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## NEWS

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### **Erlanger's "Compassion Closet" providing clothing for patients**

**Chattanooga, Tenn.** – Erlanger Health System's "Compassion Closet" is an employee-led initiative that provides patients in need of essential clothing items after they are discharged.

"Sometimes when a patient is discharged, he or she might have little clothing to wear, if any at all," said Erlanger Vice President for Patient Safety and Quality Pam Gordon. "Having clean and dry clothing and shoes is often an important step in the healing process for these patients."

Previously, when an Erlanger patient was discharged with little clothes, they were given paper scrubs. Recognizing that the lack of selection was less than ideal, Erlanger employees met to discuss what other options were available, which led to the establishment of the "Compassion Closet."

"We want everyone to feel like a VIP, even our homeless population," said Gordon. "Erlanger's mission is to compassionately care for people, and we think this program demonstrates that by providing for our patients even after they've been discharged."

A closet that once housed supplies now holds shelves with new clothing items and shoes that are distributed when patients in need are identified by clinical staff. Bolstered by a \$1,000 clothing donation from a local realtor group and a shopping cart's worth of shoes from Erlanger physician Dr. L. Curtis Cary, the closet's shelves have begun to fill up.

Clothing items and shoes are being donated by Erlanger employees.

"We have very loving, caring people who work here," said Gordon. "It's a different type of care than what most would immediately think of when they think of a hospital. It's not

just physical care; it's mental and emotional care as well. These items might be the only new, never-been-worn clothing and shoes some of these patients have ever owned."

**Photo Caption:** Pam Gordon, Erlanger vice president for patient safety and quality, in Erlanger's new "Compassion Closet."



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