

Greetings Nobles and Friends of the Hospital!

Just returned from the February meeting and again, it was very much a learning experience for myself. Bagdad got off to a good start in January, with 9 approved applications for the month of January. Last year, we had a total of 48 for the year, or 4 per month. This year, we should consider setting a goal for Bagdad of 72 for the year, or 6 per month. Upon achieving this, we will have increased the number of apps by 50% over last year, and with the things Bagdad is getting going, this should be an attainable goal for us.

Our hospital had a total of 8358 outpatient visits last year (note, 1 visit does not equal 1 patient as a single patient may have had numerous visits). We did a total of 662 operations last year. The Operating Room was closed for 2 weeks last year for remodeling, which resulted in a loss of approx. 40 additional surgeries. The average stay in Spokane is 1 day less than guidelines set forth by Tampa. This would suggest that our staff is working in an extremely efficient manner for the benefit of our kids.

III. Sir Jeff Folsom has requested that all Bagdad's clubs put on a screening clinic in their respective areas in 2009. The Bitterroot Shrine Club has tentatively set up a clinic in Stevensville on April 18th under the leadership of Divan Member Bob Anderson. Back in 2004 when we put on a clinic we had a packet that told how to successfully hold a clinic. We have obtained one of these packets, after checking with the hospital, Tampa and finally our own office, where Tara was able to produce one. We will get more or have more made up for distribution, thereby ensuring that those members needing this information can receive it. I will mail them out to anyone who requests one, instead of just sending it to the clubs. We would like to see that the information gets to the nobles who will utilize it.

Since our last message the financial markets have not gotten any better. The board of trustees in Tampa have asked each of the hospitals to put forth a budgets showing cost reductions of 5%-10%-15% as they are trying to take \$200 million out of the annual budget of the 22 hospitals. A couple of steps already taken by the trustees are the closing of the hospital in Galveston Tx. It was severely damaged by a hurricane last year. Plus they have stopped construction in L.A. Out of our budget, 60% of our costs are clinical and the other 40% administration. When I first heard about the 40% administration cost, I thought that was astronomical, until I found out that it also included our research programs.

Things are not easy out there, and it's going to take a little bit from each of us to get things turned around. We should all get back to the basics which are: Raise money for the hospitals and find the children that we can help defy the odds. With the direction that the leadership of Bagdad has chosen, I believe we can and will meet our goals and look forward to the perpetuity of our Fraternity and hospitals.

Until next month, yours in faith,

E.G.