

Text of Complaint by MNA to Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospitals

The Leadership of Anna Jaques Hospital has failed to meet its minimum obligations to patients and staff.

Recently and unpredictably, the CT scan has been inaccessible / offline apparently due to staffing. We previously reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that this occurred on September 2nd from 7p-11p and September 3rd, 4th, and 5th from 3p-11p and other dates and times.

Subsequently the pattern has continued without resolution: It appears that this week and the foreseeable future will be similar: **The CT scanner is unavailable roughly 50% of the time.** Hospital management has not issued emergency protocols or sent written notice to the nursing staff in the event that the machine is unavailable. The staff learn of unavailability of the machine by reading a handwritten sign stating “CT scan down from (day and time)”.

There is presently no coverage at nights: There is one (1) remaining CT scan tech for the nights and that person is out sick and will probably be out for a week.

The negative effects for patient care are described in the below newspaper article: .

https://www.newburyportnews.com/news/local_news/port-councilor-decries-lack-of-ambulances-hospital-wait-times/article_ff7c0c04-38dd-11ed-9b23-c71a9e53c888.html?fbclid=IwAR2SZQDpxyb8J1IE3uXcjaJnT_9KJMcAMQ92PXII_kbCthj07hvKe2xGzbo

The unavailability of the CT scan has contributed to seriously worsened ED wait times, wait times for diagnostics, **and has also pushed the region’s EMS transport system beyond its capabilities as AJH has had to transport out patients to facilities with working CT scans.** In cases that do not get transported out of the hospital those patients are boarding in the ED for eight hours or more to wait for the CT scan.

We also note that AJH is a **trauma center** and a **stroke center**. We have heard informally that the administration intends to allow their trauma certification to lapse, but we mention that as an aside. We have been and presently remain a Trauma ED without CT scan capabilities about 50% of the time.

The hospital is a busy one providing Emergency care to 27,000 patients annually, critical care and medical surgical care at the crossroads of busy interstate highways and the popular beach communities in the area. Nursing staff have been transferring patients who need urgent diagnostic or interventional CT scans out of the hospital, delaying care for those patients.

The following standards are violated on an ongoing basis in this scenario:

LD.01.03.01 states the governing body is ultimately accountable for safety and quality, yet the current situation with inconsistent availability of advanced imaging fails patients who need diagnostic or interventional scans.

Standard LD.03.03.01 requires that leaders use hospital wide planning to establish structures and processes that focus on safety and quality. The leadership at Anna Jaques Hospital has failed to provide a clear process for staff to be made aware of when the CT scanner is available and when it is not appropriately staff and thereby unavailable.

Standard LD.03.04.01 requires that the hospital communicates information related to safety and quality to those who need it, including staff, licensed independent practitioners, patients, families and external interested parties.

The nursing staff is not formally notified about the status of the CT scanner. When asked, administration failed to provide a detailed response about the policies and procedures for notifying staff about the CT scan availability. As stated by TJC, “poor communications often contributes to adverse events and can compromise safety and quality of care... Effective communication is timely, accurate, and usable by the audience”, in this case, the nursing staff.