

A message from Frank V. Sacco, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer

Good day,

Something as seemingly simple as a phone call can make a significant and even lifesaving difference.

At Memorial, discharge follow-up calls are valuable tools that help take Patient First safety, care and service to exceptional levels. This story is a perfect example of why they are so important.

Thank you,



Joan Rivera, ICU3 Clinical Manager at Memorial Regional Hospital, is an enthusiastic advocate of patient- and family-centered and she makes discharge follow-up calls a priority.

Once they're home, patients sometimes have more questions, don't remember the instructions they've been given or even lose those their paperwork, Joan says. The calls let patients know Memorial's concern doesn't stop at the exit, and just as importantly, provide an opportunity to resolve any confusion and answer questions.

"These calls are one of the best things we've established," she says. "If we make just one catch that saves a life it's worth it. You just never know what you will find."

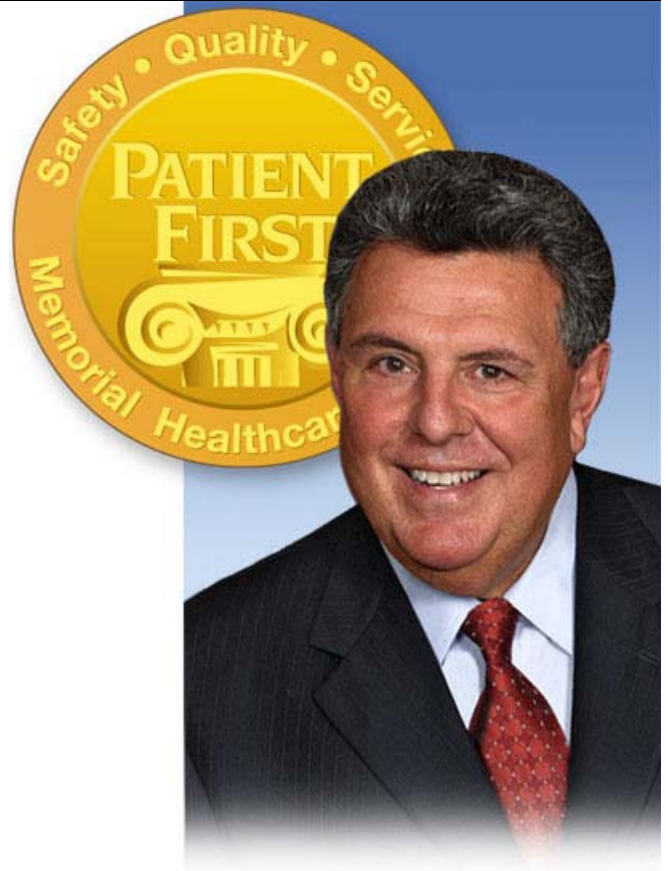
Not long ago, one of her calls turned out to be much more than routine. As she talked with a gentleman who had recently had a heart catheterization with several stents implanted, he raved about the "amazing" care he had received in the hospital. When they went on to review his discharge instructions and medications, Joan discovered the man was missing an important blood thinner that had been prescribed to help prevent potentially harmful blood clots. He did not have a prescription and was not scheduled for a follow-up appointment for a few days.

"That worried me," Joan says. She obtained the phone number for the pharmacy where the gentleman fills his prescriptions and immediately set about the task of making sure he would have the medication he needed as quickly as possible. Joan contacted his attending physician, interventional cardiologist and physician assistant; made sure the prescription was called in; kept in touch with the patient to let him know what was happening and when the prescription would be ready; and then followed up to make sure he had his medication in hand.

"I was felt so relieved and happy," Joan says. "Luckily he had not gone too long without the medication. He was very appreciative and grateful for everything we'd done."

And what if there had been no follow-up call?

"Without his medication, the stents could have closed and he could have had a heart attack," says Joan. "I don't even want to think about it."



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