

## Hospitalists



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### What will happen after I am discharged?

Prior to your discharge, the hospitalist will communicate with your primary care or other caregiver, such as a specialist or rehabilitation therapist. At the time of your discharge, your care returns to these community-based caregivers. It's important to follow your discharge instructions, including making necessary appointments with your own doctor.

### Will I receive a bill from the Hospitalist?

When you are hospitalized, you will receive at least two sets of bills: one for hospital services, and other(s) for each doctor providing care. So, yes, you will receive a bill from the hospitalist, as well as from any other treating physicians. The bill you receive will be an itemized accounting of the services provided to you by the hospitalist during your hospitalization. With this statement, you'll be able to review the services provided and verify your billing and insurance information.



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## **An Introduction to the Hospitalist Program**

To meet the needs of our patients, Northwest Medical Center–Springdale offers hospitalized patients access to doctors around the clock while allowing private practice doctors more time to see patients in their offices. Through our hospitalist program, medical doctors who specialize in the evaluation and treatment of hospitalized patients are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide care.

### **What is a hospitalist?**

A hospitalist is a physician who specializes in caring for hospitalized patients. Hospitalists are trained in general internal medicine and other medical specialties. Because hospitalists do not maintain outside clinics, they can focus attention exclusively on your medical care inside the hospital. The hospitalist maintains ongoing communication with your regular physician throughout your treatment. And, when you are discharged, the hospitalist transfers your care back to your primary care doctor or other caregiver.

### **What are the benefits of having a hospitalist?**

Your hospitalist specializes in the kinds of medical conditions that need to be treated in the hospital. Because the hospitalist practices exclusively in the hospital setting, he or she has added knowledge of other departments and specialties, and are very accessible to nursing staff.

The hospitalist can often help speed your recovery and shorten your hospital stay by following up on tests and adjusting your treatment plan throughout the day.

Hospitalists have systems in place to communicate with your primary care doctor as needed – especially at the time of admission and discharge – which provides a more seamless experience for the patient.

### **Why might I see several hospitalist physicians during my stay?**

Hospitalists are a small group of specialists who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because no single person could do this alone, they work as a team. Therefore, you may see more than one hospitalist during your stay.

### **What is the relationship between the hospitalist and my primary care doctor?**

The hospitalist partners with your primary care doctor to administer and oversee your treatment while you are in the hospital, serving as your regular doctor until you are released. The hospitalist will see you on a daily basis and manage your condition, contacting your primary care doctor as appropriate, as well as at the time of discharge. When you are discharged, you will return to your regular doctor or other community-based caregiver, to continue the care plan coordinated between your physician and the hospitalist.

### **What if my family has questions?**

As with any other doctor’s visit, we encourage your family to be present when you are seen, to meet your caregivers and ask questions. Hospitalist physicians will see you at least once a day or more, if appropriate. This is the best time to ask any questions about your medical care. It’s a good idea to record your questions on a notepad for quick reference in later discussions with your family and your doctor. Family members can contact the hospitalist(s) through the hospital’s nursing unit. We ask that one family member be designated as the primary contact person for questions and information.

### **Can the hospitalist become my primary care provider?**

No. Patients retain their primary care doctor and return to their regular caregiver after their release. The hospitalists’ time is dedicated to inpatients, and they do not provide outpatient care.

### **What if I don’t have a regular primary care doctor?**

The hospitalist and other staff at the hospital can assist you in finding a doctor after you leave the hospital. Records from your hospital stay can be sent to this doctor.