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YourCare

A PUBLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY FROM CROUSE HOSPITAL

Staying Alive

Cardiac Care Improvements Save Time, Lives



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Crouse Receives Top National Award for Workplace Excellence

Crouse Hospital has received the 2008 Optimas Award for General Excellence, the top award out of ten presented annually by *Workforce Management* magazine, the leading human resources industry publication in the U.S.

To receive the award, a company must meet at least six out of nine standards: innovation, financial impact, managing change, competitive advantage, partnership, ethics, global outlook, service and vision.



Past Optimas General Excellence award winners include Intel, Google, General Motors, AT&T, McDonalds and Texas Instruments. Other health systems and major companies, such as Disney, have won Optimas awards, but Crouse is the first hospital in the award's 18-year history to receive the General Excellence award.

"Optimas winners are distinguished as having used creative, bold and unique approaches toward solving specific business challenges," states *Workforce Management* editor John Hollon. "Crouse is doing some interesting things and we think it's a pretty big deal."

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—JOHN HOLLON, EDITOR,
WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Crouse's recognition was based on its workforce culture transformation. Over the last several years, the hospital has regained lost market share, significantly increased employee and physician satisfaction and dramatically improved its financial health.

"We realized early on that the key to our success was having employees who were engaged, passionate and committed to our mission, vision and values," states hospital President and CEO Paul Kronenberg, MD.

OUR MISSION

To provide the best in patient care and to promote community health.



IMPROVING CARDIAC CARE

Cardiac Care Improvements

Sixty-nine-year-old Hamilton Fish looked forward to a summer evening with his wife, Fran. Both were eager to hit the dance floor at a fundraiser at Skaneateles Country Club, but neither imagined that Fish would, in fact, be *lying* on the floor before the night was over.

"My wife and I danced three fast songs in a row," he said of that Friday night last July. "We sat out the next one. Suddenly, I didn't feel quite right, so we decided to head home."

Feeling worse, Fish waited while his wife retrieved their car. When she returned, he was on the ground surrounded by people. "I vaguely remember handing someone my cell phone to call 911," he said. "The pain was a crushing pressure — something I just knew was a heart attack."

Despite working out regularly, maintaining good blood pressure and cholesterol levels and recently passing a treadmill stress test that yielded "the same results as a 28-year-old," the retired nuclear engineer was, indeed, having a heart attack. He needed help — and every minute counted.

"The pain was a crushing pressure — something I just knew was a heart attack."

—HAMILTON FISH

Skaneateles Ambulance Volunteer Emergency Services (SAVES) arrived within minutes. Fish doesn't remember all that happened during his 48-minute ride to Crouse Hospital. He does recall, though, that a team was ready for him when he arrived. "Dr. (Joseph) Battaglia and Dr. (Anthony) Navone were there waiting," says Fish. "The paramedic knew enough to tell them ahead of time that this was the real thing. They were all set up. I was hustled through the Emergency Department (ED) with only a couple of questions and right through to the cardiac cath lab."

"Code Stemi"

The information SAVES provided on Fish's condition activated a "code stemi," part of an initiative begun at Crouse in 2008 to improve "door to balloon" (D2B) time. D2B is defined as the time it takes from when a heart attack patient comes through the ED doors to when the blockage is cleared in the heart artery using a balloon stent. The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association both recommend a performance standard of less than 90 minutes for D2B. "But we want to do even better than that," says Battaglia, medical director for Cardiac Care Services.

"Time is muscle," Battaglia explains. "Reducing door-to-balloon time keeps a small heart attack from becoming a big heart attack — one that could ultimately result in heart failure. If there's no blood flow, cells start to die. The longer the artery stays closed, the more damage there is. After four to six hours — including the time spent before deciding to call for help — long-term damage to the heart usually results. Decreasing the time it takes to get a patient into the cardiac cath lab increases the heart muscle we're able to save."



Save Time, Lives

To ensure success, Crouse assembled a multidisciplinary team in early 2008 comprised of key members from the ED, cardiac catheterization lab and the hospital's Quality Improvement and Educational Services departments. Team members rotate on call, and responding staff must live within 20 minutes of the hospital.

Activation starts with data from the responding Emergency Medical Service (EMS), especially those equipped with a 12-lead EKG, which allows direct transmission to a fax machine in Crouse's ED. While en route, ED medical personnel determine if a patient is truly having a heart attack. If so, the response team is activated and typically meets the ambulance upon arrival — often saving as much as 30 minutes.

Good, but not good enough

Before the initiative, Crouse recorded an average D2B time of less than 90 minutes in 75 percent of all patients. "Good, but not good enough," according to Battaglia. February through August 2008, D2B time of less than 90 minutes has improved to include 95 percent of all patients, with an average of 56 minutes charted between May and August of this year. Crouse's best D2B time recorded to date is 23 minutes, but the team has tried to maintain a more realistic goal of under 60 minutes.

A Syracuse *Post-Standard* article earlier this year noted that Crouse Hospital exceeded all Upstate New York hospitals by 30 percent in D2B time and all U.S. hospitals by 32 percent — putting Crouse in the top 10 percent of hospitals nationwide for the period reported.*

To further this initiative, Crouse analyzes each heart attack patient admission. "Follow-up is critical to keeping the staff focused on the task at hand," explains Battaglia. "Everyone involved wants to know 'how quick were we?', so we make certain to go to the ED to tell them what the outcome was. We track the stats on every D2B patient and look at where time could have been reduced or what else we can do in the future to continue to improve."

Back on the dance floor

Fish's D2B time was 54 minutes — far better than the 90-minute nationally accepted standard and just below Crouse's more ambitious goal of 60 minutes. "I remember feeling such relief as soon as the stent went in," said Fish. "It was immediate."

Just a few days later, Fish was home recovering. He was tired but alive, and further tests indicated virtually no signs of permanent heart damage. Doctors assured him that his healthy lifestyle helped him recover, and Fish credits his wife for keeping him on the straight and narrow, knowing all the men in his family had died before age 60. But Fish also knows that it was the commitment of Crouse's medical team that made sure he lived to dance another day.

And dance he did. Just months after his heart attack, Fish was well enough to attend his 45-year college reunion on Long Island. "We stuck to slow dancing this time," he said, "but it was great to get back out there again."

* July 2006-March 2007; Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website, hospitalcompare.hhs.gov

Excellence in Cardiac Care

Crouse Hospital is proud to be affiliated with the cardiac care experts at Cardiology PC. With more than 4,000 patients treated and diagnostic and interventional procedures performed annually, the experience and track record of our cardiac specialists is something you can take to heart. For a physician referral, call 315/472-2464.



Joseph Battaglia, MD



William Berkery, MD



Kwabena Boahene, MD



Ray Carlson, MD



Anil George, MD



Matthew Gorman, MD



James Longo, MD



Anthony Navone, MD

OUR RANGE OF CARDIAC SERVICES

- ▶ dedicated 40-bed cardiac care unit
- ▶ 67 telemetry monitored beds
- ▶ chest pain observation
- ▶ adult cardiac catheterization
- ▶ pediatric cardiac catheterization (the only program of its kind in the region)
- ▶ pacemakers and defibrillators
- ▶ cardiac intravascular ultrasound imaging
- ▶ EKG and cardiac ultrasound testing
- ▶ electrophysiology studies and heart rhythm management
- ▶ coronary balloon angioplasty and stenting
- ▶ rapid "door to balloon" care in emergency situations