

Department Spotlight:

Information Services (aka IS)

Driving the Digital Age at South Nassau

Before 2002, Information Services, otherwise known as IS, was all about personal computers, computerized billing systems and mainframes, huge computer systems that serve as the hub of information technology at South Nassau. Today, with the rise of computerization of everything from audio-visual equipment to intravenous infusion pumps, the department is charged with not just managing technology but also information, explained John Mertz, chief information officer.

That information takes the form of radiology systems, such as PACS, which is a picture archiving and communications system, remote patient monitoring such as telemetry and any clinical ancillary system that is computer-based.

For instance, IS ensures that clinical systems such as the Innova™ 4100, an all-digital vascular and interventional imaging system, as well as a heart monitor hooked up to a patient during a cardiac catheterization, runs smoothly. Still other IS employees provide support for fetal monitoring devices and labor and delivery archiving systems. IS is also tied to the recently launched IntelIDOT® System, a wireless handheld device that enables nurses to perform safety checks before administering medication.

“Increasingly, we see an integration of medical monitoring and diagnostic and therapeutic devices with the hospital’s



The IS department at a recent observance of IS System Administrator Appreciation Day.

enterprise information technology network,” he said. “And in the future, this integration will increase exponentially.”

South Nassau’s IS department also provides technical support for EZ Access, a system that helps the medical staff retrieve their patient labs, sign charts and access medical images, EKGs and other vital clinical data with just one click.

The IS department even has a hand in ensuring that the hospital’s payroll system will cut checks on time.

And the list goes on. Kronos, software that monitors employee attendance and time; PrivacyShell, a software that enables some staff to log onto their work computer when they are not in the hospital; and the Patientkeeper®, software that allows physicians and other caregivers to review patient labs, access medical images and sign charts—all rely on the IS department to run properly.

Information Services is staffed by 23 full-time employees who work at the hospital and at 609 Merrick Rd.

At the Merrick Rd., offsite, 15 department employees work various shifts from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and handle everything from making sure that e-mail is functioning properly and the servers are running smoothly to diagnosing and installing computers at an offsite or the hospital.

One IS function most South Nassau staff members are familiar with is the (virtual) Help Desk. It’s virtual, Mr. Mertz explains,

because much of the support is provided by using remote access software. All IS employees are cross-trained to answer common computer questions, of which there are about 100 a day, from how to unlock a frozen computer to remedying a malfunctioning mouse.

The most common problem, he says, is not being able to recall a password. “Then we help them set up a new one,” he said.

Eight IS employees are based at the hospital and work various shifts to provide coverage most days, excluding weekend and holiday days. If a computer problem arises in the hospital after hours, IS has it covered and rotates four on-call employees who carry a laptop and can log on from anywhere.

IS employees assigned to the hospital are based within the data center and department of radiology. The newly renovated 1,660-square-foot data center, opposite radiology, contains two huge air-condi-

continued on page 12