

Hospital Name:

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center

Address:

1900 South Avenue
La Crosse, WI 54601

Contact:

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Emergency Services
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2006 ED Volume: 30,092
Growth from 2005: -0.7%
Total Staffed Hospital Beds: 258
Acute ED Beds: 18
Fast Track: no
Clinical Decision Unit: no

Problem to be Resolved:

Desire to decrease time-to-treatment of heart attack patients in the ED

Key Words:

- Heart attack
- Cardiac Catheterization
- EMS

Lessons Learned:

Because symptoms of a heart attack are usually easy to identify, Gundersen Lutheran is confident that paramedics can accurately decide whether or not to activate the Cardiac Catheterization Team.

Reason for Change:

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center is recognized as a national leader in treatment for heart attacks. Despite having many best practices already in place, the hospital continued to look for new ways to improve care and decrease treatment delays for heart attack patients.

Implementation:

According to the new Cardiac Alert protocol, when paramedics from Tri-State Ambulance (a fully-owned subsidiary of Gundersen Lutheran) identify specific heart attack symptoms in a patient, they send a signal to Gundersen Lutheran to activate the Cardiac Care Team. The Cardiac Care Team can then prepare for the patient's treatment before he or she even arrives at the hospital.

Once the patient arrives, rather than performing a series of tests and procedures in the ED prior to activating the cardiac catheterization lab, the patient is brought directly to the cardiac catheterization lab following a brief evaluation.

The Cardiac Alert protocol compliments Gundersen Lutheran's Priority One Heart Attack Program, which speeds the time-to-treatment for heart attack patients transferred to Gundersen Lutheran from other hospitals.

Results/Impact:

The Cardiac Alert protocol is still too new to know what the impact will be; however the hospital estimates that by bringing patients directly to the cardiac catheterization lab, rather than stopping in the ED, the patients may receive care 30 or 40 minutes earlier.