It is a common sight as we watch our favorite teams getting ready for the “Big Game,” gathering in close mass, usually to set a strategy or call a play. It is called a “huddle” and it is not exclusive to your favorite sports team.

At LVHN, use of the huddle is widespread. Since our merger, LVH–Schuylkill implemented a daily, morning operational huddle to look at where we were, where we are and where we are going. Circumstances sometimes require additional huddles throughout the day.

“Each day we examine things like census, bed availability, length of stay and waiting times,” says Gabe Kamarousky, Vice President, Operations. “We also look at things like Great Experiences and Less than Optimal Experiences that our patients have shared, and decide if a visit from a member of our senior leadership team (Executive Council) is needed,” he says.

“The purpose of the huddle is to improve communication, improve efficiency and improve the patient experience,” says Susan Curry, MSN, RN, Vice President, Patient Care Services. “Each day, we bring together a cross-section of our team to address our needs and any issues related to delivering the level of care that our patients expect and deserve.”

Nursing, Environmental Services, Facilities, Laboratory, IT, Infection Prevention, Supply as well as physicians are typically part of the huddle. LVH–Schuylkill’s huddle is held at 8:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, and is designed to last no longer than 15 minutes.

Metrics and statistics are noted on a board that tracks daily and weekly progress, as well as variation throughout the hospitals. Going forward, the huddle will also serve as a way for LVH–S and the health network to enhance its Communication Cascade to our colleagues.
Some difficult decisions have been made and implemented at LVH–Pocono. The combination of the ongoing trend of cases shifting from inpatient to outpatient care and changes in the competitive landscape in Monroe County have impacted our organization since the start of our fiscal year in July. The actions taken are specific to LVH–Pocono and its changing health care environment.

Inpatient volumes have declined at varying rates over the last three months, requiring us to make changes in our managerial, clinical and non-clinical staffing. Staffing is being adjusted to meet patient volume and will not impact safety or quality. In addition to changes in staffing, we are also pursuing non-labor cost reductions through efficiencies made possible by the merger with LVHN.

At LVHN, our practice is to communicate with you first so you are not hearing information second hand. A system-wide, all users email was sent on Wednesday, Jan. 25. It was also posted on our intranet site. Please make sure you go to the LVH–S intranet regularly for news and information.

LVH–Pocono leadership has been meeting with affected staff. All team members affected by these decisions will be treated consistently and fairly. These actions will make LVH–Pocono more efficient while providing safe, quality care and will give us the financial strength to pursue growth opportunities that will benefit the Pocono community.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, yet some people think cardiovascular disease is a man’s disease. In fact, heart disease strikes more women than men. For women, heart disease is more deadly than all forms of cancer combined. National Wear Red Day® is a day to raise awareness about heart disease in women and educate women about taking action to reduce their risk for heart disease. This year, National Wear Red Day is Friday, Feb. 3. Colleagues are encouraged to wear red or red accessories. You also are encouraged to take a photo of you and your colleagues wearing red and submit it to michael.peckman@LVHN.org for possible inclusion on LVHN Daily and LVHN’s Facebook page.

Here are things you need to know to prepare for National Wear Red Day:

- Be creative. If you’re a nurse who must wear a navy blue uniform, opt for red accessories.
- Strike a pose. Smile pretty for the camera, and make sure the photographer takes a horizontal photo. Horizontal photos look better on LVHN Daily and Facebook.
- Meet the deadline. Submit your photo by noon on Friday, Feb. 3.
- Be a teacher. When people ask you why you’re wearing red, tell them about National Wear Red Day. Explain that although heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, only one in five American women believe it to be their greatest health risk.

And remember, consider attending LVH–Schuylkill’s “Little Red Dress” Event, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2017 at the Ramada Inn, Pottsville. Contact Mary Bardell, Auxiliary Liaison for more information: 570-621-4242 or mary.bardell@LVHN.org.