

Structure of a skilled medical team providing care to patients on continuous renal replacement therapy

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Providing continuous renal replacement therapy (CRRT) to critically ill patients requires a team of skilled nurses and physicians. At Helen DeVos Children's Hospital (HDVCH) pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) approximately 20 children receive CRRT annually. Care is provided to patients requiring this therapy an average of 161 days per year. HDVCH has a 16 bed PICU with an average of 1100 patients per year.

The PICU has a staff of 60 nurses who provide care to patients on CRRT. They receive initial and annual hands on training to care for these patients. A core team of 10 nurses have received additional education to manage the initiation, maintenance, and discontinuation of CRRT. The team is available 24 hours to resource staff caring for CRRT patients. This team is led by a nurse coordinator who is responsible for educating all staff and assuring CRRT equipment and supplies are maintained. Nurses on the core team take part in skill validation, consisting of basic pump setup, various priming techniques, and troubleshooting twice annually. The core nursing team, nurse coordinator, and physicians meet every two months to review recent cases and provide new education in CRRT practices.

This structured team of nurses and physicians has been developed with a goal of improving the quality and safety of care delivered to patients requiring CRRT. At HDVCH we have created a culture within our team that allows us to seek knowledge, encourage questions, and support each other in delivering safe and excellent care.

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