Lehigh Valley Health Network

Patient Care Services / Nursing

### **Empowering Staff Nurses to Decrease Patient Observation Hours**

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# **Empowering Staff Nurses to Decrease Patient Observation Hours**

### Evidence

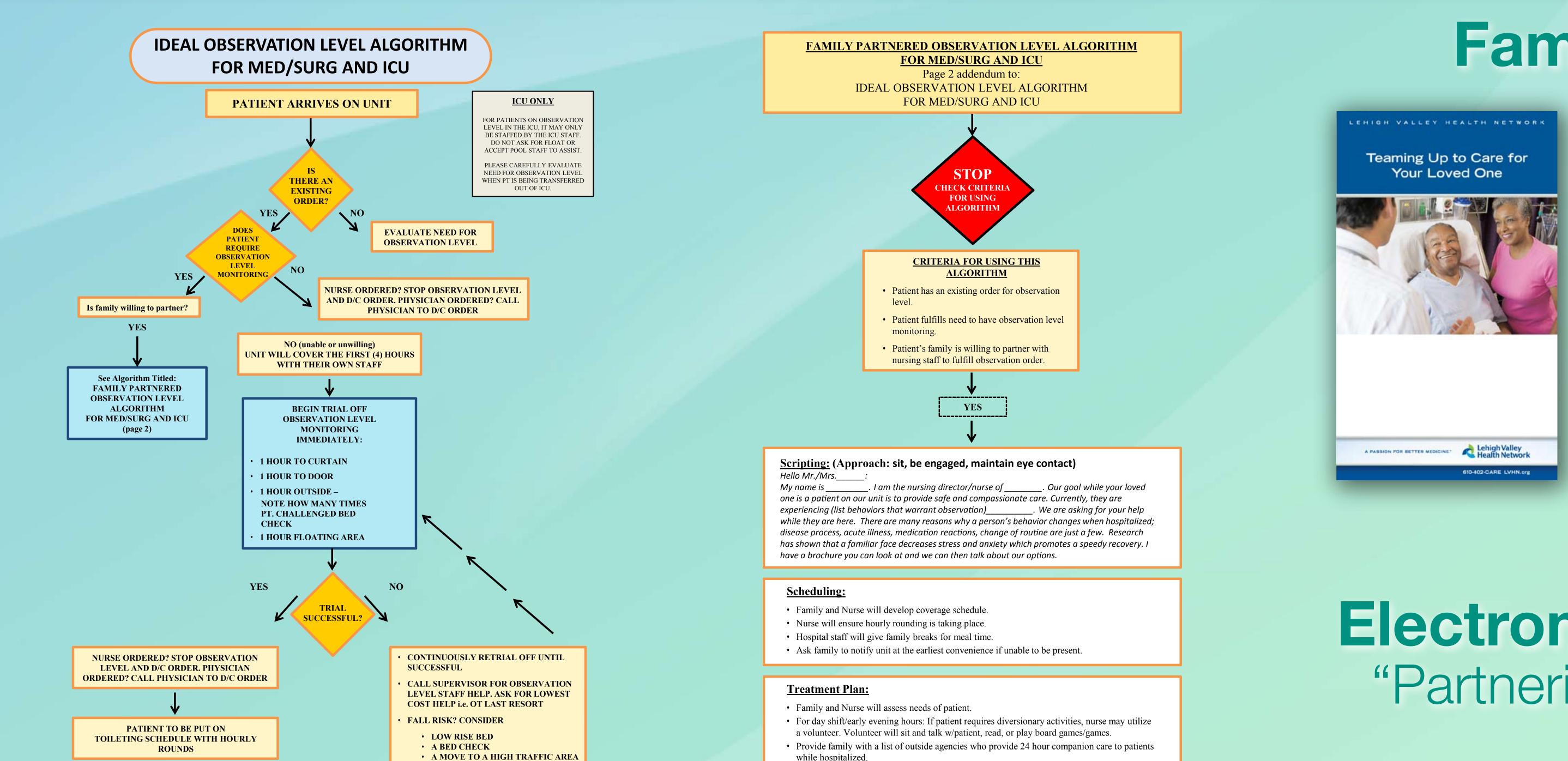
Although the use of sitters and constant observation (CO) are common in many settings, little research has been done in this area. Currently, there is no research to suggest the use of CO reduces the risk of patient harm related to their risk for falling or harming themselves (Harding, 2010). The literature on CO is limited and increasingly outdated, with little new research in the last 5 years. Constant observation is not an evidence-based practice, and there are no data to show that it is cost-effective (Rausch & Bjorklund, 2010). As per the evidence, settings are encouraged to:

- Develop a sitter program model w/ policies & procedures that clearly identify responsibilities of staff & sitters.
- Provide clear instructions for sitters.
- Keep costs of sitters unit- based to encourage RN to find alternative measures.
- Approach families in partnering.
- Educate staff on alternatives.
- Use psychiatric consults for behavior management.
- Make clear distinction between custodial care provided by sitters vs. nursing care.

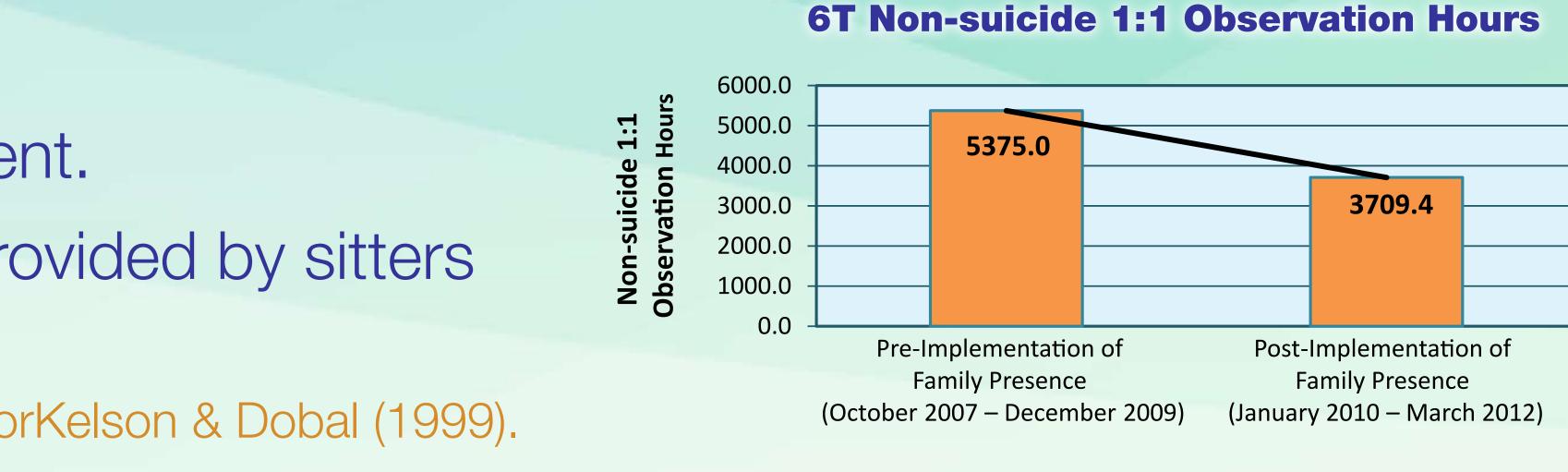
# Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

# Significance and Background Goal

# Acute care healthcare settings incur significant costs associated with use of non-licensed assistive staff in a sitter capacity to continuously observe patients to keep them safe.



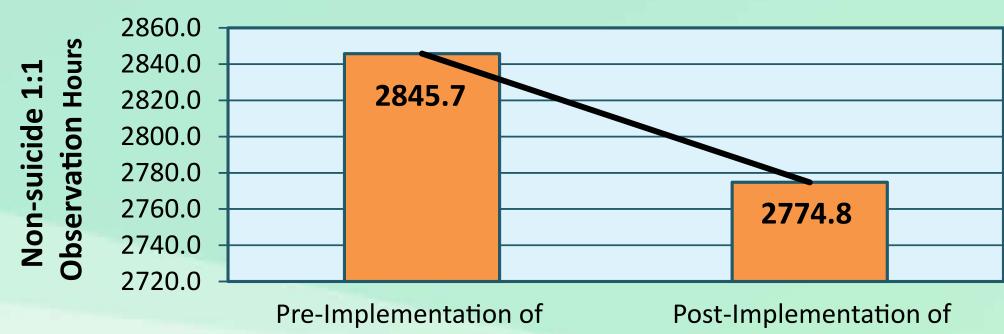
## Outcomes



Reduce "observation hours" by partnering with families.







Family Presence (June 2011 – October 2011)

Family Presence (November 2011 – March 2012)

# **Family Partnering Brochure**

EHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK

### Partnering With You

milies play an active role in the medical care of their loved or mily members are not only relatives but anyone who shares a ose relationship with the patient. Lehigh Valley Health Network inderstands how important it is for patients to have their familie and categivers with them when they are in the hospital. cometimes, patients feel confused and may not know what day it or where they are. They may panic and try to get out of bed or pul

heir tubes or dressings. These types of behaviors may be harmful to their safety. Research has shown that family involvement may help alleviate the fear, anxiety, hopelessness and helplessness patients may feel while in the hospital. Family members can he

How You Can Help Patients feel better when they are supported and surrounded h familiar faces. They also may rest better and heal faster. You can help make your loved one feel more comfortable while he or she i the hospital by sitting with him or her and providing comfort. Your loved one will continue to receive the care he or she needs

You are a respected part of your loved one's care team. To hel ensure your loved one receives the best care possible. Lehigh Valle Icalth Network would like to be partners in care with you. Learn about the different ways you can play an active role in your loved one's care by talking with his or her nurse. We understand that not everyone is able to be with his or her loved one at all times. Please see the nurse to talk about other options.

ogether we can make a difference

building a two-way relationship between staff and families is important to keeping our patients safe. We are excited about building a relationship with yo

Unit Number

Nursing Director



**Electronic Staff Education Program** "Partnering in Keeping Our Patients Safe"





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