

# Rapid-Response Teams Decrease Code Blues

Any one of a number of subtle signs may be the first clue of a patient's deteriorating status. A patient may have an unexpected shift in respiratory status, heart rate or blood pressure. Or, nurses may be concerned that the patient "doesn't look

right." That's when hospital staff at Lakeland Regional Medical Center call the SWAT Team.

The SWAT Team is a rapid response team composed of specially trained health professionals who can act

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immediately to meet the needs of patients in critical situations.

“The responders include critical care registered nurses, respiratory therapists and, if necessary, an intensivist,” explains Jennie Stocks, RN, MS, manager of nursing support services. “They evaluate the patient using physician-approved algorithms and work with the nurse to turn around the patient’s condition. The SWAT Team helps prevent code blues and improves patient outcomes.”

“The intensivist team eagerly supports the SWAT service. We believe this program will significantly help the overall care for our hospitalized patients. It is an organized method to deal with urgent problems,” states **Robert Allen, MD**, intensivist.

Failure to rescue in hospitals usually occurs due to a failure in planning or communication. Rapid response teams, such as Lakeland’s SWAT Team, provide an established system of communication and support for those in the front lines of patient care.



*Robert Allen, MD,  
intensivist*

*At Lakeland, the SWAT Team can be activated by any hospital health professional. They work with the primary care nurses to review the case and recommend treatment changes.*

When the team finishes an evaluation, the patient’s physician is notified, and if necessary, other specialists may be called in to further care for the patient. However, the SWAT members remain involved in the patient’s care until the crisis is resolved. Rapid response teams are proven to prevent avoidable deaths and improve patient care, according to the Institute for Health Improvements.

*“The SWAT service is an organized method to deal with urgent problems,” states Robert Allen, MD, intensivist. “It’s an extra measure of support for our patients and our staff. Patients benefit because their deterioration is prevented; our staff have another avenue for clinical assessment.”*

**Physicians who would like more information on the rapid response teams at Lakeland can contact Jennie Stocks at 269-983-8242.**