



Emergency Room Patients on the “Fast Track” at United Medical Center

WASHINGTON, DC (September 16, 2008) – In the underserved DC communities of Ward 7 and 8, an emergency room (ER) will not only serve as a treatment center for acute trauma and illness, but will also see a major percentage of non-emergency patients relying on the ER for their routine medical care. To continue to provide the utmost care to all those in need, United Medical Center (UMC) recently introduced the “Fast Track” program to their emergency room to reduce patient wait times and to streamline patient care.

Dr. Jean M. Williams, Medical Director of the Emergency Department, led the development of this new program after experiencing the inefficiency of the prior system firsthand. “Before our current “Fast Track” program was instituted, patients with minor injuries or ailments would wait for hours to see a doctor, especially when large numbers of traumas were brought to the hospital by ambulances. I began to see how simple it would be to get the non-emergency patients diagnosed and treated without forcing them to wait until our more seriously ill or injured patients were treated.”

At UMC, all patients presenting to the ER for emergency care go through triage where registered nurses utilize the Emergency Severity Index to determine the gravity of the ailment or illness. Those who are classified as non-emergency are escorted to the “Fast Track” program, where trained physician’s assistants see patients in a timely fashion. The physician’s assistants, who are medically-certified and licensed to practice medicine within prescribed parameters, can diagnose the patient’s medical condition and prescribe medication or further outpatient treatment. The average time of diagnosis and treatment is about 90 minutes, and as staff becomes more familiar with the “Fast Track” program, the average time will drop to about 60 minutes.

“Our goal is to provide rapid, effective and quality care to the community we service, and the ‘Fast Track’ program is helping us achieve this. We’ve been able to increase the number of patients treated each day, and we are now able to offer our non-acute patients the education and information to prevent the ailments or illnesses that are driving them into the hospital,” says Dr. Williams. “At the end of the day, we’re doing our job better, which helps us serve this community better.”

About United Medical Center

United Medical Center has provided medical services to residents of the Washington metropolitan area since 1965. Under the leadership of Specialty Hospitals of America, LLC, United Medical Center is committed to its evolution into a full-service, state-of-the-art facility where physicians and staff provide expertise in medical and surgical specialties with the combined results of improved patient care and a sustainable business model.