPH**

St. Tammany Parish Hospital continues to enhance its reputation for excellence in the care of cardiac arrest and stroke patients through accreditations and initiatives that reflect best medical practices.

STPH in spring 2012 received “accreditation with PCI” from the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care, formerly called the Society of Chest Pain Centers. The “accreditation with PCI” designation puts STPH in an elite group of Louisiana hospitals with special expertise in the use of balloon angioplasty to clear the coronary arteries of patients experiencing a heart attack.

“It’s a process of perpetually improving yourself to make patient care better,” says Teresa Krutkleich, STPH director of critical care.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital likewise continues to distinguish itself in stroke care. The hospital in May 2012 received the Bronze Achievement Award for compliance with Get With the Guidelines-Stroke, a national best-practices program that considers hospitals’ use of clot-busting drug tPA and other factors as measures of the effectiveness of care of stroke patients.

Indeed, STPH has significantly increased its use of tPA in its emergency department over the past few years, says Louise Dill, STPH nursing department head for inpatient rehab. The department’s use of clot-busting drugs, whose timely administration can save lives and brain cells, is 18 percent higher than the U.S. average, notes Dill, explaining that the speed of effective intervention is crucial to preserving brain function in stroke patients.

Stroke patients recovering in STPH’s inpatient rehab unit also fare better than patients elsewhere, with post-stroke gains in function higher than both state and national rates.

Other elements of STPH stroke care include the hospital’s participation in a regional network that gives emergency-department staff round-the-clock access to vascular neurologists and community outreach that includes free blood-pressure screenings at public events.

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**Shingles Virus and its Spread**

By Dr. Katie Tarantino, St. Tammany Physicians Network

Herpes zoster, more commonly known as shingles, is a disease that mostly affects adults over the age of 60. It occurs in approximately one million people in the United States annually. Shingles is a painful vesicular rash that is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox, the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), and results from the reactivation of VZV. Antiviral medications, such as acyclovir and valacyclovir, are used to treat shingles and help lessen the symptoms and course of the disease. The emergence of the zoster vaccine in recent years has helped decrease the incidence of shingles.

The main risk factor for shingles is age because there is a decrease in immunity against VZV as we get older. Other risk factors are any conditions that lead to a compromise in the immune system, such as cancer and chronic kidney or lung disease. Transmission of the virus only occurs while the vesicular rash is present and mainly occurs from direct contact with the rash. Once the vesicles have crusted over and start to heal, it is no longer contagious. People who have never had chicken pox are at risk of developing chicken pox if they are exposed.

As mentioned above, shingles is characterized by a unilateral vesicular rash that occurs in one dermatome, or area of the body, usually around the trunk. It can be extremely painful because the virus lives in and attacks the nerves in our body. The vesicles will begin to crust and heal in 7-10 days, but the pain can precede the rash by days or weeks and last up to 2-3 months. It is usually a self-limited disease and rarely causes complications.

The goals of treatment of shingles are reducing symptoms and shortening the course of the disease. Antiviral medications, such as acyclovir and valacyclovir, are recommended for herpes zoster and are best effective when started within 3 days of the onset of symptoms. Other treatments are aimed at helping the pain associated with shingles. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, can help mild to moderate pain. Gabapentin and opioids are generally reserved for more severe pain. The best treatment for shingles is preventing the disease.

Individuals with shingles should take precautions and keep the rash covered and wash their hands frequently to lessen the chance of transmitting the virus to others. The shingles vaccine was approved in 2006 and is recommended for all individuals age 60 or older, regardless of whether they have had shingles in the past.
Louisiana roadways can be treacherous for young drivers. In the first 11 months of 2012, there were 41 fatal crashes involving Louisiana drivers ages 15 to 17 and 4,031 injury crashes when drivers in that age group were at the wheel, according to state data.

Dangers emerge from texting to drinking to ignoring seatbelt laws and overloading cars with rambunctious friends put teens at higher risk in Louisiana, where car accidents are the biggest cause of accidental death.

“Motor vehicle crashes are without a doubt the biggest source of danger out there for teenagers,” says Trooper Nicholas Manule of the Louisiana State Police.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital physicians and nurses partner with Northshore law enforcement experts to keep young drivers safe by helping them understand—and avoid—distractions that put them at risk. Sudden Impact, a daylong program for high school sophomores held at St. Tammany Parish Hospital, puts the deadly serious nature of distractions into terms that teens understand, explains Felipe Canas, RN, with the hospital’s intensive care unit.

In the first 11 months of 2012, there were 41 fatal crashes with the support of the victim’s family, students observe the deadly nature of collisions, and the hospital’s intensive care unit.

The most common planned gift is a bequest in your will. Other planned gifts include:

- A charitable gift annuity
- A charitable remainder trust
- A charitable lead trust
- An endowment fund

**What is Gift Planning?**

Gift planning is finding ways to make charitable gifts now or after your lifetime while enjoying financial benefits for yourself.

Planned gifts are sometimes referred to as “stop-and-think” gifts because they require some planning and, often, help from your professional advisors. Unlike cash donations, they are typically made from assets in your estate rather than disposable income, and come to fruition upon your death.

The Legacy of Caring Society

Planned gift donors are invited to join the elite ranks of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Legacy of Caring Society. Society members are individuals who, through their estate plans, have made an unconditional future commitment to the mission and purpose of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation. Their generous expressions clearly reflect a profound belief in the vital importance of our community hospital.

**Legacy of Caring members include:**

- Dr. and Mrs. Adrian B. Cairns Jr.
- Carolyn A. Chassee
- Louslila E. Dean
- Camille D. Dennis
- Roland J. Hymel, Jr.
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard F. Knight
- Mr. and Mrs. Gene W. Lafayette
- Mary Alice Laue

**Visit www.stthfoundation.org/giftplanning to learn more about each type of gift.**

After your family is taken care of, you can plan a charitable gift that may extend your legacy beyond your lifetime, protect your loved ones and reduce your taxes.

A misconception is that gift planning is only for the “wealthy.” The truth is, even people of modest means can make a difference through gift planning.

**A Premium on Prevention**

Wellness Increasingly Viewed as CORE Healthcare Role

Chronic conditions like diabetes account for a whopping 75 percent of U.S. healthcare spending, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Yet the massive financial and human toll of chronic illness is also prompting a fundamental shift concerning the role of healthcare. That shifting viewpoint puts a premium on wellness education and prevention as a way to help people stay healthy or better manage chronic disease.

At St. Tammany Parish Hospital, community outreach and wellness education are increasingly viewed as core aspects of healthcare delivery.

A number of factors are behind that changing view, according to Kerry Milton, RN RN MSHA, senior vice president and chief nursing officer at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. For starters, rising costs and improved understanding of the connection between lifestyle and chronic conditions are fanning the focus on prevention as a core element of healthcare.

“It’s becoming more mainstream to think of your health as your responsibility,” Milton says.

STPH is looking to increase wellness opportunities in the community and within its four walls on a variety of fronts. That includes an unprecedented effort to improve the health of its employees.

STPH in 2012 conducted its first-ever detailed assessment of the health of its 1,700 employees. Information collected through the assessment is now being used to design new wellness opportunities for STPH employees, including onsite classes on subjects like nutrition and stress management, explains Sharon Toups FACHE, senior vice president and chief operating officer at STPH.

The hospital also continues to enrich its connections to the Northshore community through wellness education. For example, it will partner with Christwood Retirement Community to offer wellness classes at Christwood’s new community center.

Christwood’s approach to healthy aging—based on a model that comprises social and emotional needs as well as physical wellbeing—views wellness as a multidimensional state that extends beyond treatment of acute illness.

“People are looking at ways to invest in themselves to stay healthy,” says Randy Beineld, Christwood’s wellness director.

The St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative represents another aspect of this emerging view of healthcare. As the initiative looks to harness the soothing power of the arts for the benefit of patients, staff and visitors alike, it will embody wellness and taking care of oneself as well. Music, art, landscaping and soothing architectural elements throughout the campuses reflect the Healing Arts philosophy.

More information on Healing Arts is available by contacting Charley Strickland of the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation at 985-898-4141 or cstrickland@stph.org.
STPH Calendar Highlights

As your community hospital, STPH hosts events, meetings and opportunities to improve and maintain physical and emotional well-being. A short sample of upcoming events is provided below, but please check stph.org and local newspapers for additional learning opportunities for individuals of all ages.

STPH Calendar Highlights

**Tai Chi: Healing in Motion**
Thursday, weekly; 9 am to 10 am
STPH Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
Meditation in motion based on martial arts movements guided by Erlinda R. Nye, yoga and Tai Chi instructor with extensive martial arts background. 985-875-2234

**Breast Cancer Survivor Support Group**
Tuesday, January 8; then first Tuesday of the month; 7 pm – 8:30 pm
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center at St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Talk with others in a supportive environment about breast cancer, managing feelings and learn positive coping strategies. 985-875-2234

**Meditation in motion based on martial arts movements guided by Erlinda R. Nye, yoga and Tai Chi instructor with extensive martial arts background. 985-875-2234**

**New Baby Support Group**
Thursdays; 11:15 am to 12 noon
STPH Parenting Center
Join other mothers and their little ones (birth to seven months old) for information and support. 985-898-4435

**Don’t Keep it a Secret**
January 22; 6 pm
STPH Conference Center
In an informative talk for women, discover important information about female sexual dysfunction with Covington gynecologist Dr. Jessica Rinaldo. 985-898-4083

**Infant and Child CPR**
January 26 and March 20; 9 am to 11:15 am
The Parenting Center
Learn what to do if your child chokes or stops breathing. 985-898-4435

**1,2,3,4 Parents**
Wednesdays, January 16, 23 & 30, 6 pm to 8 pm and Saturday, February 23, 9 am to 2 pm
The Parenting Center
This three week series will assist parents in learning techniques and strategies that will enhance their parenting skills. Learn positive discipline skills and the social/behavioral ages and stages as children progress through those first four years, as well as ways to prevent problem behaviors. 985-898-4435

**Boot Camp for New Dads**
January 19 and March 16; 9 am to noon
STPH Conference Center
Class for new dads on taking care of mom and baby after delivery. 985-898-4035

**Baby Chat for Siblings**
Saturday, January 19 and March 23; 10 am – noon
STPH Conference Center
Girls and boys welcome. Ages 3 and up. A parent is required to stay with the child. FREE. 985-898-4083

**Art of Breastfeeding**
January 21 and March 11; 7 pm to 9 pm
STPH Conference Center
Parents will learn how to establish a breastfeeding routine that will enable them to use their breastfeeding skills with confidence; facilitating a positive and successful breastfeeding experience. 985-898-4083

**Hitting the Green for STPH Pediatric Advancement**
Second Get Lucky! Golf Tournament April 12

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation will host its second annual golf tournament April 12 to benefit pediatric advancement at St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

Last year’s first ever Get Lucky! Golf Tournament—held on Friday, April 13—raised nearly $53,000 for pediatric advancement at STPH. This year’s four-person scramble at the Tchefuncta Country Club in Covington will again feature contests, prizes and the chance to win a new car from Honda of Covington.

“It was meant as a one-time event (in 2012) but was so popular and well attended that we decided to do it again,” said the foundation’s Nicole Suhre. “We received an outpouring of calls asking when registration would open for 2013. Our hope is to raise even more money and beat last year’s total.”

Information on participation and corporate sponsorship opportunities for the Get Lucky! Golf Tournament are available by contacting Suhre at 985-898-4171 or nsuhre@stph.org.