At HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin, our patients come first. It is our mission to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through our high quality Franciscan healthcare ministry. We consider it an honor and privilege that patients and families trust us with their care and the care of their loved ones. As a result, we deliver on that trust by placing our patients at the center of all that we do. We seek to be a top ranked performer in quality and safety and are constantly asking ourselves, “What can we do to ensure the best possible experience for our patients?” For our diagnostic imaging department, the opportunity to apply for an AHRA and Canon Medical Systems USA, Inc. Putting Patients First grant helped answer that question.

HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center is a 158 bed hospital serving northeastern Wisconsin and upper Michigan, which is a service territory of approximately 940,000 individuals. We are part of the Hospital Sisters Health System (a 14 hospital system headquartered in Springfield, Illinois). The services we provide include cancer care, cardiac care, diagnostic imaging, digestive health care, emergency care, orthopedic care, palliative care, surgery, therapy, and women’s health care.

Each year, more than 21,000 procedures take place in our diagnostic imaging department. The volume of procedures means there are plenty of opportunities for patient falls and staff injuries, with many occurring during patient transfer. In one situation, a patient fell during an imaging procedure and hurt her wrist. In another instance, one of our technologists suffered an injury while lifting a patient, causing her to miss three months of work.

In late 2016, we applied for an AHRA and Canon Medical Systems USA, Inc. Putting Patients First grant to support the installation of a patient lift in our fluoroscopy room. We envisioned that this lift would standardize how patients are moved and therefore improve patient safety and comfort. It would also improve efficiencies by limiting injuries to staff and preventing a loss in productivity due to medical leave. Our fluoroscopy room presented special challenges with regards to patient safety. Unlike other modalities, the fluoroscopy table cannot be moved up and down, and it is wider than other procedure tables. Our technologists cannot reach across the fluoroscopy table, which means that they often needed to climb on the equipment, pull the patient across, and then climb down when completed. This is far from a best practice. It is awkward and uncomfortable for patients and staff, and it may endanger the safety of both.

The past several years have been challenging for healthcare organizations. While patient safety is at the core of our mission, the reality is that the equipment needs of our hospital have regularly exceeded what our capital budget could support. As a result, a patient lift in our fluoroscopy room had not yet been included in the budget, and we needed to look for other funding opportunities. We were thrilled when we received word that we had been awarded a Putting Patients First grant.

Using grant funds, in May 2017 we installed a permanent ceiling lift in our fluoroscopy room. Since that time, our technologists have used the lift for all fluoroscopy procedures (including joint injections, lumbar punctures, myelograms, and GI studies) where patients need to be transferred to the table from wheelchairs or stretchers. The lift has also had a significant impact on our ability to transfer patients in other modalities such as MRI, CT, and nuclear medicine. Now patients with limited mobility can easily be moved from wheelchairs onto stretchers, and then be transferred to the rooms where their procedures are taking place.

Since the installation of the lift, there have been no injuries to patients or staff in our fluoroscopy room! Our technologists have shared that the lift is easier on their bodies (especially their backs) than manual transfers and they are better able to keep patients safe and comfortable. We have also seen an increase in efficiency as it now takes less time to transfer patients and we have not had to deal with any unexpected staff medical leave. The
technologists who have used the lift all recommend it over manual transfer. One was so impressed with how the lift has impacted her that she recommended to other departments that they look into the possibility of acquiring their own lift. As we continue to move forward, leadership in our diagnostic imaging department will be sharing the success of our patient lift with the other diagnostic imaging departments in our hospital system. The impact of this patient lift has exceeded our expectations and we are incredibly grateful to AHRA and Canon for making it a reality.

Quote:

I cannot thank AHRA and Canon enough for helping us put our patients first. I use our new lift whenever I can and recommend that my colleagues do the same. Not only has it saved my back, I truly believe that it provides a safer environment for our patients.

Amber Dekeyser, Radiologic Technologist, HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center

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