

1. What is hospital medicine?

Hospital medicine is a relatively new and rapidly expanding way of providing medical care specifically for hospitalized patients. Hospital medicine programs use providers called “hospitalists” who specialize in providing inpatient care. A hospitalist oversees a patient’s care from admission, through diagnosis, treatment and discharge from the hospital.

2. What is a hospitalist?

Hospitalists are medical doctors (MDs) and advanced practice nurse practitioners (APNPs) with specialized training in acute medicine to exclusively care for hospital inpatients in the medical, surgical, intensive care, swing bed and observation programs. Our hospitalists coordinate multidisciplinary teams of hospital professionals to provide exceptional care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our hospitalists’ sole focus is to care for patients while they are in the hospital, so you receive the personalized, around the clock care you need to recover and return home.

3. How does hospital medicine change the way RCMH provides care?

Previously, a primary care physician would admit and care for their patients in the hospital when needed. Primary care providers who have chosen the hospital medicine program are relieved of this responsibility. The hospitalist admits and oversees all patients in the hospital. When patients complete their inpatient hospital stay, they return to their primary care physician for follow up and ongoing care.

4. How do patients benefit from the Hospital Medicine Program?

Our hospitalist program helps make sure patients get the attention needed in the hospital, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. RCMH hospitalists provide personalized care and improve the continuity of care for patients. Patients benefit by a shorter wait time to be admitted from the Emergency Department, shorter hospital stays as a result of tight coordination of care and timely tests, results and consultations and quicker discharge from the hospital once it is deemed that a patient is ready to return home.

By focusing solely on the care of hospitalized patients, a hospitalist can gain insight to the unique aspects of a patient’s needs during their hospital stay. Hospitalists typically spend most of their work day in the hospital and, thus, can be more readily available to the patient than a provider who spends much of the day outside the hospital in an office or clinic setting.

5. Are medical doctors available in-house?

Yes. Our Emergency Department is staffed by medical doctors around the clock. These physicians respond for consult at the request of the hospitalist if there is a significant change in a patient’s medical condition. Our hospitalists also have another collaborating physician who is available for consultation via telephone.

6. How is an Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioner (APNP) different than other nurses?

An advanced practice nurse practitioner (APNP) has completed a doctorate or master’s degree in nursing with coursework in specific fields of acute medicine beyond the typical registered nurse. APNP hospitalists practice independently *without* requiring direct physician oversight. An APNP’s clinical expertise includes diagnosing and treating health conditions with an added emphasis on disease prevention and health management. APNPs order and interpret diagnostic tests, make diagnoses and initiate and manage treatment plans including writing orders for services and prescriptions.

7. Do hospitalists have access to my records?

Our hospitalists have access to Riverside Clinic, Marshfield Clinic and past hospital stay records. Any additional records that are needed are sought, regardless of clinic or hospital location.

8. If a patient is being admitted, does their primary care provider know?

All patient information is available to their primary care provider throughout their inpatient stay. When discharged from the hospital, all discharge instructions are shared and the patient's follow-up care occurs with their primary care provider.

9. Why doesn't my own doctor from the clinic see me?

Primary care providers are not prevented from seeing their patients. However, most of our primary care providers choose to use the Hospital Medicine Program to care for their patients while in the hospital. Our hospitalist shares all your hospital stay information with your primary care provider, who resumes your care again after discharge.

10. If I am not being seen by a doctor, is my patient stay covered by insurance?

Yes. Your hospital stay is covered in the same manner as though you were seen by your regular primary care provider.