

RHRCC offers tips on healthcare

Do you think of your doctor as your partner in healthcare? Being involved and informed are the best ways to make sure you are receiving good healthcare, according to many experts.

"Clear communication with doctors, pharmacists and other providers helps ensure patient safety and satisfaction," said Cindy Burton, RN, associate nursing director and performance improvement director. "Asking questions, seeing your doctor at the first sign of a problem and making sure that all healthcare professionals involved in your care have all the information they need about you are vital to decisions that are made regarding treatment options."

Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center, Inc. offers the following tips to help you increase the safety of your medical care:

- Be an active participant in your own healthcare. Speak up. Ask questions.

- If you have questions about medications, side effects or dosage, discuss it with your doctor or pharmacist. Tell your doctor about any allergies you have.

- Make sure you understand why tests are being performed, and how low up with your doctor on results if you don't hear from him or her.

- If something doesn't seem correct, ask about it.

- Ask a friend or family member to accompany you to ask questions or help you remember what your doctor has advised you to do.

- Tell your doctor about all the medications you are taking.

- Follow up on any expired medications.

- See your doctor as soon as you suspect a problem. Early diagnosis provides the best options for treatment and recovery.

Burton said healthcare organizations take many safety steps, and that Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center goes to great lengths to ensure its patients' safety.

"We regularly review all our processes," she said. "We want to do everything we can to make sure this is a comfortable and secure environment for our patients, employees and visitors."

"Something most patients don't even think about is hospital security. But, during the past several years, hospitals have taken additional steps in that area, too. RHRCC is no exception. The staff has been trained in safety and security issues, and they play an important role in maintaining patient safety. A recent survey of patients indicates these measures have paid off."

"Ninety-four percent of our patients said they were comfortable with their medical care and surroundings at Rockcastle Hospital, with three-quarters saying they were completely comfortable here," Burton added. "That means a lot to us."

Rockcastle Hospitalized Respiratory Care Center, Inc. is a not-for-profit community hospital, which is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). It operates inpatient and outpatient acute care programs, 60 long-term beds for ventilator-dependent patients, and a home health care service. The organization recently purchased a local nursing home, which has been renamed Rockcastle Health and Rehabilitation Center, Inc. It will be surveyed by JCAHO later this year.

The hospital was established in 1956 and treats patients from across Kentucky, Tennessee and several other states. For more information, log on to:

www.rockcastlehospital.org.

Air Force Airman John C. Brown has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and customs; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training and special training in human relations.

In addition, airman who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Brown is the son of Eva Gay of Berea and the grandson of Marie Venable of Mt. Vernon. He is a 1998 graduate of Rockcastle County High School.



Internet college classes becoming very popular

Tammy Wrye, a full-time sophomore at Somerset Technical College with two teenage sons, now takes her college courses at home on her computer. She finds it convenient, fun and better all around for her and her family.

"You can do the class at three in the morning, if you want to," Wrye said. "I pick my own schedule." Wrye admits that she was a little hesitant to try "web-based" college courses at first. "I just didn't know if I would like it, but I found out I did," she said.

More and more students in the Somerset Community and Technical College District (SCTCD) are joining Wrye and completing their college courses at home at a time that suits them. Registration in web-based courses has grown rapidly in the local college district. One class in Medical Terminology offered on the Internet by Somerset Community (SCC) this spring attracted 70 students.

"We were a little taken off guard by the large number of students who enrolled in that class," said Buford Howard, the academic dean at SCC. Since such a large number enrolled, Howard decided to team-teach the course with James Anderson and Anita Walker, who are both biology instructors at SCC.

Howard said that dividing the class up between three instructors allowed the students to get more individual attention, an important characteristic of college courses in the local community college district.

A student interested in a Web-based class can sign up in two ways. First, there is the Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU). It currently has more than 15,000 students from around the state enrolled in college courses on-line. Anyone interested in a KYVU course can sign up for it on-line. The second way to register is simply to come to any of the district's three colleges during regular on-campus registration.

In the local college district there are both KYVU classes and local web-based classes, which are not listed in the KYVU on-line schedule.

One of the big advantages of taking a college course on the Internet is that a student only has to come to the college two or three times during the semester, once for orientation, a second time for midterm testing and a third visit for the final. Since anyone, anywhere can take a web-based course, a student who, for example, is taking a Somerset Community College course while living in

Owensboro, can take their tests at Owensboro Community College with the assistance and supervision of a faculty member from that college and the test provided by the Somerset instructor.

Loris Sherman, an SCC instructor who is teaching a web-based Biology class, said that her courses have everything the student needs at the click of the mouse.

"The syllabus, the course outline, a chat room for class discussion, quizzes and unit tests, the e-mail address of the instructor, everything is right there," Sherman said.

Sherman thinks that there are many more pros than cons to web-based courses, but she does caution that a student needs to be a "computer literate" in order to be successful with an Internet course. She said that KYVU has a site on-line that discusses the personal characteristics that make a good candidate for a web-based course. The KYVU website is www.kyvu.org.

"They have to learn how to get around on the Internet before they can learn biology on-line," she said. "Another thing is that, if a person is a procrastinator, they probably don't need to take an on-line course. I think it's probably pretty easy for a procrastinator to put off doing biology," Sherman has found that her web-based classes are filling up each semester, while sometimes her regular face-to-face classes may or may not have enough students to make them viable each semester. She points out that often a student needs a specific class in order to earn a degree and graduate, but sometimes the on-campus class they need isn't offered at a time they can attend. Web-based classes are an excellent alternative for those students because the class material is ready whenever the student has time.

"This semester I have quite a few students from around our area, but I also have students from Frankfort, Prestonsburg, Henderson, and Bowling Green," Sherman said.

"It saves the student from having to come to a campus two or three times a week," said Wanda Bolze, the chairperson of the Social Science Division at SCC. "It's ideal for working students. We currently have students enrolled who will get all the coursework for their associate degree on-line."

"I've just found them to be more convenient time wise," Wrye said. "I also think that I learn more because I get to set my own pace. You're not being pressured."

Wrye also likes the fact that she gets her assignments for the week on Monday and she has until the next Monday to complete them. She finds that might be more convenient than getting an assignment on Monday and

having it due on Wednesday, as sometimes happens in a regular on-campus class.

"Some students do think web-based classes are harder," Bolze admits. "They are the ones who like face-to-face contact with their instructors."

"Well, sometimes it is hard to get in touch with your instructor by e-mail," Wrye said. "Especially if you are doing your assignment on the weekend. If you have a question, it

RHRCC takes steps to draw in more people into the field

Although healthcare continues to be a bright spot for career advancement and job security, the number of healthcare workers in America is declining. A survey recently released by the American Hospital Association found double-digit vacancy rates for registered nurses, imaging technicians, pharmacists, licensed practical nurses and nursing assistants.

The decreasing number of workers to fill these jobs is related to several factors. One of the biggest factors is the aging U.S. population, which means a growing number of retirees will leave the field over the next several years. Additionally, women have many career choices available to them and some who traditionally would have chosen nursing are going into business or other fields.

Seeing the writing on the wall, Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center, Inc. has taken several steps to proactively secure workers for future vacancies.

One example is a new nursing scholarship program. The hospital will award three scholarships each year to Rockcastle County High School graduates who have been admitted to the nursing programs at Somerset Community College or Eastern Kentucky University. The scholarship will cover half the cost of the program. Recipients must agree to work at RHRCC for a minimum of two years upon completion of an associate degree in nursing.

The hospital also is considering a similar program for other allied health degree programs and has a scholarship program for dietitians for several years. It also offers tuition reimbursement for employees who are enrolled in nursing and other allied health programs that can fill a need at RHRCC.

Additionally, RHRCC is reaching out to young people in the community and provides exposure to healthcare careers by collaborating

with the local school system for students to have hospital experiences.

"We felt the best way for someone to get excited about a nursing career is to have them see first hand what it's like to be a nurse," said Betty Purcell, RN, MSN, chief nursing officer. "We have shadowing programs for high school students who may be considering healthcare careers; We enjoy having them here and let our staff provide good role models for young people."

Purcell also said she is hopeful that nursing students who have clinical rotations at RHRCC will feel at home and want to work there after graduation.

"The clinical rotation gives them a feel for the true hospital environment and the relationships that the staff builds with patients and each other," she said. "Once they have had a clinical exposure, we hope the nursing students will be excited about joining our team after graduation."

For more information on RHRCC's nursing scholarship program or shadowing, contact Betty Purcell at 256-7704.

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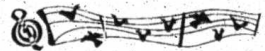
Rockcastle County Sheriff

We need a Sheriff we can trust. A man that has proved his integrity. A Sheriff that is concerned about every citizen in Rockcastle County. A Sheriff that has and will operate the Sheriff's office in a manner of which we can all be proud. A man we can all be very pleased to call Sheriff of Rockcastle County.

A vote to re-elect Shirley Smith is a vote for continued confidence.
Your support is greatly appreciated

Paid for by Shirley Smith

ALL-SCHOOL SING



Mt. Vernon Elementary will be celebrating Music In Our Schools Month by hosting the 5th annual All-School Sing! The sing will be on Thursday, March 28th, at 1:15 in the MVES Gym. The students and staff are also planning to dress musically that day to show our support of music education. Join us on the 28th for a day of music!

Elect Roger Pigg 4th District Constable



My name is Roger Pigg and I am running for Constable in the 4th District of Rockcastle County.

As a partner of Discount Carpet, I have been serving Rockcastle and surrounding counties with honest, dependable hard work for more than 30 years. In the last few years, I have been in many homes in Rockcastle County. I stand amazed at how crimes such as burglaries, theft, have increased in our county. Many good people live in fear, even in their own homes.

I would like to be part of a joint law enforcement to help serve and protect the people of Rockcastle County. I want to help people feel they have a safe and better place to live. If elected on May 28th I will do everything in my power to protect and serve Rockcastle County and its people.

Thank you and may God bless you and our community.

Your Vote and Support are Greatly Appreciated!

Paid for by Roger Pigg