Besides standard hospitalists, ICU patients are sometimes cared for by an Intensivist, or Critical Care physician. Like Dr. James Heddleson at Galion and Bucyrus Community Hospitals, Critical Care physicians direct the care of patients who have life-threatening illnesses or conditions such as cardiac arrest, respiratory failure, sepsis, shock, or severe infections. An Intensivist is important in a small-town hospital because unstable conditions require intensive monitoring, highly trained nursing staff, and an experienced subspecialty-trained physician to improve the quality of care and lessen the chance of a transfer to another hospital.

An Intensivist has completed a primary residency and board certification in a specialty such as surgery, internal medicine, anesthesiology or pediatrics, and an additional two to three year fellowship and certification in Critical Care Medicine.