Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014

Alarm Safety Intervention funded by the Center for Innovation and Research

LANSING, Mich. — MSU and Sparrow's Center for Innovation and Research has awarded $25,000 in project support to study ways to improve alarm safety, a health care priority across the nation.

The study will investigate alarm safety interventions in Sparrow’s Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (RNICU). As more monitoring equipment is used, there is an increase in alarms, which can result in alarm fatigue or desensitization—especially if the majority of alarms are false alarms or nuisance alarms.

“As technology continues to advance, we have more and more ways of monitoring our Patients. With that monitoring comes alarms, and unfortunately, not all alarms are clinically relevant or helpful in the care of our Patients,” said awardee Piper Probst, MSN, RN-BC, who serves as the Director of Nursing Practice, Research and Outcomes for Sparrow. “For example, we sometimes will get a false alarm because a Patient moves. Our goal is to decrease false alarms and nuisance alarms so most of the alarms our Nurses hear are clinically relevant and help us provide safer and better care.”

Throughout the country, alarm desensitization has been connected with delayed responses to alarms, failed responses to alarms, and in some instances the alarms were shut off. Such conditions compromise Patient safety, so The Joint Commission (TJC) has a new National Patient Safety Goal for 2014 to improve the safety of clinical alarm systems.

The interventions being tested in this study have been shown to improve alarm safety with adult monitoring equipment. The funds will be used to test these proven alarm safety interventions with neonatal monitoring equipment as there is less known about improving alarm safety in the neonatal care environment.

Probst is partnering with Shelia Cotten, PhD, a medical sociologist and Professor in the Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media at Michigan State University; Kathleen Marble, MSN, RNC-NIC, a RNICU Nurse expert and the Director of Women’s and Children’s Services at Sparrow; Sarah Collins, BSN, RNC-NIC, the Nurse Manager and Educator for the RNICU at Sparrow, and Jonathan Watt, an advanced Biomedical Technician for Sparrow. Additionally, Wenjiang Fu, PhD, Associate Professor of Biostatistics, is consulting on the project.

“The Center was created to focus on high-priority translation projects that can be rapidly developed and deployed for the benefit of our Patients,” said Interim Director of the Center, Barbara Given, PhD, R.N., FAAN, Michigan State University Distinguished Professor and Director of the PhD Program, College of Nursing. “We hope this project will document effective strategies to improve alarm safety for this neonatal environment.”

The Center for Innovation and Research, created as a major joint initiative between Sparrow and MSU, aims to seek new projects to continuously improve care and deliver Patient-centered, evidence-based best practice care to individuals who receive care at Sparrow.