

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS THE HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Your four-year-old son, Eric, is excitedly trying out his new bike. The bike was a birthday present and he is so thrilled! There you are watching him, oh so proud! He goes up and down the driveway. As he turns and waves to you yelling, "Watch me!" a car comes up the road. CRASH!! There's Eric on the street, helmet intact, bike at his side. But as you rush to his side you see his arm covered with blood. And, as you look closer you see something white protruding from the skin of his arm. Your neighbor, who has witnessed the scene, has her portable phone in hand and calls "911".

There you are trying desperately to control yourself and provide comfort to Eric. In what seems like an eternity (but in reality is only three minutes) the Emergency Medical Unit arrives. The EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) quickly surveys the scene and reassures you that Eric is okay. The EMT splints Eric's arm and collects relevant medical data from you. The EMTs partner alerts the Paramedic Team since Eric is bleeding profusely and is losing consciousness. The Paramedics arrive and establish an intravenous line to replenish the fluid Eric lost during the incident. You and Eric are then transported to the Emergency Room of the local hospital.

At the Emergency Room you are met by the Emergency Room Technician who evaluates the situation and guides Eric and you into an examination room. The Physician Assistant (PA) greets you and examines Eric and collects medical information from you. The PA orders various diagnostic tests. The Phlebotomist draws blood samples and sends them to the laboratory for analysis by the Medical Technologist or Clinical Laboratory Scientist. The Radiologic Technologist x-rays Eric's arm. An ultrasound exam is performed by a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer to ensure that his spleen was not ruptured from the trauma of the car hitting him. Next the Orthopedic Technician stabilizes Eric's arm in a portable splint. Since Eric was complaining of numbness in his fingers, a nerve conduction study was performed by an Electro-diagnostic Technologist.

Based upon the diagnostic and medical findings, it is determined that Eric needs surgery to correct his injuries. The Medical Assistant collects relevant insurance information data from you and establishes medical clearance. Eric is transferred to the operative waiting room where he is met by the Anesthesiologist Assistant who tells Eric and you what to expect and shows Eric, with a Teddy Bear, how he will go to sleep for surgery. Once asleep the Surgical Technician and the Surgical Assistant help the doctors fix Eric's injuries.

In the waiting room you are met by the Patient Advocate who reassures you about Eric's progress. After the surgery you are encouraged to visit Eric in the post-anesthesia recovery room. Here you both meet the Respiratory Therapist who provides Eric with a "blowing machine" for Eric to practice inflating his lungs.

Eric is then transferred to the Pediatric Wing of the hospital where Eric plays with the other children under the supervision of the Recreation Therapist. The Art Therapist assists Eric with dealing with the emotional trauma of the accident through the expression of his feelings while experiencing finger painting. The Music Therapist works with Eric to create his own song that describes what it's like to be a patient in the hospital. The Occupational Therapist instructs Eric with adapting his skills with tooth brushing. The Dental Hygienist checks Eric's mouth to determine if other dental care or referral to a dentist is necessary. While recuperating the Dietetic Technician instructs you in the clever ways of incorporating green vegetables into Eric's diet.

Two days later Eric is discharged. But the Health Care Team is still working. The Health Information Technician has collected data relevant to Eric's hospitalization and is in the process of submitting the information to your insurance company for reimbursement. The Social Worker has notified the Visiting Health Association to provide a follow-up home visit to you and Eric. The Physical Therapy Assistant will provide instruction for the home environment. And the Public Health Administrator from the Health Department will be evaluating your roadway to seek safer roadway conditions to help eliminate future accidents like the one that occurred to Eric.

These are but a few of the Allied Health Professionals who make a difference. These are the individuals who provide the care and expertise so that you and Eric receive the best possible health care!

Submitted by: Margaret Townsend Warren