

HealthSmart

Quality health care within reach at Virtua Berlin Hospital

A crucial decision: Choosing the “right” emergency department

Before you find yourself faced with a medical emergency – it’s important to know which emergency department (ED) can provide the care you need.

“Be well informed about the healthcare services in the area where you live,” says Carol Magariello, RN, MSN, CEN, nursing director, Virtua Berlin. “It can mean the difference between a successful and unsuccessful outcome.”

Not all EDs are the same

During an emergency, time is of the essence. It is important that you know ahead of time which one can give you the broadest range of care. Here are the three questions you should ask to determine the best emergency department for you.

1 Is it a full-service emergency department?

In a full-service emergency department, virtually all of the services and specialties you could need are available for you onsite – greatly reducing your need to be transferred to another hospital.

2 Is the emergency department in a hospital?

Should a medical emergency require an admission into the hospital for surgery, you’ll want to already be at a hospital that provides that care.

3 Is the patient a part of the care team?

Incorporating the patient into the care team means keeping patients continually informed and involved in the decision-making process. It’s about doing what’s best for the patient, even if it means extra work on the care team. This approach not only improves outcomes in the hospital but also in the post-hospital recovery.

Carol Magariello, RN, helps treat patients in Virtua Berlin's full-service emergency department.

Why choose Virtua Berlin

Virtua Berlin is a medical-surgical hospital with a full-service emergency department and is widely recognized for its strong commitment to personalized medical care for all patients.

Virtua Berlin provides:

- Primary Stroke Center
- Fracture Center
- Wound Healing Center
- Health and Rehabilitation Center

Also, Virtua Berlin ranks among the highest of hospitals nationally for patient satisfaction.

The emergency department at Virtua Berlin offers care for patients of all ages and serves more than 20,000 patients each year. “Most importantly, the patient is always at the center of what we do,” says Magariello.



Virtua Berlin creates innovative volunteer opportunities

If you think back to the last time you were in an emergency department (ED), you probably recall a hectic, fast-paced environment. To make the experience more comfortable and supportive, Virtua Berlin goes beyond advanced medical care by offering a team dedicated to address the non-medical needs of patients and their families.

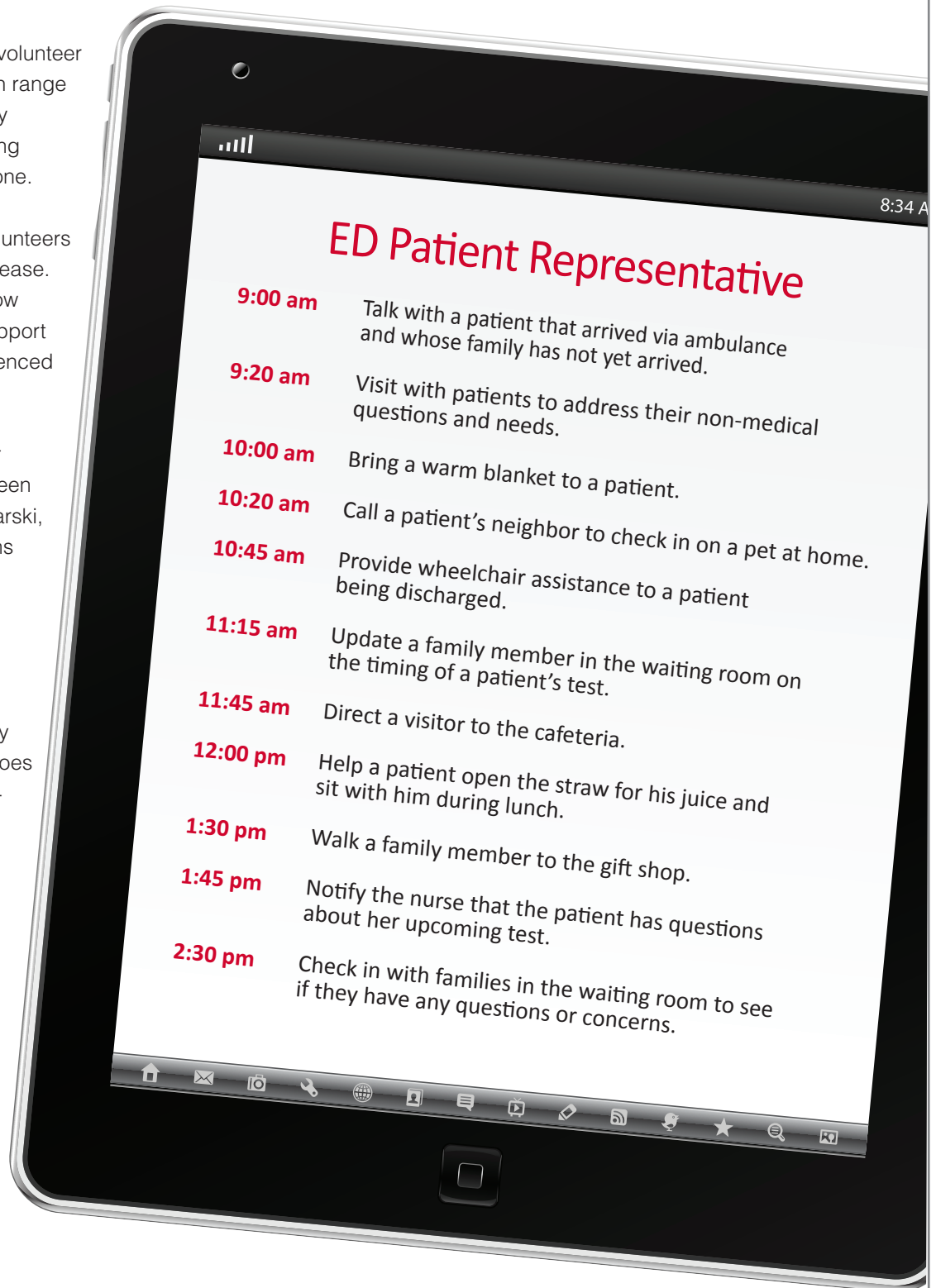
The responsibilities of the volunteer patient representatives can range from keeping waiting family members informed to talking to a patient so he is not alone.

These specially trained volunteers help ED patients to feel at ease. Many of the volunteers know the importance of such support because they have experienced it firsthand.

"Twenty-five percent of our volunteers have actually been patients," says Kathy Tontarski, manager of patient relations and volunteers.

"They come to work with a smile and without a paycheck, and they truly want to be here. The facility wouldn't run as well as it does if we didn't have the volunteers that we do."

In fact, Virtua Berlin has volunteers throughout the hospital, applying many of the same levels of support to inpatients as well as their families and friends who visit. Although no two days are the same in the hospital, the following is a typical day in the life of a volunteer ED patient representative.



A doctor who really understands your pain



For a person suffering from chronic pain, every waking and walking moment is a challenge. Simple, everyday movements like climbing steps, reaching for a dish or bending over to tie a shoe are a constant reminder of how limited life has become.

“Whether someone’s pain is from arthritis, a herniated disk or spinal stenosis, the net effect is the same: The quality of the person’s physical and psychological life suffers,” explains Virtua board-certified pain specialist, Kieran A. Slevin, MD.

“When patients first come to me, many express a sense of relief that there is finally a physician who does nothing but work with patients like them,” he adds.

For most patients, Dr. Slevin starts with the most conservative treatments. These include oral medication, physical therapy and, where appropriate, a specially fitted back or spine device that a patient can wear to alleviate discomfort. “After four-to-six weeks of using these methods, patients return for a consultation to see if their pain has lessened or, hopefully, even disappeared,” says Dr. Slevin.

If further treatment is needed, Dr. Slevin might recommend an epidural injection with pain-relieving medication or a steroid injection. Some simple injections can be performed in the office; others require local

anesthesia. “Sometimes, I include a weight-loss program to a person’s treatment so that the pain and strain caused by excess weight on the back, hips and knees is reduced,” says Dr. Slevin. For some patients, warm-water exercise or swimming at Virtua’s Centers for HealthFitness in Voorhees and Washington Township also provide relief.

For patients at the extreme end of the pain spectrum for whom more conservative treatment methods have not worked, Dr. Slevin offers advanced minimally invasive surgical techniques to stop the torment. These include minimally invasive lumbar decompression performed with a one-quarter-inch incision and spinal cord stimulation for severe nerve pain.

To start on the road to a pain-free life, call for an appointment at 1-888-VIRTUA-3.

Meet the Physician



Kieran A. Slevin, MD, is board certified in pain management and in anesthesiology. He graduated from medical school at University College Dublin in Ireland. He completed his residency and fellowship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where he was the director of acute pain services.

The face of Virtua Berlin

Name: Sharon Smith, RN, BSN, CEN

Hometown: Berlin Borough

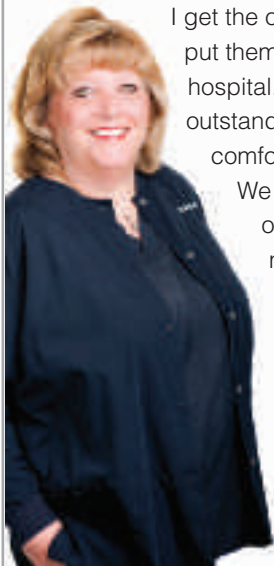
Years at Virtua: 25 years

Best thing about working at Virtua Berlin:

I enjoy working in the community that I live.

As a familiar face to many patients, I get the opportunity to further put them at ease while in the hospital. Virtua Berlin offers outstanding patient care in a comfortable atmosphere.

We also have the strength of being part of a multi-division network that enables us to connect patients to virtually any specialty service they could need.



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Overcoming the agony of arthritis. Ask the doctor.

While arthritis appears in many forms and degrees of severity, one thing is clear – you want relief from the pain and frustration. Join James Dwyer, DO, MBA, executive vice president for physician services at Virtua, to discuss the range of relief available in the full spectrum of arthritis conditions. Space is limited, so register today.

Join us for a complimentary dinner.

Date: **Tuesday, Sept. 27 or Thursday, October 6**

Time: **6 to 7:30 pm**

Place: Virtua Berlin Hospital
Community Room
100 Townsend Ave., Berlin, NJ

Cost: **FREE**

To register, call **1-888-VIRTUA-3**
(1-888-847-8823)

Dr. James Dwyer

