

Hospital Implements Handheld Medication-Administering Device

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St. Mary's Hospital has taken yet another step toward patient safety with the implementation of CareMobile — a handheld scanning device designed to prevent medication errors.

"Patient safety is our top priority here at SMH," said Liz Schaeffer, director of Nursing Resources for St. Mary's Hospital. "CareMobile is our latest technology implementation that will enhance our patient care by providing safer administration of their medications."

Nurses on the second and third floors of the hospital began using the device on February 17. CareMobile, offered to the hospital by the Cerner Corporation, is a software solution used on a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). It is used for medication distribution, although it can be used for other functions such as documenting vital signs, intake and output. When a nurse administers medication, he or she will scan the barcode on his or her employee badge, scan the wristband of the patient and scan the barcode on the medication. This process links the nurse to the patient's chart and will provide alerts to tell the nurse if the medication dose, or route, such as pills or liquid, are correct.

CareMobile "provides nurses with a safe medication administration process that automatically checks the '5 Rights' — providing the right medication to the right patient at the right time through the right route with the right dose. The nurse already performs a visual check of the 'rights' of medication administration and the CareMobile technology verifies these efforts," Liz said. "It's a confirmation process to support nurses as they administer medications safely to our patients."

The addition of the device is just another way that the hospital is becoming a leader in efficient technology designed to put patient safety first. Last July, St. Mary's Hospital launched an innovative electronic medical records system from the Cerner Corporation, which is the leading supplier of health care information technology.

The electronic technology allows physicians and clinicians access to patient information immediately and from anywhere within the hospital or from physicians' offices. Lab or imaging test results can be seen moments after being entered. According to a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* survey of 63% of hospitals in the United States, only about 1.5% of the hospitals have a comprehensive electronic records system.

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