

## **Ventilator Associated Pneumonia Prevention**

The staff and physicians at Montrose Memorial Hospital have something to crow about! MMH has gone more than one year without a single case of Ventilator Associated Pneumonia. Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP) is a lung infection that can develop in patients who are dependent on ventilators to help them breathe. Nationally fifteen percent of patients on ventilators have been known to develop pneumonia as a result of the ventilator use and we haven't had one in an entire year!

Patients in the Intensive Care Unit are usually the sickest patients in the hospital and VAP increases their mortality or death rate. Patients who develop VAP can have mortality rates of 46% or more. In addition of increasing the likelihood of death, VAP increases both how long they stay in the hospital and the cost.

This achievement at MMH was attained through the teamwork of the nurses in Intensive Care Unit, the Respiratory Therapy Department and members of the Medical Staff. This team developed a protocol to care for patients on the ventilator based on the recommendations and research from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. A set of standards or bundle was created and instituted on every patient who is placed on a ventilator. The ventilator bundle has several key components which include; elevation of the head of the bed to 30-45 degrees, medications to prevent blood clots and ulcers, checking daily to determine if the patient is ready to come off the ventilator and oral or mouth care every six hours. These efforts have been shown to decrease the number of ventilator associated pneumonias.

Compliance with the established protocols is checked every day the patient is on the ventilator. A Ventilator Bundle checklist records that all the items are being done and the bundle is most effective when everything is done all the time.

The Ventilator Associated Pneumonia bundle was one of the changes recommended in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) 100,000 Lives Campaign which MMH voluntarily participated in. Launched in December 2004, the 100,000 Lives Campaign was the first ever national initiative that aimed to save a large and specified number of lives by a specified date, June 2006. The Colorado Trust gave all Colorado hospitals that joined the 100,000 Lives campaign and applied for a grant of \$35,000 to help defray the costs of developing and implementing the Ventilator Associated Pneumonia bundle as well as five other IHI projects that were recommended.

Ventilator patients at MMH can feel comfortable knowing that our team is doing all we can to prevent this serious complication and help you get well sooner and out of the hospital faster.