



NEWS

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Glades General Hospital Decreases Mortality Rates Caused By Ventilator Associated Pneumonia to Zero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Belle Glade, FL, March 24, 2008 – As hospital-acquired infections gain more attention in the media, Glades General Hospital (GGH), decreased Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP) rates to zero for all of 2007. VAP is the primary cause of death among hospital-acquired infections. Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP) is a lung infection acquired in a hospital that occurs in patients receiving mechanical ventilation and for whom the infection was not the reason for ventilation. According to the National Healthcare Safety Network Report for 2006 released June 2007 by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control, the national VAP average is 4.2%. GGH is well below the average, with a dramatic decrease of VAP rates from 6.99% in 2006 to 0% in 2007. The overall hospital-acquired infection rate at GGH dropped from 2.66% to 1.20% during the same period.

A ventilator is used when a patient can no longer: breathe on their own; breath fast or deep enough to maintain specific blood values that are conducive to life; or so ill that, to rest the organs, the hospital provides artificial breathing at levels to maintain or support life. Glades General is dedicated to obtaining newer, safer and more efficient technology, which played a role in the decreased VAP rate at GGH. In December 2005, GGH purchased five Respironics Esprit ventilators, which are used in conjunction with non invasive cardiac output monitors (NICO.) These monitors communicate with the ventilators and provide vital information to the therapist and physician to help reduce the time on the ventilator by accurately monitoring a patient's ability to breathe more on their own. The information that was previously only available from an invasive central line catheter inserted into the heart is now available without harm or trauma to the ventilated patient. The combination of utilizing innovative equipment such as the new ventilators and the use of bedside clinical monitoring requiring minimal technology helped Glades General to achieve the decreased VAP rate. Glades General is the only acute-care hospital in Palm Beach county with the non-evasive cardiac monitoring system.

According to Erin Etheridge, RN, BSN at Infection Control of GGH, “The staff’s dedication to safety protocols strongly contributed to VAP and overall infection rates. These statistics are proof of the continued commitment to infection prevention in our hospital,” said Ms. Etheridge. The rates

can be attributed to the institution of the “VAP bundle,” which is a set of interventions specifically for the prevention of VAP and is seen as the key to the hospital’s accomplishment. These interventions include: preventing blood pooling and clotting (usually the legs) in a patient that is immobile; preventing over-active acid production in the stomach; keeping the head of the patients bed at an angle of 30 degrees or more, decreasing the chance of aspiration and allowing more natural blood perfusion and gas diffusion of the lungs; and defining periods where sedation is turned off or reduced significantly to assess whether the patient can start being weaned off or taken off a ventilator. A hospital-wide effort contributed to the success of the interventions. By utilizing national guidelines and educating physicians and nurses, the number of patient ventilator days began decreasing.

In 2006, VAP prevention became a National Safety Goal established by the Joint Commission of Health. GGH’s commitment to educating the staff and placing protocols in place has provided patients the very best care. By decreasing VAP’s, Glades General has decreased mortality rates and costly length of stay in the ICU and the Hospital. In 2008 to date, GGH has maintained a 0% VAP rate.

Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP, the President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in Cambridge, Massachusetts commented that “The achievement at GGH of a VAP rate of 0% for the whole of 2007 is superb work. I cannot overstate how much it helps IHI, our mission, and hospitals all over the nation to have examples like this to draw on. GGH’s continuing leadership across the whole frontier of patient care quality and safety adds hope and confidence about what is possible for us all.”

About Glades General Hospital:

Glades General Hospital, Palm Beach County’s only public hospital, is a JCAHO accredited 73- bed acute-care facility located in the heart of a large agricultural belt on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee. Operated by the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, GGH is one of the largest employers in the Glades with just over 300 employees. The Health Care District is currently constructing a new regional hospital and medical campus that will open in 2010. Glades Healthcare Foundation is leading the \$73 million fund raising campaign for this state of the art facility that will feature all-private patient rooms. The new 70-bed hospital hopes to attract physicians and patients from all over Palm Beach County with services including: a Trauma Hawk air landing pad; a 24-hour physician staffed emergency room; obstetrics with advanced diagnostic testing; general surgery; social services; radiology and nuclear medicine.