

Advanced Respiratory Services at Levindale *help families breathe easier*

It's something most of us take for granted: the simple act of breathing. We do it without thinking, regardless of whether we're awake or asleep, around 20,000 times per day. But what happens when that autopilot system crashes? For many doctors in Greater Baltimore, the solution is to send their patients to the respiratory services team at Levindale.

Part of Levindale's high intensity care unit, the respiratory services team specializes in caring for patients who have respiratory failure brought on by catastrophic illness, neurologic challenges, postsurgical complications or—most recently—COVID-19. These conditions can make it impossible to breathe without the help of a ventilator or tracheostomy.

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Judy Benner, respiratory services manager

“The patients we see have typically been transferred to us from another hospital, and so they've been through the mill so to speak,” says Judy Benner, respiratory services manager. “Our team is very special in that they understand how to care for patients and families who have already been through so much.”

That team includes respiratory therapists and nurses who are certified in advanced cardiac life support; physical, speech and occupational therapists to support patients' rehabilitation; dietitians who can adjust patients' nutrition intake around issues such as inability to swallow; and doctors, nurse practitioners and physician

assistants who specialize in pulmonology and otolaryngology (ear, nose and throat) and can oversee the patients' entire course of care.

“Our goal is to get patients off the ventilator or the trach tube and breathing independently, and I think our multidisciplinary team approach accelerates us toward that goal,” explains Benner. “We have the combined expertise to handle just about any respiratory challenge, and the patients get everything they need in their recovery.”

Patients also benefit from the team's interconnectedness with the entire LifeBridge Health system. At the height of COVID-19, for example, Levindale partnered with Sinai to borrow additional ventilators and treatment equipment as the need for respiratory services surged.

“COVID reaffirmed that we're not on an island,” Benner recalls. “I can reach out to Sinai, or Northwest or Carroll [hospitals], and they've got our backs.”

The partnership goes both ways. While the respiratory services team cares for patients from across the region, many come from within the LifeBridge Health system. “The pulmonologist who cared for you at Sinai can be the pulmonologist who is overseeing your care at Levindale,” Benner says. “Having that continuum of care can be invaluable in a patient's outcomes and a family's peace of mind.”



There's More To Levindale

See how Levindale's post-acute services help patients recover from the most complex illnesses and injuries at lifebridgehealth.org/levindale