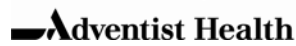


# *Ukiah Valley Medical Center*



Dec. 4, 2007

## ***Local Health***

By Terry Burns, UVMC President/CEO

By way of introduction, I'm Terry Burns, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ukiah Valley Medical Center (UVMC). I'll be a contributing columnist once a month to share the challenges and triumphs of local health care. This month, I'm going to explain what a hospitalist program is, and why we're so proud of ours.

Hospitalist programs represent a major shift in the way people receive care in hospitals. Traditionally, a person's primary doctor cared for him whether he was in the doctor's office or in the hospital. This practice is on the decline. Many doctors now hand over the care of their hospitalized patients to a hospital specialist, a "hospitalist."

A hospitalist is a physician, usually an internist or family practitioner, who specializes in hospital-level care and dedicates his or her time to hospitalized patients. These doctors spend their entire day or night in the hospital working directly with their patients and the team caring for them. During the past several years, hospitalist programs have swept the nation because they are good for patients, doctors and hospitals.

Hospital (inpatient) and office-based (outpatient) care are different, and doctors appreciate the opportunity to focus on what they do best. Of course, there are some who enjoy both, and they continue to practice in and out of the hospital.

Patients receive the benefit of a specialist in the hospital who provides excellent care. Upon admission to the hospital, a patient's primary physician shares relevant medical history with the hospitalist, so the patient's outpatient care is continued. When the patient is released from the hospital, the hospitalist transfers the patient's care back to his original physician, again sharing pertinent medical information to maintain consistent care.

Hospitals have the benefit of having a physician on-site dedicated to hospitalized patients, which means timely care for patients and education for nurses and other clinical staff. Hospitalist programs are a triple-win.

UMVC began its hospitalist program in December 2006 with a physician group from the Bay Area, but has recently changed to a local group to take advantage of the excellent relationships that exist between this group and community physicians. Pacific Redwood Medical Services will provide hospitalist services beginning in January 2008. They are the same group who has been providing excellent emergency services through the UVMC Emergency Room for more than 25 years. They have proven both their quality and their commitment to the hospital and the community, and we're proud to partner with them.

Going forward, I would like to write about topics you're interested in, so please share your thoughts with me. I can be reached at 707.463.7360.