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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING PATIENT CARE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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The present invention is directed to a system and method for providing care to a patient, comprising a patient care device having a number of configuration databases stored in a memory in the device. Each configuration database preferably includes protocols, operating limits, rule sets and/or operating features that collectively define an operating environment, or personality, of the device. Selection of a specific configuration database preferably is based at least in part upon patient-specific information obtained from any location in a distributed hospital network. Examples of such patient-specific information include patient age or size, patient medical characteristics, a location of the patient or a location of the care device. In a preferred embodiment, programming a patient care device to deliver a drug to a patient entails activating a configuration database and scanning a machine-readable drug label identifying a particular protocol stored in the activated database. The selected protocol includes default parameters for delivering the drug, and the label optionally includes instructions for deviating from the default protocol.

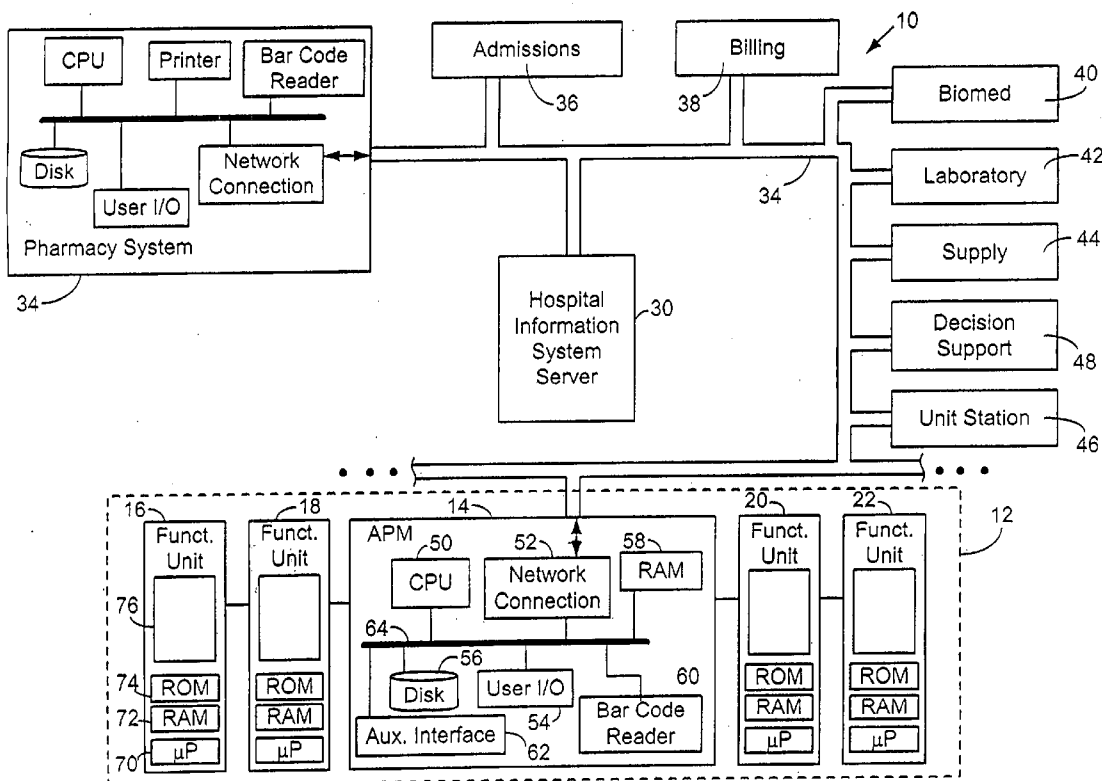
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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Division of application No. 09/793,475, filed on Feb. 26, 2001, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/379,212, filed on Aug. 23, 1999, now Pat. No. 7,074,205, which is a continuation of application No. 08/871,307, filed on Jun. 9, 1997, now Pat. No. 5,941,846, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 08/403,503, filed on Mar. 13, 1995, now Pat. No. 5,713,856.



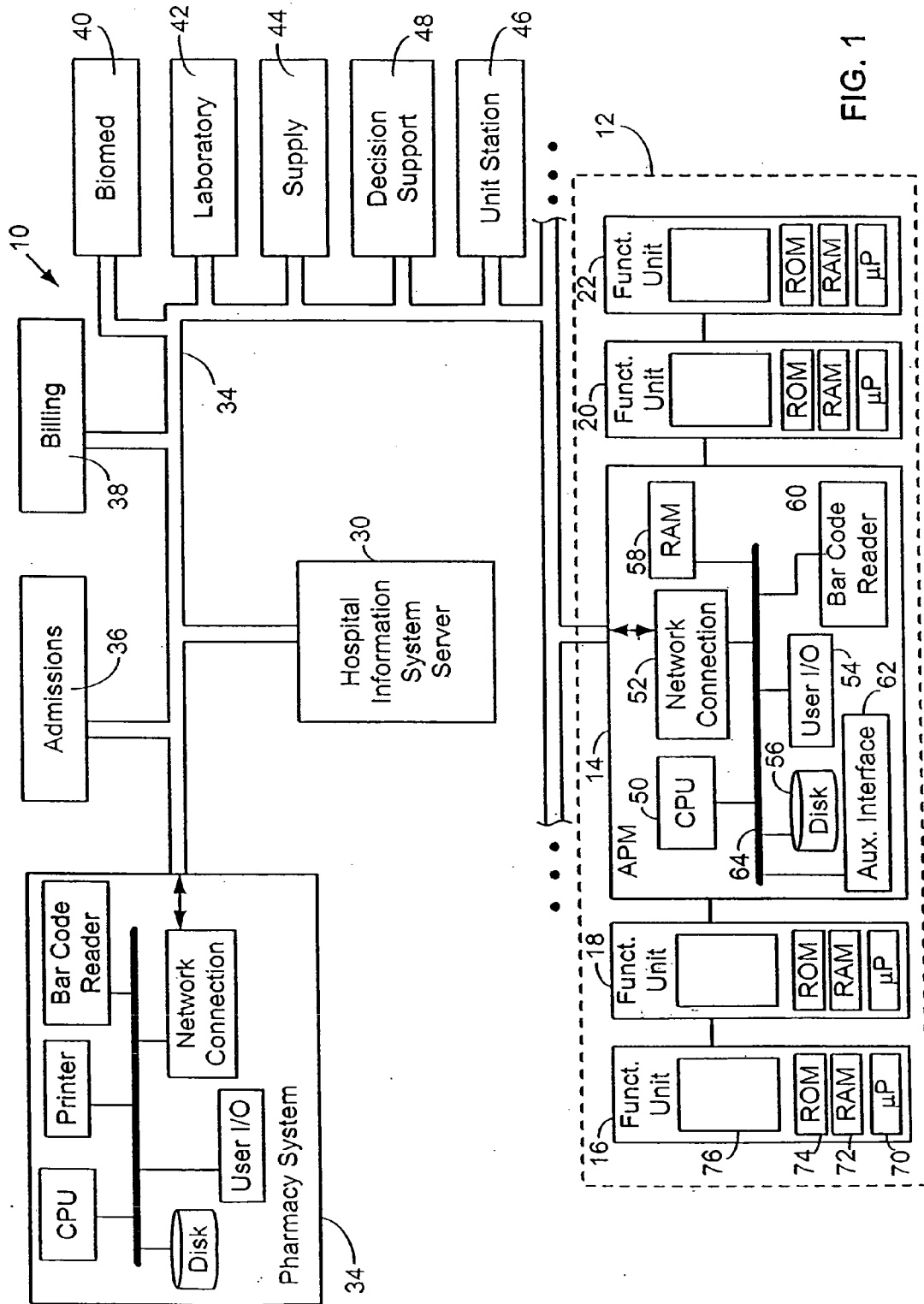


FIG. 1

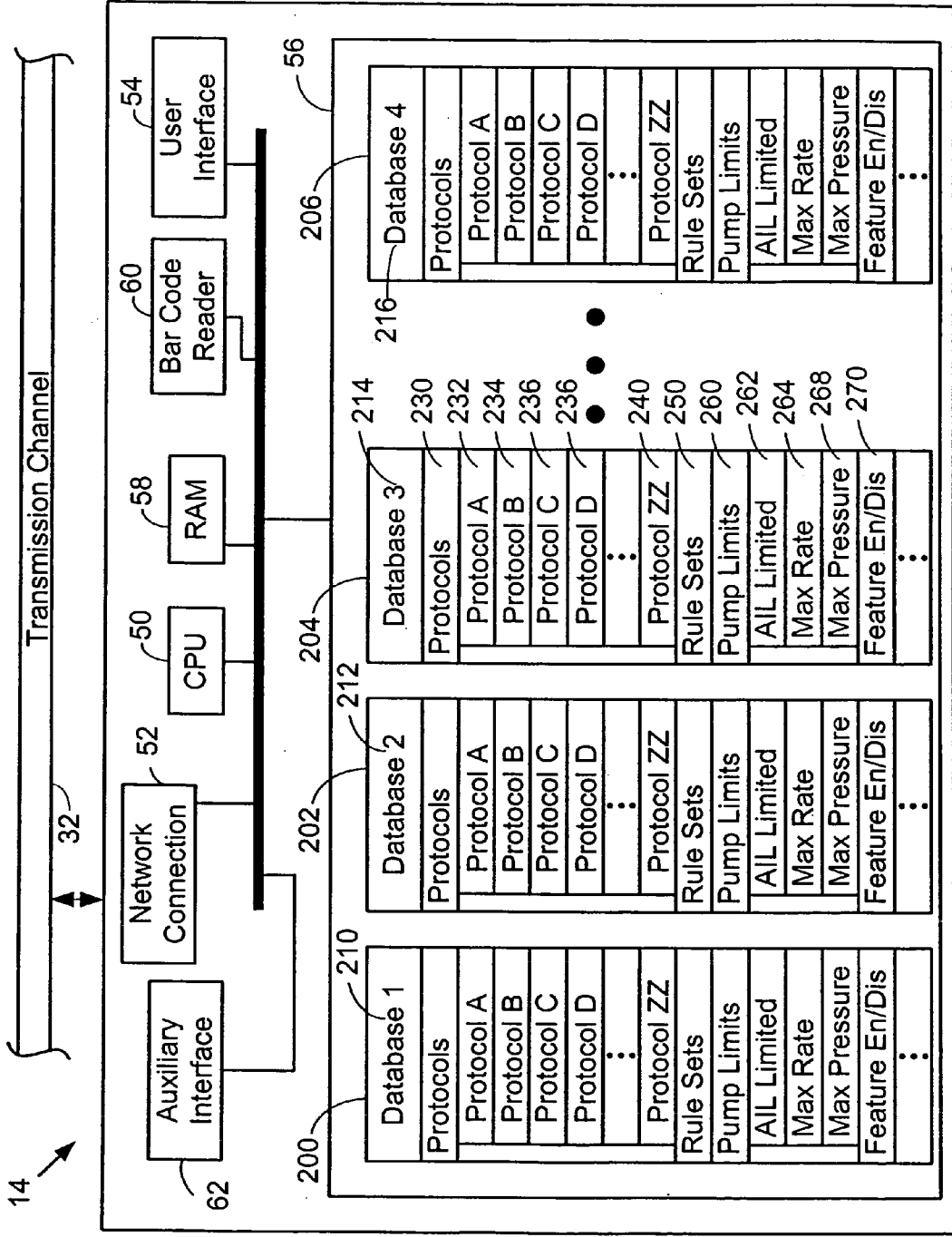


FIG. 2

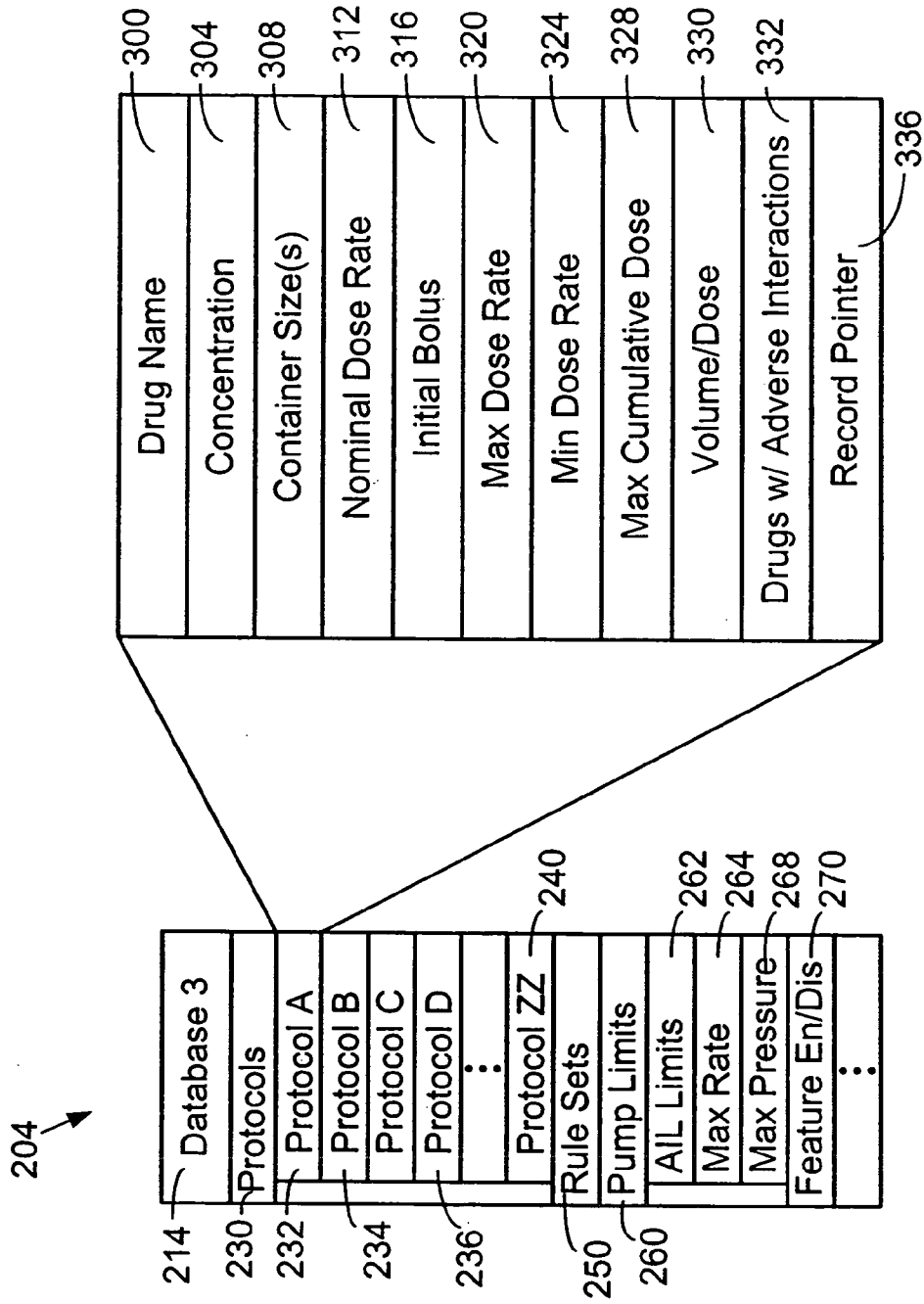


FIG. 3

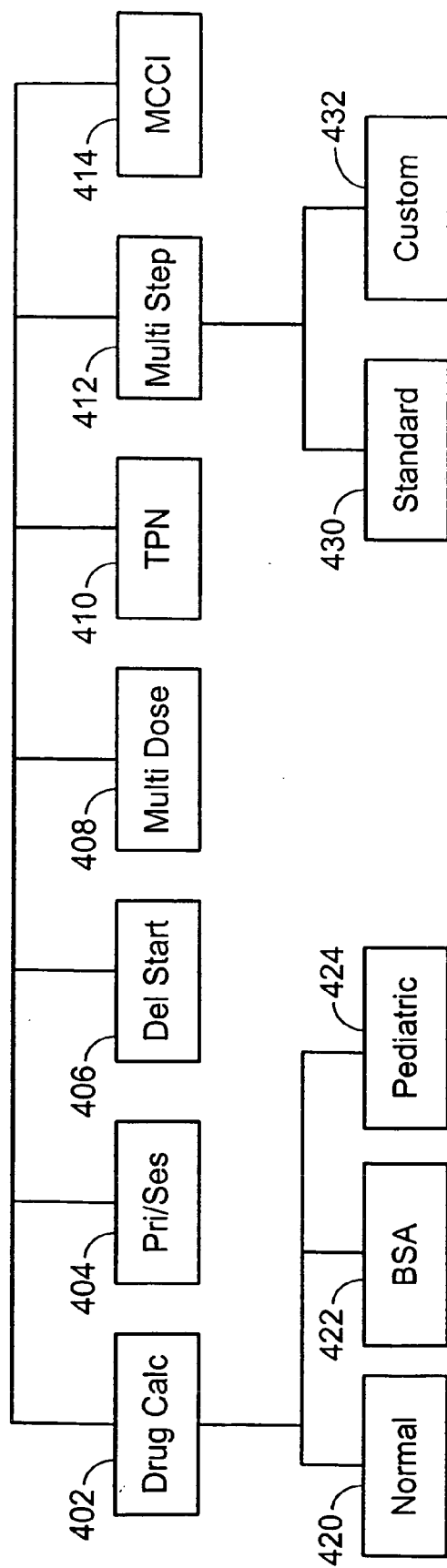


FIG. 4

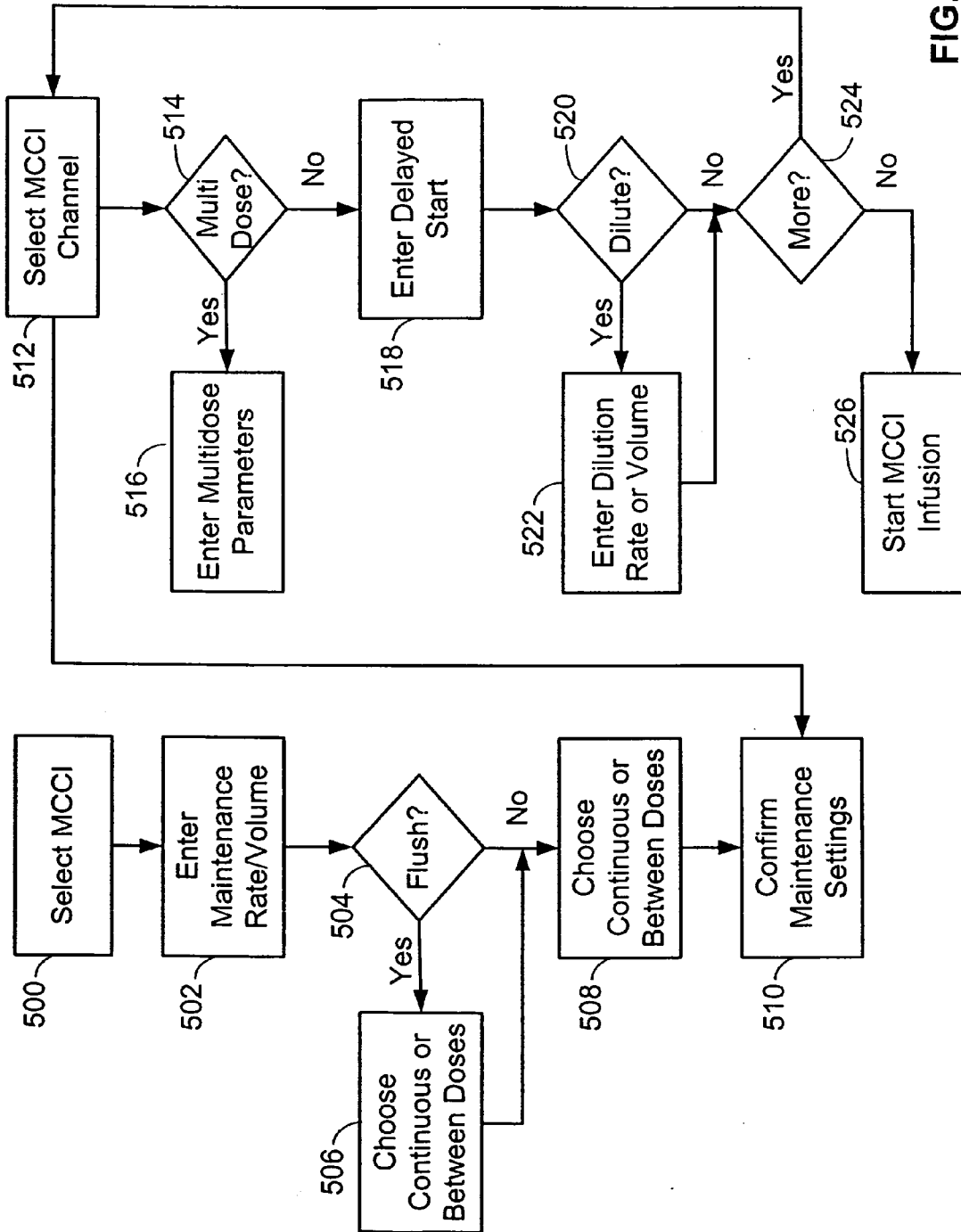


FIG. 5

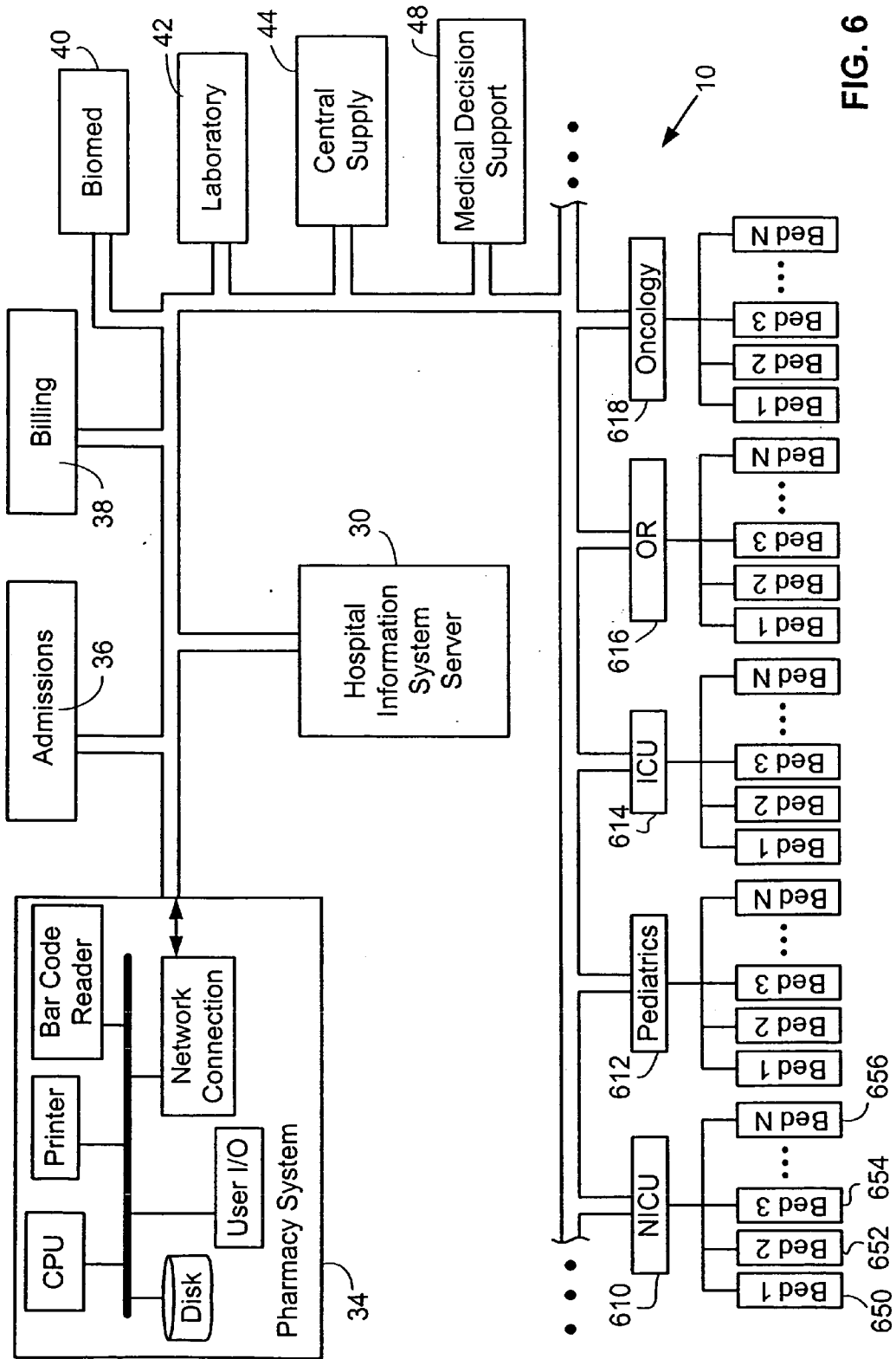


FIG. 6

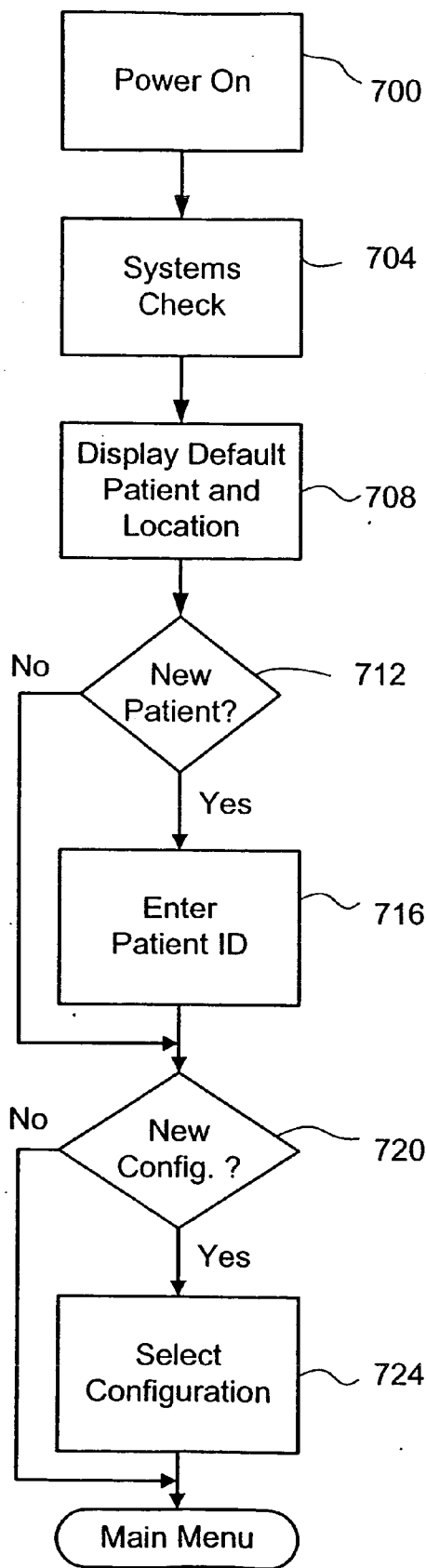


FIG. 7

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING PATIENT CARE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/379,212, filed Aug. 23, 1999; which is a continuation of U.S. Pat. No. 5,941,846, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Power Connection in a Modular Patient Care System", filed Jun. 9, 1997; which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Pat. No. 5,713,856, entitled "Modular Patient Care System", filed Mar. 13, 1995. These related applications are herein incorporated by reference in their entireties.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates generally to a system and method for managing patient care in a health care facility, and in particular to a system and method for integrating information from a distributed network to alter the operating characteristics of a patient care device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Much attention in the health care industry has been placed on reducing the incidence of medication dosing errors and improving overall quality of patient care. Often medication dosing errors occur because a patient receives the wrong medication, a wrong dosage of the correct medication, the correct dosage of the correct medication at the wrong time, or the medication has harmful interaction with other drugs. Recent advances in the health care field have attempted to address these problems and to enhance efficiency and quality of patient care.

[0004] Many drugs are dispensed for patient use at or close to the point of care using programmable infusion pumps such as those disclosed by U.S. Pat. No. 5,713,856 to Eggers et al. and U.S. Pat. No. 5,041,086 to Koenig et al., both of which are incorporated herein by reference. Eggers et al. discloses a modular patient care system capable of providing therapy to a patient and monitoring patient condition. The system of Eggers utilizes a central control module to control and monitor a number of functional modules, including one or more infusion pumps and patient monitoring devices.

[0005] Most hospitals today have a pharmacy equipped with a computerized system for entering, preparing, and tracking prescriptions, managing drug inventory, checking for drug incompatibilities, and printing prescription orders and labels. Typically, one or more medication infusions to be administered to a patient are prescribed by the patient's physician. The pharmacy prepares the infusion solution according to the physician's prescription and places the solution in an IV bag, syringe or other container. A printed label identifying the container contents, the patient to whom the medication is prescribed, the prescribing physician, delivery instructions and/or other information regarding the prescription. The label is generally typed or printed in human readable characters. In some instances, bar codes are used to encode information on the label.

[0006] After a label is affixed, the container is transported to the patient's location and operatively attached to a bedside infusion pump system, such as that disclosed by Eggers

et al. A nurse or other care provider then programs the infusion system with drug delivery data from the label, typically by manually entering infusion parameters using a keyboard or a keypad. Alternatively, some systems seek to reduce data entry errors by incorporating a bar code reader that scans coded data into the pump system from the drug label or from a prescription order. The data may include, for example, rate of infusion, total volume to be infused (VTBI) and, in multichannel or modular systems such as that described by Eggers et al., which channel or pump module is to be used.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 5,153,827 to Coutré et al. discloses a system for providing an infusion apparatus with medication infusion parameters from a central pharmacy database. Infusion delivery parameters for a particular treatment are printed from the central pharmacy database on a machine-readable labels, which are then carried to the patient location and scanned into the bedside infusion apparatus. The system of Coutré requires that all information used to program a pump is either scanned from a machine-readable label or entered manually by the user. Thus, the infusion systems of Coutré do not utilize information from other sources within the hospital or within the system itself.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 5,781,442 to Engleson et al. discloses a patient care management system comprised of a network of computers having a variety of input and output devices for receiving patient data and for generating or displaying reports. The disclosed system monitors ongoing administrations of care to patients and automatically updates records and provides alarms when necessary. In an example of use, patient and drug identification information are scanned into a bedside terminal and communicated to a central computer, where the data are processed. The central computer then sends operating parameters to the terminal and the terminal programs an infusion pump in accordance with the operating parameters.

[0009] In spite of recent advances in the art, there remains a need in the art for a system that facilitates efficient and accurate programming of a medical treatment device while ensuring that the prescribed treatment conforms with institutional and departmental guidelines with respect to a patient in a particular location and/or with particular characteristics.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The present invention generally involves the movement of patient information from a variety of sources such that the patient receives a better quality of care, the care providers' assets are utilized more efficiently and labor costs are reduced through the automation of some processes now done manually. The means of data transfer is typically done within a network, or network of networks, with some data entering and exiting through portals which convert data formats. A preferred embodiment of the present invention is a modular patient care device connected to a hospital network, wherein the capabilities and operating characteristics of the device are altered as a function of its location within the network.

[0011] According to the invention there is provided a patient care system, comprising a patient care device and means for transferring patient-specific information to the device. The device includes a memory for storing a plurality of configuration databases, each of which comprises a

plurality of distinct groups of device operating parameters. Transferring patient-specific information to the device enables selection of a specific configuration database from the plurality of configuration databases, based at least in part on the patient-specific information. The patient care system of the present invention also preferably includes a computer network and means for communicating between the device and the network.

[0012] Still further according to the invention there is provided a method of programming a patient care device to deliver a substance to a patient, comprising printing a coded label, said label including a protocol pointer identifying a first protocol for delivering the substance to the patient; attaching the label to a container holding the substance; transporting the container to the patient care device; entering the pointer into the patient care system, the patient care system including the first protocol in a memory; and programming a functional unit of the patient care system to deliver the substance to the patient in accordance with the first protocol.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] For a better understanding of the nature and details of the invention, reference should be made to the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0014] **FIG. 1** is a schematic diagram of a patient care management system according to the present invention;

[0015] **FIG. 2** is a schematic diagram of an interface unit according to the present invention;

[0016] **FIG. 3** is a schematic diagram illustrating a configuration database according to the present invention;

[0017] **FIG. 4** is a block diagram illustrating a number of different infusion types supported by the interface unit of the present invention;

[0018] **FIG. 5** illustrates the process steps for programming an infusion system to perform a particular infusion protocol in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

[0019] **FIG. 6** is a schematic diagram of an alternative embodiment of the patient care management system of the present invention; and

[0020] **FIG. 7** illustrates the process steps used to relate a programming module with a patient, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] Like reference numerals refer to corresponding parts throughout the several views of the drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0022] **FIG. 1** is a general illustration of a patient care system in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. In **FIG. 1**, a patient care device **12** is connected to a hospital network **10** including a pharmacy management system **34** and a hospital information system server **30**. Each element **12**, **30** and **34** is connected to network **10** by a transmission channel **32**. Transmission channel **32** is any wired or wireless transmission channel, for example a **802.11** wireless local area network (LAN). In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, network **10** also

includes computer systems located in various departments throughout a hospital. For example, network **10** of **FIG. 1** optionally includes computer systems associated with an admissions department **36**, a billing department **38**, a biomedical engineering department **40**, a clinical laboratory **42**, a central supply department **44**, one or more unit station computers and/or a medical decision support system **48**.

[0023] Patient care device **12** preferably comprises a system similar to that described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,713,856 to Eggers et al., which is incorporated herein by reference. Alternatively, other patient care devices, such as pumps, physiological monitors (e.g., heart rate, blood pressure, ECG, EEG, pulse oximeter, and other patient monitors), therapy devices, and other drug delivery devices may be utilized according to the teachings set forth herein. Patient care device **12** preferably comprises an advanced programming module **14**, also referred to as interface unit **14**, connected to one or more functional modules **16**, **18**, **20**, **22**. Interface unit **14** includes a central processing unit (CPU) **50** connected to a memory, e.g. random access memory (RAM) **58**, and one or more interface devices such as user interface device **54**, a coded data input device **60**, a network connection **52**, and an auxiliary interface **62** for communicating with additional modules or devices. Interface unit **14** also preferably, although not necessarily, includes a main non-volatile storage unit **56**, preferably a hard disk drive, for storing software and data and one or more internal buses **64** for interconnecting the aforementioned elements.

[0024] In a typical embodiment, user interface device **54** is a touch screen for displaying information to a user and allowing a user to input information by touching defined areas of the screen. Alternatively, user interface device **54** could include any means for displaying and inputting information, such as a monitor, a printer, a keyboard, softkeys, a mouse, a track ball and/or a light pen. Coded data input device **60** is preferably a bar code reader capable of scanning and interpreting data printed in bar coded format. Alternatively, data input device **60** could be any device for entering coded data into a computer, such as devices for reading a magnetic strips, PCMCIA smart cards, radio frequency cards, memory sticks, CDs, DVDs, or any other analog or digital storage media. Other examples of data input device **60** include a voice activation or recognition device or a portable personal data assistant (PDA). Depending upon the types of interface devices used, user interface device **54** and coded data input device **60** may be the same device. Alternatively, although data input device **60** is shown in **FIG. 1** to be disposed within interface unit **14**, one skilled in the art will recognize that data input device **60** may be integral within pharmacy system **34** or located externally and communicating with pharmacy system **34** through an RS-232 serial interface or any other appropriate communication means. Auxiliary interface **62** is preferably an RS-232 communications interface, however any other means for communicating with a peripheral device such as a printer, patient monitor, infusion pump or other medical device may be used without departing from the scope of the invention.

[0025] Network connection **52** is preferably a direct network connection such as a T1 connection, an integrated services digital network (ISDN) connection, a digital subscriber line (DSL) modem or a cable modem. Alternatively, any direct or indirect network connection may be used, including, but not limited to a telephone modem, an MIB

system, an RS232 interface, an auxiliary interface, an optical link, an infrared link, a radio frequency link, a microwave link or a WLANS connection.

[0026] Functional modules **16, 18, 20, 22** are any devices for providing care to a patient or for monitoring patient condition. In preferred embodiment of the present invention, at least one of functional modules **16, 18, 20, 22** is an infusion pump module such as an intravenous infusion pump for delivering medication or other fluid to a patient. For the purposes of this discussion, functional module **16** is an infusion pump module. Each of functional modules **18, 20, 22** may be any patient treatment or monitoring device including, but not limited to, an infusion pump, a syringe pump, a PCA pump, an epidural pump, an enteral pump, a blood pressure monitor, a pulse oximeter, an EKG monitor, an EEG monitor, a heart rate monitor or an intracranial pressure monitor. Alternatively, functional module **18, 20** and/or **22** may be a printer, scanner or any other peripheral input/output device.

[0027] Each functional module **16, 18, 20, 22** communicates directly or indirectly with interface unit **14**, with interface unit **14** providing overall monitoring and control of device **12**. In a preferred embodiment, functional modules **16, 18, 20, 22** are connected physically and electronically in serial fashion to one or both ends of interface unit **14** as shown in **FIG. 1** and as detailed in Eggers et al. However, one skilled in the art will recognize that there are other means for connecting functional modules with the interface unit may be utilized without departing from the scope of the invention. It will also be appreciated that devices such as pumps or monitors that provide sufficient programmability and connectivity may communicate directly with the network without a separate interface unit. As described above, additional medical devices or peripheral devices may be connected to patient care device **12** through one or more auxiliary interfaces **62**.

[0028] Each functional module **16, 18, 20, 22** typically includes module-specific components **76**, a microprocessor **70**, a volatile memory **72** and a non-volatile memory **74** for storing information. It should be noted that while four functional modules are shown in **FIG. 1**, any number of devices may be connected directly or indirectly to central computer **14**. The number and type of functional modules described herein are intended to be illustrative, and in no way limit the scope of the present invention. Module-specific components **76** include any components necessary for operation of a particular module, such as a pumping mechanism for infusion pump module **16**.

[0029] While each functional module is typically capable of a least some level of independent operation, interface unit **14** monitors and controls overall operation of device **12**. For example, as will be described in more detail below, interface unit **14** provides programming instructions to the functional modules **16, 18, 20, 22** and monitors the status of each module.

[0030] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, patient care device **12** is capable of operating in several different modes, or personalities, with each personality defined by a configuration database. A particular configuration database is selected based, at least in part, by patient-specific information such as patient location, age, physical characteristics, or medical characteristics. Medical charac-

teristics include, but are not limited to, patient diagnosis, treatment prescription, medical history, medical records, patient care provider identification, physiological characteristics or psychological characteristics. As used herein, patient-specific information also includes care provider information (e.g., physician identification) or a patient care device's **10** location in the hospital or hospital computer network. Patient care information may be entered through interface device **52, 54, 60** or **62**, and may originate from anywhere in network **10**, e.g. from pharmacy **34**, admissions **36**, laboratory **42**, etc.

[0031] Data to and from the various data sources can be converted into network-compatible data with existing technology, and movement of the information between the medical device and network can be accomplished by a variety of means. For example, patient care device **12** and network **10** may communicate via automated interaction and/or manual interaction. Automated interaction may be continuous or intermittent and may occur through direct network connection **54** (as shown in **FIG. 1**), or alternatively through RS232 links, MIB systems, RF links such as BLUETOOTH (Amtel Corp., San Jose, Calif.), IR links, WLANS, digital cable systems, telephone modems or other communication means. Manual interaction between patient care device **12** and network **10** involves physically transferring, intermittently or periodically, data between systems using, for example, user interface device **54**, coded data input device **60**, bar codes, computer disks, portable data assistants, memory cards, or any other media for storing data. Preferably, the communication means is bidirectional with access to data from as many points of the distributed data sources as possible. Decision-making can occur at a variety of places within network **10**. For example, and not by way of limitation, decisions can be made in HIS server **30**, decision support **48**, hospital department or unit stations **46**, or within patient care device **12** itself.

[0032] Referring to **FIG. 2**, in a preferred embodiment of the present invention, interface unit **14** of patient care device includes a plurality of configuration databases **200, 202, 204** and **206**. The configuration databases are preferably stored in memory **56** of interface unit **14**, however one or more databases may be stored within a functional module **16, 18, 20, 22**. One skilled in the art will understand that, while memory **56** is preferably an internal hard disk, any permanent or removable storage media including, but not limited to, CD-ROM, EEPROM, diskette, tape, external hard disk, memory card, flash memory, etc. may be used. Optionally, portions of configuration databases **200, 202, 204, 206** may be stored in volatile memory such as RAM **58**.

[0033] Each configuration database **200, 202, 204, 206** preferably includes a unique database identifier, or pointer, **210, 212, 214, 216**, for identifying the respective database. Each database **200, 202, 204, 206** includes a plurality of fields which define, for example, available treatment protocols, drug library information, module operating limits, rule sets, device features and possibly other information for defining a particular operating parameters for patient care device **12**. Each configuration database **200, 202, 204, 206** defines a specific operating environment, or personality, for patient care device **12**. The individual configuration databases may be treatment location specific (e.g. intensive care unit [ICU], neonatal intensive care unit [NICU], pediatrics, oncology, etc.), disease state specific (intracranial pressure

management, bone marrow transplant, etc.), user specific (LPN, RN, physician, etc.), or created by any other rationale. For example, according to one embodiment of the present invention, when patient care device **12** is located in the ICU it utilizes configuration database **200**, and when device **12** is located in the NICU it utilizes configuration database **202**. Each database **200** and **202**, respectively, contains particular operating parameters, treatment protocols, features etc. that configure device **12** for use with patients in that unit of the hospital.

[0034] It should be noted that while **FIG. 2** shows that each database includes the same categories and types of information, the databases may vary considerably in terms of the types and amounts of information they contain. Each of the various configuration databases, when selected, at least in part defines the operating environment of device **12** and includes a number of protocols or groups of default operating parameters.

[0035] **FIG. 3** is a more detailed representation of a sample configuration database **204** according to the present invention. Configuration database **204** includes a protocol module **230** comprising a plurality of protocols **232, 234, 236, 238, 240**. Each protocol includes a plurality of fields of default operating parameters. In some cases an infusion protocol may include a complete detailed infusion instruction with all of the default parameter values defined. Other infusion protocols may have partially defined parameters with additional data entry required by the user at the point of care. For example, protocol A **232** of **FIG. 3** includes fields of default operating parameter values and other data for controlling a medication infusion pump. The fields of this example include drug name **300**, concentration **304**, container size(s) **308**, nominal dose rate **312**, initial bolus **316**, maximum dose rate **320**, minimum dose rate **324**, maximum cumulative dose **328**, drug incompatibility **332** and an ID field, record pointer **336**, for identifying or "calling" the protocol record. Each field typically includes stored default parameter values that collectively define a specific infusion protocol. Some fields, such as Drug Incompatibility **332**, include a reference or link to another database or drug library containing relevant information. Such references to commonly used data libraries allow data to be shared between protocols and/or configuration databases to avoid duplicate storage and entry and to allow efficient updating of database information. Similarly, all protocols need not be stored within each configuration database. Rather, protocols from different configuration databases may be saved in a master database or library, with each individual configuration database containing reference links to particular protocols stored in the library. Such an arrangement is advantageous because it avoids duplicate storage of identical protocols and facilitates updating of library information.

[0036] When such a protocol is selected certain information must be provided. For example, device **12** may query the network to automatically obtain data such as patient weight from the patient's electronic records in admissions **36**, critical dosage parameters from pharmacy system **34** and double check with laboratory **42** for recent test results which may contraindicate the prescribed medication. A double check with pharmacy system **34** of information coded on the drug prescription label also may be automatically performed. Alternatively, the user may enter data such as the patient weight and total dosage directly into the device, and

confirms the automatically selected parameters. In one embodiment of the invention, information in a drug specific protocol is a superset of the information in the "drug library". Consequently, if the user selects a drug name, then certain parameters in the record are applied. Such parameters would typically include the drug name, delivery rate limits, units of delivery, possibly concentration and container size. The user would enter or scan in missing data such as patient weight, drug amount, diluent volume, dosage rate, total dosage and confirm the automatically selected parameters as prompted.

[0037] Different protocols typically include different fields and/or different parameter values. Thus, Protocol B **234** might include additional fields compared to Protocol A **232**, where the additional fields define instructions and/or parameters for implementing one or more different infusion types such as primary/secondary infusion, multichannel coordinated infusion and multidose protocols (see **FIG. 4**). Alternatively, Protocol B **234** could include the same fields as Protocol A **232**, and differ only in terms of one or more parameter values in one of the fields. For example, both protocols could be for infusion of the drug dopamine, where one protocol has a concentration **304** value of 400 mg/250 mL while the other has a concentration **304** value of 800 mg/mL.

[0038] Referring again to **FIG. 3**, the Rule Sets module **250** of database **204** includes rules and/or algorithms that may be used to help define particular parameters within a database. For example, Rule Sets module **250** could include an algorithm that modifies the maximum allowable infusion rate or some other parameter based upon data obtained from other sources in network **10**, such as patient age, body weight or medical history from Admissions **36** or test results from Laboratory **42**. Other rule sets in the Rule Sets module **250** may provide warnings or recommendations upon the occurrence of particular events within pump module **16**, such as occlusion of the infusion line.

[0039] Still other rule sets within module **250** may contain algorithms that utilize measurements from one or more functional modules to modify operation of another functional module. For example, module **250** may contain a rule set that monitors blood pressure and intracranial pressure in a head trauma patient and calculates resulting perfusion pressure. The system then notifies the user when perfusion pressure falls outside of a defined range and recommends adjusting infusion rate of a therapeutic agent to increase blood pressure or to decrease intracranial pressure.

[0040] The Pump Limits module **260** of database **204** contains information that defines the overall operating limits of infusion pump module **16** and other pump devices, if any, attached to interface unit **14**. The Pump Limits module **260** typically includes at least three fields, Air In Line (AIL) Limits **262**, Max Rate **264**, and Max Pressure **268**. Because the Pump Limits module **260** of each configuration database **200, 202, 204, 206** potentially contains different parameters and values, module **260** helps define the operating characteristics or mode in which device **14** operates when a particular configuration database **200, 202, 204, 206** is active.

[0041] AIL Limits **262** defines an allowable limit for the amount of air in an infusion line connected to a patient. Allowable AIL Limits may differ for particular patients or

particular locations in the hospital. For example, an allowable limit of 50 μL may be set for pediatric patients, while a limit of 100-200 μL is used for general adult patients and 500 μL for operating room and/or trauma patients.

[0042] Max Rate **264** defines the maximum allowable infusion rate for an infusion pump operating under that particular configuration database **20**. Again, the defined Max Rate **264** values may differ among patient class, attributes, location, etc. For example, the maximum rate for delivering heparin to pediatric patients may be set at 10 units/Kg/hr, while adult patients have a limit of 500-1000 units/hr.

[0043] Feature Enable/Disable module **270** of configuration database **204** defines which particular infusion types, or features, are available to the user of system **14** when configuration database **204** is activated. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, patient care system **14** is capable of supporting a wide variety of such features, ranging from simple primary infusions used for hydration and keep-vein-open (KVO) applications to complex multi-channel delivery applications. **FIG. 4** illustrates some of the various features or infusion types that are supported by patient care system **14** according to one embodiment of the present invention. These features include, but are not limited to, Drug Calc **402**, Primary/Secondary **404**, Delayed Start (Del Start) **406**, Multi Dose **408**, Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) **410**, Multi Step **412**, and Multi-Channel Coordinated Infusion (MCCI) **414**. As mentioned previously, each of these features or infusion types may be implemented by a particular protocol stored in protocols module **230**. The foregoing features are described briefly below; see U.S. Pat. No. 5,713,856 for a more detailed description of each.

[0044] Drug Calc **402** is a feature that allows calculation of drug infusion parameters such as rate or dose, based on patient weight, time units, and drug concentration. For example, the drug calculation function of the system allows the user to either: enter the desired drug dose and the infusion pump functional unit microprocessor calculates the correct flow rate to achieve the desired dose; enter the desired flow rate and the pump functional unit calculates the corresponding drug dose; or enter the desired bolus dose and the duration and the pump functional unit calculates the bolus rate and the VTBI. The system may additionally include a pediatric drug calculation function **424** which allows the user to enter, for example, flow rate, dose, and diluent volume. From these user entered parameters, the system calculates the amount of drug to admix with the diluent to achieve a drug concentration consistent with the selected dose and flow rate. Additional details regarding Drug Calc **402** features are found in U.S. Pat. No. 5,713,856.

[0045] Typically, Drug Calc **402** mode is used to ensure accuracy of infusion rate data where a user enters at least a portion of the infusion program data manually, e.g. through a touch screen or a keypad. For example, Drug Calc **402** may be used in conjunction with a drug-specific protocol such as stored in a configuration database. Alternatively, Drug Calc **402** feature may be used in combination with a stored protocol that is identified by a coded label to calculate missing parameter values or to recalculate new values (e.g. when a prescription includes a deviation from the standard protocol values).

[0046] Pri/Sec **404** feature allows use of protocols utilizing a primary infusion in conjunction with a secondary

infusion solution. Historically a primary infusion with an antibiotic secondary would be programmed by entering the primary and secondary rate and VTBI. In the present invention, a user can simply select the appropriate antibiotic regimen from the list infusion protocols and have the appropriate parameters automatically retrieved. The user may then simply confirm the parameters and start the infusion.

[0047] Delay Start **406** delays the start of an infusion protocol or other treatment for a particular duration of time or until a particular time of day. Alternatively, start may be delayed until the happening of a particular event. Such events include, but are not limited to, a signal from the interface unit in response to measured vital signs or other physiological parameters, completion of a stage of treatment by another module, or a signal or data received by system **14** over network **10**.

[0048] Multi Dose **408** allows multiple doses of a drug to be delivered over time. A protocol incorporating the Multi Dose **408** feature typically includes parameters for infusion rate, volume/dose, dose interval, number of doses and start time. As with all other protocols stored in a configuration database, a stored Multi Dose **408** protocol may be selected or activated from the configuration database simply by scanning a coded drug label containing the protocol identifier (with or without instructions for deviating from the default protocol values). Any missing or different values may then be entered by the user.

[0049] TPN **410** provides for total parenteral nutrition delivery using standard or custom ramp and taper protocols known to those skilled in the art. For example, a typical TPN protocol for delivering 2500 calories over an eight hour period utilizes an initial slow rate of delivery with a gradual increase to a maintenance rate for a period of six to seven hours, then a gradual decrease to complete the infusion.

[0050] Multi Step **412** is similar to TPN **410** in that it allows delivery of a substance at various rates/volumes during a protocol. Standard **430** defines standard multi-step protocols that are commonly used without deviation for different patients. Custom **432** defines multi-step delivery protocols that are customized for particular situations. For example, a custom multi-step protocol may be used for delivery of dobutamine to increase heart rate during a stress test. Such a protocol typically varies the delivery profile of the drug to a patient over time, and patient weight or age is used as a factor to select a particular profile. Any number of custom multi-step protocols may be defined and used by one skilled in the art.

[0051] MCCI **414** may be used in conjunction with Multi Dose **408** and/or Delay Start **406** features to program complex coordinated infusion involving different solutions being infused from multiple modules, or channels. **FIG. 5** illustrates a process flow for manually setting up a typical multichannel coordinated infusion according to the present invention. After the MCCI **414** function is selected in step **500** from a menu of operations displayed by the interface unit, the user is prompted to enter maintenance rate/volume **502**. The user is then queried as to whether a flush **504** is desired. If yes, the user is prompted to enter flush volume and duration in step **506** before going to step **508**. If no flush, or after flush volume and duration are entered, the user is prompted to choose continuous or between doses **508**. The

user is then prompted to confirm the maintenance settings **510**. The user then selects a channel to use for the coordinated infusion in step **512**. Step **514** queries the user as to whether a multi-dose infusion is desired. If multi-dose is to be used for that channel, the user enters the multidose parameters in step **516**; if multi-dose is not to be used, the user is prompted to enter delayed start time in step **518**. If a dilution **520** will be used, the user is prompted to enter dilution rate or volume **522**. After all parameters have been entered for that channel, the user is queried in step **524** as to whether additional infusions/channels are to be used. If so, steps **512-520** are repeated until all channels are configured. Once all channels are configured, the user is prompted to start the MCCI **526**.

[0052] According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, some or all of the process steps shown in **FIG. 5** and the values to be entered may be defined by a protocol stored in a configuration database. In such a case, the steps of **FIG. 5** may be replaced by simply scanning a coded label including the protocol identification, or alternatively by selecting the desired protocol from a menu, and verifying the parameter values.

[0053] One skilled in the art will appreciate that the features and infusion types shown in **FIG. 4** is intended to be illustrative of the present invention, and that patient care device **14** may support additional or different features than those described herein.

[0054] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a plurality of patient care systems **12** are linked through a local area network (LAN) to a floor or unit server as shown in **FIG. 6**. For example, in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) having an NICU server **610**, a plurality of bedside patient care devices **650, 652, 654** and **656** are connected through a LAN **620** to unit server **610**. Similar network servers may be provided throughout the hospital, such as pediatrics **612**, intensive care unit (ICU) **614**, surgery (OR) **616** and oncology **618**. Unit server **610** may contain the configuration database information for that particular unit. The configuration databases in patient care device **12** could be updated periodically by downloading them from the unit server. Alternatively, a particular configuration database could be downloaded from the server as it is selected for use in patient care system **650, 652, 654** or **656**. Still another alternative is to have a unit- or department-specific configuration database that is automatically downloaded into a patient care system **650, 652, 654, 656** when the system is operatively connected to the department LAN. In any case, having some or all of the configuration database information stored in the unit server **610, 612, 614, 616, 618** facilitates management and updating of the databases. U.S. Pat. No. 5,718,442 to Engleson et al., which is incorporated herein by reference, describes a system for connecting bedside medical devices to a hospital network, or network of networks, that may be suitable for use with the present invention.

[0055] In yet another an alternative embodiment of the present invention, patient care device **12** is not directly connected to network **10**. Rather, information is indirectly connected to network **10** using data input device **60**, user interface **54**, auxiliary interface **62** or other communication means. Such communication means include, but are not limited to, RS232 links, MIB systems, IR links, WLANS, portable data assistants, memory cards, portable storage

media or any other suitable communication means. Indirect communication can also be accomplished, for example, using modems with either the traditional phone system, voice over data or with cellular phones. In one example, a portable computer such as a personal data assistant may be used to transfer database information and/or infusion instructions from pharmacy system **34** to patient care device **12**. The various possible means of direct and indirect communication allow information to be continuously or periodically transferred between the patient care device and other systems in network **10** (e.g. pharmacy system **34**, unit station server **46**, laboratory **42**, etc.).

[0056] Referring again to **FIG. 1**, regardless of how patient care device **12** connects to or otherwise communicates with network **10**, a feature of the present invention is that information is transferred, at least occasionally, between the various departments and systems within network **10** such that functionality of patient care device **12** is altered by information received from the other systems. Such a distributed, coordinated care system provides for efficient utilization of assets and improved quality of patient care by maximizing integration and utility of information from various sources in the system and by limiting opportunities for human error. As discussed above, one example of how patient care device **12** may alter its personality based upon information received from other sources is selection of specific configuration database defining a particular, treatment location-specific (e.g. NICU, Pediatrics, ICU, Surgery, Oncology, etc.), operating environment for the device **12**. Similarly, prescription information, patient treatment history, drug incompatibilities, etc. from Pharmacy **34** are utilized to program device **12** and minimize data entry errors.

[0057] Other communications between patient care device **12** and the various departments or units **36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48** within network **10** serve to enhance overall quality of care. For example, communication with the biomedical engineering department (Biomed **40**) helps insure device **12** safety and efficacy and optimize the efficient utilization of assets. Asset location can be accomplished by querying devices about their serial number and location. As mentioned above, device **12** location can be automatically determined by the device's connection to the network or some other means of identifying itself and its location to the network. Preventative maintenance procedures and device diagnostics can be performed remotely and blindly to the user. When problems occur, diagnostic analysis of perspective device behavior can be done remotely. This information can also be collected as a quality control device on an ongoing basis. Device utilization data can be collected to optimize the distribution of devices. As product updates or maintenance procedures come due, notices could be posted on the devices's user interface indicating the pending need. Similarly utilization of resources may also be managed from Central Supply **44**. They can benefit from the same effects as the biomed group. The location and use of medical devices can be monitored and optimized based upon this data.

[0058] When a patient is first admitted in the Admissions department, a variety of data relevant to the patient is entered into the hospital's information system including patient sex, size, weight, medical condition, drug allergies, etc. This information can be used by the medical device **12** to advise the user of potential problems such as adverse drug reactions, incompatible dosing regimens and unlikely drug

prescriptions. These could appear as prompts to the direct care giver or as flat-out restrictions for use beyond prescribed parameters. In patient monitoring applications it might include recommended alarm limits, monitoring periodicity, etc.

[0059] A Billing department **38** may rely on information regarding utilization of the medical device, particularly the documentation of its use or the delivery of specific medications, to effect the billing to the customer. The ability to track activities independent of their actual origin offers a way of cross checking them with the resultant improvement in efficiencies.

[0060] Networked computer terminals in Unit Stations **46**, such as in a nurse's station in a particular hospital unit, allow care providers to assess remotely from any location connected into the distributed coordinated care network **10**, the course of care and patient vital signs. The parameters of care (flow rate, PCA parameters, dose, monitoring intervals, alarm limits, etc.) can be altered from any location in the network, with the necessary authorization. The history of device readings, infusion site monitoring and back pressure readings, as well as the infusion and revised parameters and monitoring limits, can be reviewed remotely.

[0061] By way of non-limiting example, the use of the patient care system according to the present invention is explained in greater detail below by reference to procedures for configuring patient care device **12** for providing a prescribed treatment to a patient.

[0062] Most hospitals commonly have an established formulary of medications which defines how the medications are typically dispensed. When a patient care management system according to the present invention is first installed, a hospital committee may be formed to determine how that formulary would be applied to the patient care devices **12**. The configuration definitions (e.g., by hospital unit such as ICU, NICU, Pediatrics, Oncology, Surgery, etc.) are agreed upon and the drugs and typical infusion protocols are established. In addition, all outer limit, or guard rail, conditions are defined. This information is entered into a drug library editor and configuration management program such as INFUSION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (Alaris Medical Systems, San Diego, Calif.).

[0063] When all of the definitions are complete, then a configuration can be released. Pumps at the institution are then updated by transferring the configuration databases into some or all of their pumps. Transfer of the database information typically occurs over network transmission channel **34**. Alternatively, databases may be downloaded/updated using removable media, portable computers, personal data assistants, or any other appropriate means for transferring information to patient care device **12**.

[0064] Assuring that the medication is being administered to the correct patient is a key element of this system. Upon entering the hospital every patient is typically issued an identification number (patient ID) and an associated wrist band. Printed on the band or located within the band is the patient ID in text form and in coded form. Various options exist for the coded ID. For example, the band could utilize a bar code, a magnetic strip, or any other means of storing coded patient identification information. The desired configuration database might also be recorded on the wrist band.

For example, a child may have a band with an indicator that the pediatric configuration database is to be used.

[0065] The process steps involved in configuring a device to utilize a particular configuration database according to one embodiment of the present invention are shown in **FIG. 7**. After power to device **12** is turned on **700** and an internal systems check **704** is performed, the device displays on user interface **54** information pertaining to the current patient and/or the current location **708**. In one embodiment of the invention, this information is recalled from the last use of the device. Alternatively, the device location and or patient identification may be determined by information received through its connection to network **10** and/or a LAN within the hospital. For example, referring to **FIG. 5**, a device **650** connected over LAN **620** to a server in NICU **610** receives information from the server that it should be located by Bed **1**, and that a particular patient is scheduled to be in that bed. Accordingly, the device **650** utilizes that information as the default patient and location. Alternatively, device **650** automatically determines its location within the hospital by a sensor or other means of uniquely determining its location. A sensor is defined broadly herein as any device or process of sensing or detecting the location of a device, including, but not limited to, a network receptacle or port address, a network adapter, programmed location instructions, hospital records indicating location, an IR sensors or tags, RF sensors or tags, magnetic sensors or tags, or any other means of detecting the location of a device **650**.

[0066] In step **712** the device queries the user whether the patient information is correct. If the patient is new to the device, or if the information is missing or incorrect, the user enters the patient ID in step **716**. Patient ID is typically entered using input device **60**, e.g., by scanning a patient's coded wristband including patient identification information. Alternatively, patient ID may be entered manually using a keyboard, keypad, or other interface device **54**. If the current configuration database is missing or incorrect **720**, the user is prompted to select the-appropriate configuration database **724** (e.g. according to location, patient, physician, etc.). Alternatively, the appropriate configuration database ID may be scanned into the system from the patient's identification band, or may be automatically retrieved from memory or from another location in network **10** once the patient identity, location or other patient-specific information is entered into device **12**.

[0067] When a physician orders an IV, the order is typically first sent to the pharmacy (where it is entered into the hospital's pharmacy system **34**). Most hospitals include a pharmacy computer system capable of maintaining records of medications already given as well as those prescribed in the future. Most commercially available pharmacy systems allow for adverse drug interactions to be checked for as part of the process prescription entering/drug dispensing process.

[0068] According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, after the order is entered the prescription is prepared. If the drug is compounded or sourced in the pharmacy, then the prescribed medication is prepared and placed in a container. Pharmacy system **34** would then translate the infusion order from the hospital pharmacy software onto a label with encoded message and accompanying text. The label preferably includes at least the following information: patient ID, infusion protocol reference,

infusion protocol deviations, or deltas, if any, and scheduled time of infusion. The label is affixed to the medication container before the prescription is transported to the unit nursing station. Medications are preferably transported from the Pharmacy to the nurse's station by hospital personnel or contained within drug dispensing cabinets near the nurse's station. Alternatively, drugs may be transported using a robotic system, such as a PYXIS system (Pyxis Corporation, San Diego, Calif.). If the drug is to be distributed from a unit nursing station, then the same type of label may be printed at the station and affixed to the drug container.

[0069] At an appropriate time, the labeled medication container is then taken to the patient's location. The bar code reader (or other data input device) is used to scan the coded drug label, the patient's coded ID band and the caregiver's ID badge, and optionally supplementary prescription information or medical device configuration instructions (including configuration database ID) printed on the label or an accompanying order. The scanned information is stored in memory 58, while device 12 first compares the scanned data to ensure that the patient identity corresponds to the patient information on the medication label, and that the prescription is being administered at the appropriate time. After the correct patient, prescription and time are verified, device 12 recalls from the active configuration database the protocol or other program information identified on the container label. The default parameter values are adjusted by any delta information included in the prescription. The user is prompted to enter, using a touch pad, bar code reader, or any other appropriate means, any missing or incomplete data. Optionally, some data may be obtained automatically from network 10 or from the appropriate department server based upon the entered patient ID, caregiver ID, user commands, etc. Once all required settings have been entered, central unit 14 displays the values, either serially or in one or more groups, to the user for verification. Once all information is entered and verified, interface unit programs the functional module(s) to perform the prescribed treatment.

[0070] It should be noted that the prescription label or other treatment instructions may identify multiple protocols and other instructions. The multiple protocols (or a single complex protocol), may define a plurality of operations to be performed by device 12. For example, the prescription label or prescription order could identify a multichannel coordinated infusion protocol involving multiple channels and infusion solutions. Additionally, the same order may identify a protocol for (or detail instructions for) programming a functional module or auxiliary device to monitor the patient physiological parameters, such as a blood pressure, heart rate, O₂ saturation, respiratory rate, etc. Interface unit 14 monitors the measured parameters and, depending upon active rule sets and other configuration instructions, can modify infusion parameters based upon signals received from the physiological monitors. Such feedback systems may be useful for titration of drugs, to control anesthesia, or to regulate blood pressure.

[0071] Various embodiments of the invention have been described. The descriptions are intended to be illustrative, not limitative. Thus, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that modifications may be made to the invention as described without departing from the claims set out below.

1. A patient care system comprising:

a patient care device including a memory for storing a plurality of configuration databases, each of said configuration databases comprising a plurality of device operating parameters;

a network communicating with said device, said network including at least one database comprising patient-specific information; and

means for activating a configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases based at least in part on said patient-specific information communicated to the care device, wherein the patient care device operates in accordance with at least one of said plurality of groups of operating parameters of the activated configuration database.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said network comprises a plurality of separate databases communicating via manual interaction.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein said network comprises a plurality of separate databases communicating via automated interaction.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein communication between the network and care device is provided by a coded data input device or a network connection.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient-specific information comprises any of a patient identifier, a patient location, a patient care device location, patient age, a physical characteristic or a medical characteristic.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the activating means comprises:

a processor within said patient care device;

a patient-specific information input device in communication with said processor; and

a computer program stored in said memory, said computer program executable by said processor and including instructions for activating the specific configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases based at least in part on input patient-specific information.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the patient-specific information comprises a patient identifier, patient location, patient care device location, patient age, a physical characteristic, a physiological characteristic, a psychological characteristic, patient medical history, a patient medical record, a patient diagnosis, or a care provider identifier.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein said input device is a coded data input device or a network connection.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein said selecting means comprises a patient care device location sensor, such that selection of the specific configuration database is based, at least in part, on a location of the patient care device.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the operating parameters within at least one of said plurality of configuration databases are organized into a plurality of groups.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein at least one of said plurality of groups is a protocol defining parameters for operating said patient care device to deliver a substance to the patient.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of said configuration databases comprises a plurality of drug delivery protocols, at least one of said protocols including a

protocol identifier and at least one default parameter value for programming the patient care device to deliver a drug.

13. The system of claim 12, further comprising:

a coded data input device operatively connected to said patient care device; and

a drug container having a label comprising coded patient care instructions, wherein the data input device is capable of reading the coded patient care instructions from the label into said patient care device.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the coded patient care instructions comprise the protocol identifier, such that reading the coded patient care instructions activates the protocol identified by the protocol identifier.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the coded patient care instructions further comprise a deviation from the default parameter, such that the patient care device is programmed to deliver the drug in accordance with the deviated parameter.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient care device comprises any of an infusion pump, a syringe pump, a patient-controlled analgesia pump, an epidural pump, an enteral pump or a physiological monitor.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient care device comprises an interface unit and at least one functional unit detachably and operatively connected to the interface unit, wherein the interface unit includes said memory and said functional unit provides care to the patient in accordance with said at least one of said plurality of configuration databases.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the functional unit comprises any of an infusion pump, a syringe pump, a patient-controlled analgesia pump, an epidural pump, an enteral pump or a physiological monitor.

19. A patient care system comprising:

a patient care device comprising a processor and a memory, said memory storing a plurality of configuration databases, said patient care device capable of providing patient therapies or monitoring the condition of a patient in accordance with operating parameters defined by a configuration database selected from said plurality of configuration databases; and

an input device communicating with said patient care device, said input device adapted to enter patient-specific information into the patient care device,

wherein the processor selects the first configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases in response to the patient-specific information entered into the patient care device through the input device.

20. The patient care system of claim 19, wherein the input device is a coded data input device.

21. The patient care system of claim 20, wherein the coded data input device is a bar code reader.

22. The patient care system of claim 20, wherein the coded data input device is any of a magnetic media reader or a voice recognition device.

23. The patient care system of claim 19, wherein the input device is a network connection.

24. The patient care system of claim 23, further comprising a network, said network comprising at least one database in communication with said network connection of said interface unit via manual interaction or automated interaction.

25. The patient care system of claim 24, wherein said network connection is a wireless network connection.

26. The patient care system of claim 19, wherein the patient-specific information comprises a location.

27. The patient care system of claim 26, wherein the location is any of a location of the patient, a location of the patient care device, or a network address.

28. The patient care system of claim 19, wherein said patient care device comprises:

an interface unit including the processor and the memory, said interface unit in communication with the input device;

a functional unit communicating with the interface unit, said functional for providing the patient therapies or monitoring the condition of a patient in accordance with the operating parameters defined by the selected configuration database.

29. The patient care system of claim 28, wherein said functional unit is removably connected to said interface unit.

30. The patient care system of claim 28, wherein the functional unit is any of an infusion pump, a syringe pump, a PCA pump, an epidural pump, an enteral pump, a blood pressure monitor, a pulse oximeter, an EKG monitor, an EEG monitor, a heart rate monitor or an intracranial pressure monitor.

31. A patient care system, comprising:

an interface unit comprising a processor and a memory, said memory storing a plurality of configuration databases;

an input device communicating with said interface unit, said input device adapted to enter patient-specific information into the interface unit;

a functional unit removably connected to the interface unit and communicating therewith, said functional unit capable of providing patient therapies or monitoring the condition of a patient in accordance with a configuration database selected from the plurality of configuration databases; and

a network communicating with said interface unit, said network including at least one database comprising the patient-specific information and communicating with said interface unit via manual interaction or automated interaction,

wherein the processor selects the configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases in response to the patient-specific information entered into said interface unit through said input device, and said functional unit provides a patient therapy or monitors the condition of the patient in accordance with the selected configuration database.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the input device comprises a network connection or a coded data input device.

33. The system of claim 31, wherein the functional unit comprises a pump for delivering a drug or fluid to a patient, wherein said functional unit delivers said substance in accordance with the selected configuration database.

34. The system of claim 31, wherein the selected configuration database comprises at least one protocol for operating said functional unit, such that the functional unit

operates in accordance with the protocol to provide a patient therapy or to monitor the condition of the patient.

35. The system of claim 31, wherein the patient-specific information is any of a location of the patient, a location of the interface unit, a network address, or a patient medical characteristic.

36. A method of providing care to a patient, comprising:

activating a configuration database from a plurality of configuration databases stored in a memory of a patient care device, said patient care device capable of providing patient therapies or monitoring the condition of a patient in accordance with the activated configuration database, wherein said configuration database comprises at least one protocol defining parameters for operating said patient care device;

configuring said patient care device to operate in accordance with said activated configuration database;

selecting the patient care protocol from said activated configuration database; and

operating said patient care device in accordance with the operating parameters defined by the selected protocol to provide care to the patient.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the input device is a coded data input device or a network connection.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein activating the configuration database comprises positioning the patient care device at a location in a network of computers, such that the active configuration database is selected as a function of said location in the network.

39. The method of claim 36, wherein activating the configuration database comprises:

entering patient-specific information into said patient care device using all input device communicating with said patient care device; and

selecting the configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases based at least in part on said patient-specific information.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the patient-specific information is any of a location of the patient, a location of the patient care device, a network address, or a patient medical characteristic.

41. The method of claim 36, wherein activating a configuration database comprises selecting a configuration database from a menu of configuration databases using an input device in communication with the patient care device.

42. The method of claim 36, wherein selecting a patient care protocol comprises entering a protocol identifier corresponding to said patient care protocol using an input device in communication with the patient care device.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein said patient care protocol includes a drug identifier and at least one drug delivery parameter.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein said at least one drug delivery parameter is any of a concentration, a container size, a dose, an bolus dose, a dose rate, a maximum dose rate, a minimum dose rate, a maximum cumulative dose, a volume or an adverse drug identifier.

45. The method of claim 36, wherein selecting a patient care protocol comprises selecting the protocol from a menu

of protocols displayed on a user interface of said patient care device using an input device in communication with said patient care device.

46. The method of claim 36, wherein said patient care device comprises:

an interface unit comprising the memory and a processor;

an input device in communicating with the interface unit, said input device adapted to enter patient-specific information into the interface unit; and

a functional unit communicating with the interface unit, said functional unit for providing the patient therapies or monitoring the condition of a patient in accordance with the activated configuration database.

47. A method of programming a patient care device to deliver a substance to a patient, comprising:

printing a coded label, said label including a substance delivery protocol identifier;

attaching the label to a container holding the substance;

transporting the container to the patient care device;

entering the protocol identifier into the patient care device;

retrieving from a memory in the patient care device a specific protocol identified by the identifier, said specific protocol comprising a plurality of delivery parameters and default values; and

programming the patient care device to deliver the substance to the patient in accordance with the specific protocol.

48. The method of claim 47, further comprising selecting a configuration database from a plurality of configuration databases stored in the memory of the patient care device, wherein the selected configuration database includes the specific protocol.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the selected configuration database further includes additional information defining all operating environment for the device, said information comprising any of a protocol, a rule set, a device operating limit or a device operating feature.

50. The method of claim 48, wherein selecting the configuration database comprises transferring patient-specific information to said patient care device to enable selection of the configuration database from said plurality of configuration databases based at least in part on said patient-specific information.

51. The method of claim 50, wherein transferring of said patient-specific information comprises entering the patient-specific information into the patient care device using a coded data input device or a network connection.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said entering step comprises scanning the coded label with a coded data input device operatively connected to said patient care system.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the data input device is a bar code reader.

54. The method of claim 48, wherein selecting the configuration database comprises positioning the patient care device at a location in a network of computers and selecting the configuration database as a function of said location.

55. The method of claim 45, wherein the coded label further includes a value representing a deviation from the specific protocol, such that the programming step includes

programming the patient care device to deliver the substance to the patient in accordance with the deviation from the specific protocol.

56. The method of claim 45, wherein the coded label further includes supplementary information, said information including a patient identifier, a deviation from the first protocol and a scheduled time to begin delivery of the substance to the patient.

57. The method of claim 56, further comprising:

scanning a patient identification code attached to the patient; confirming that the patient identifier on the container label corresponds to the patient identification code; and

entering the supplementary information from said coded label,

wherein the step of programming the patient care device comprises programming the patient care device to deliver the substance to the patient to accordance with the deviation from the specific protocol at the scheduled delivery time.

58. The method of claim 57, further comprising scanning a provider identification code.

59. A method of delivering a drug or fluid to a patient, comprising:

obtaining patient-specific information from a database in a hospital network;

transferring the patient-specific information to a patient care device using an input device in communication

with said patient care device, said interface unit comprising a memory storing a plurality of configuration databases for configuring the care device to provide care to a patient;

activating a configuration database from the plurality of configuration databases in response to said patient-specific information, the activated configuration database including a plurality of protocols;

selecting a protocol from said plurality of protocols, said protocol including at least one parameter for programming the care device to deliver a drug or fluid to the patient;

programming said device to deliver the drug or fluid to the patient in accordance with the selected protocol; and

delivering the drug or fluid to the patient in accordance with the selected protocol

60. The method of claim 59, wherein said patient care device comprises:

an interface unit including the memory and a processor, said interface unit in communication with the input device; and

a functional unit removably connected to said interface unit and communicating therewith, said functional unit including a pump for delivering the drug or fluid to the patient.

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