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SoutheastHEALTH Adds Virtual Nursing to Care Resources

JANUARY 07TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

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SoutheastHEALTH announced today the launch of a new virtual nursing platform that will provide the hospital with increased nursing coverage, improved efficiency and further enhance high quality patient care.

SoutheastHEALTH identified a need to create new and innovative models of care to meet the growing demands of patients and nurses, along with an understanding that new technologies bring about novel and flexible ways of working. Southeast virtual nursing operationalizes technology, supports clinical decision-making processes, elevates the continuity of care, heightens patient safety and provides a work environment conducive for keeping technically competent and highly educated nurses engaged at the bedside.

Roles of the virtual nurse in this advanced approach to patient care include admission and discharge coordination, enriched patient education, medication reconciliation and more, freeing up the in-house nursing staff to spend more time at the bedside administering direct care and support so critical to the patient experience. Southeast Hospital is licensed for 244 beds; 112 beds are equipped with virtual nursing capabilities. Patients will continue to have a dedicated bedside nurse who provides all the hands-on care that is needed to continue the road to recovery, including medical assessments, medication administration and treatments.

SoutheastHEALTH Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer Gina Leath, RN, MSN, NE-BC, CCRN-K, said, “Healthcare teams across the nation are struggling with nursing shortages and the many challenges that creates, such as costly traveling nurse positions. At the same time, we must meet stringent clinical outcomes and quality measures to ensure quality patient outcomes and reimbursements. With this program, we will eliminate fragmentation, increase collaboration and easily adjust nursing staffing based on patient census.”

Leath said virtual nurse technology is easy for both patients and families to use. “When the virtual nurse call button is selected, a virtual nurse will appear. A TV monitor displays the live nurse, and a camera located within the patient room will also turn on, allowing the virtual nurse to see the patient.” She emphasized the importance of patient privacy, adding that the virtual nurse will always ask permission before turning on the camera. The use of remote technology for nursing services is not new. Statistics show that more than 70 percent of healthcare providers currently use some form of virtual care, a rise from 54 percent five years ago. SoutheastHEALTH has offered telemedicine visits for many of its outpatient clinics for years. However, the new virtual nursing program with real-time patient care is a game-changer for Southeast patients and staff.

About SoutheastHEALTH

At SoutheastHEALTH, the region's premier healthcare system in southeast Missouri, our patients receive excellent care of the highest clinical quality, close to home. Within our network are more than 50 care locations in 13 communities, including hospitals, primary and specialty care clinics representing over 30 clinical specialties and extending care for patients in a four-state area. Learn more at SEhealth.org.

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