



Harris County Hospital District

Media Release

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“Ask Your Nurse” Celebrates One Year of 24/7

Reducing unnecessary emergency center visits

Got a fever? Feel dizzy? Bleeding? In pain?

Should you go to the emergency center or the doctor’s office?

Locally, about 80 percent of 911 calls are non-emergencies, and about 60 percent of individuals coming into ECs could receive appropriate care in a primary care clinic.

To reduce unnecessary use of emergency centers, a collaboration of public and private supporters created ‘Ask Your Nurse,’ a free health advice telephone hotline available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In operation since 2002, it’s been one year since the program went 24/7.

In the past year, calls to ‘Ask Your Nurse’ or in Spanish ‘Pregunte a Su Enfermera’ at 713-633-2255 have prevented nearly 3,000 unnecessary emergency center visits to area hospitals.

Staffed with Harris County Hospital District nurses, callers are asked a series of questions and go through “triage” to see if their illness is a true emergency. After typing symptoms into a computer software program, nurses know the next course of action for the patient.

“We’re here to provide callers with assistance and direct them to the appropriate level of care, whether that is self care, next day appointments, urgent care or the emergency center,” said Titiana Brown, Nurse Coordinator for Ask Your Nurse.

Three major objectives include minimizing non-emergency room visits, improving access to care by connecting patients to healthcare providers and appointments, and providing healthcare teaching.

The Harris County Hospital District is the fourth largest metropolitan public healthcare system in the U.S. It comprises three hospitals—Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital and Quentin Mease Community Hospital—12 neighborhood health centers, a dental center, six school-based clinics, 13 satellite homeless shelter clinics and five mobile health units.

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