

Pulmonary Care

Patients can breathe easy at Oroville Hospital. The institution has just been rated the best in Butte County for overall pulmonary care, was ranked among the top five percent nationwide for overall pulmonary care services, and received the HealthGrades Pulmonary Excellence Award. These accolades represent a culmination of efforts over the past half-decade at Oroville Hospital to streamline its services in treating one of the body's most crucial physiological systems – the lungs.

What makes Oroville Hospital so good at pulmonary care? Dr. Matthew Fine, chief medical officer and a pulmonary specialist, feels that Oroville Hospital's Respiratory Care Department has attained its status of excellence thanks to its dedicated, enthusiastic, and well-trained staff. Receiving the HealthGrades award, he says, was a result of these people working together and streamlining their efforts.

"We're very proud that we received that award, and I think it's a culmination of efforts that we've been making at this hospital over the past five or six years," Dr. Fine says. "We've always tried to be good, but what we've learned in the last decade is that in medicine it not only takes individuals working together to succeed but an organized hospital effort."

In the Respiratory Care Department, all respiratory therapists and doctors apply a particular focus on two prevalent lung diseases: COPD, the acronym for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – caused primarily by smoking – and pneumonia. Protocols and systems are in place for treating these illnesses based on national standards. For instance, as soon as a patient with pneumonia enters the hospital, Oroville

Hospital's staff swiftly identifies the type of pneumonia before administering antibiotics, which the



Oroville Hospital

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services require to be administered within six hours.

"We define which patients need to go into the Intensive Care Unit and which patients can be treated on a regular medical-surgical unit," Dr. Fine says. "We've also established an intermediate unit that we call a 'high-acuity medical-surgical unit' that allows patients who don't need to be in the Intensive Care Unit to still be watched very closely." Cross-department teamwork, too, is a winning strategy, as Dr. Fine says, "Our hospital has very good, motivated, well-trained respiratory therapists who, by working with us, allow us to identify problems before they get worse. We're fortunate to have an excellent respiratory care program at Butte College, which provides us with well-trained therapists."

While the hospital's award-winning continuing medical-education program, through lectures and seminars, keeps staff up to speed with scientific and technological advances in their field, in-house cooperation is a key strategy to keeping the hospital working as one effective unit.

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"In some places, doctors, therapists, and nurses might be pulling and pushing in different directions, so they don't get anywhere," Dr. Fine says. "But here, everybody pulls in the same direction, and we're always moving forward."

