



## Condition "H"

### Partners in Care

For Patients or Families to Activate  
the Rapid Response Team

*A Shands HealthCare  
Patient Safety Initiative*

## Shands HealthCare Condition "H" Rapid Response Team Program Fact Sheet

Shands HealthCare is committed to patient safety through preventing harm and reducing medical errors throughout our healthcare system.

Each Shands hospital has a designated Patient Safety Officer who oversees patient safety initiatives under the direction of the corporate Patient Safety Officer.

Shands has been committed to supporting **The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals** since their inception in 2002. All Shands facilities have processes in place to promote and monitor compliance with safe practices.

In July 2008, The Joint Commission mandated that every accredited hospital have a formal, patient/visitor-initiated Rapid Response Team in place by Jan. 1, 2009.

- In July 2007, Shands HealthCare had already piloted this type of RRT program at Shands Jacksonville, encouraging partnership with inpatients, their families and visitors and empowering them to activate the hospital RRT.
- In July 2008, the successful program was formally expanded throughout all Shands HealthCare's eight hospitals. Each hospital now has a structured Condition "H" program in place through which hospitalized patients and their family members and visitors can access the RRT if they notice a sudden change in a patient's condition.

## Shands HealthCare Condition “H” Program Summary

Changes in a hospitalized patient’s condition can occur rapidly – family and visitors at the bedside may be the first to detect early warning signs of a serious problem. Each Shands hospital has a phone number with which patients and visitors can summon the hospital’s Rapid Response Team to speed our urgent assessment and treatment process.

A Rapid Response Team consists of nurses, respiratory therapists and/or doctors who race to respond when a patient’s condition deteriorates to an urgent, potentially life-threatening situation.

They assess the patient’s condition as quickly as possible, stabilize their condition to reduce harm and help prevent a crisis. They may suggest lab tests, X-rays, medication or moving a patient to an intensive care unit.

**Warning signs** that someone is experiencing an emergency situation include:

- sudden, noticeable change in overall condition
- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- uncontrolled bleeding
- sudden, excessive perspiration (sweating)
- sudden change in vision
- severe shakiness or seizures
- sudden confusion or change in behavior
- sudden or extreme pain
- a change in level of consciousness (difficult to wake up)
- your instinct that “something is different”

Each hospital’s RRT phone number is promoted in brochures given to every inpatient and through hospital signage. The brochure includes the above list of warning signs, the hospital’s RRT phone number and instructions on what to say when making a call to the RRT dispatch operator.

# UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA PHYSICIANS

## **University of Florida Physicians Condition “H” Rapid Response Team Program**

In January 2009, UF Physicians – the UF College of Medicine’s Gainesville-based faculty practice – launched an adapted Condition H pilot program in the Pediatric Specialties and the Neurology outpatient clinics located at the Shands Medical Plaza. This is one of the first programs of this type in the U.S. in an outpatient physician practice.

- The UF Physicians Condition “H” Program supports UFP’s ongoing patient-safety initiatives to promote compliance and safe practices.
- The outpatient-based rapid response program was developed in part as a result of initiatives that resulted from the tragic death of Sebastian Ferrero in fall 2007.

### **UF PHYSICIANS Condition H Program Summary**

- Signage in each exam room states “If you or a family member needs immediate medical assistance while in the exam room, please open the exam room door and let any staff member or physician know. Just say, ‘I need help.’ If there is an immediate medical emergency and you are not getting the help you need, please call (xxx)xxx-xxxx and help will be summoned.”
- Initial calls are received by the UFP Director of Quality and Safety who immediately contacts an on-site clinic nurse to respond to the situation. The response includes clinic physicians and other support staff, as needed.
- On-site staff will assess the patient’s condition as quickly as possible and report back to the UFP Director of Quality and Safety who can determine if additional resources are required.
- All calls received will be reviewed by the UFP Quality and Safety Committee.