

Greetings Nobles and Friends of the Hospital:

The March meeting for the Spokane hospital was held this last Monday, March 16th. After the meeting was completed, Lester Nivens and myself, as new Board Members, were given our orientation Monday afternoon and all day on Tuesday.

On Monday afternoon, we met with the department heads of Rehab, Health Information Services, Recreation Therapy, Public Relations, HR and Volunteer Services, Lab, and Fiscal Services; followed on Tuesday by going on patient rounds with Dr. Caskey, Chief of Staff, and then observed 2 surgeries. The procedures were the same in each surgery: 2 children, approx. age 18 mos., each were born with webbed fingers. The purpose of the surgery was to separate each finger, allowing it to operate individually. Once the fingers were separated, a graft of skin taken from their hips was used to cover their fingers. Due to the expertise of the surgeons, these children will most likely not remember the surgery or have any visible signs of scarring.

Following surgery, we continued on with our meetings with the department heads, visiting with Inpatient Nursing, Outpatient Clinic, Care Coordination, Plant & Facilities, Family Center, Nutrition, Motion Analysis Lab, Clinical Research, Radiology, Information Services and Performance Improvement.

As you can see, there are many more departments than one would realize. All dedicated to one common goal "THE TOTAL WELL BEING OF THE ENTIRE CHILD". The common message that we received from all employees in all departments was " It is an honor to work here, we are proud of the work we do. We want to do better in the future, and will do whatever it takes to help every single child who enters our hospital".

Bagdad had 3 approved applications in February bringing us to 12 year to date. Putting us on track to do 72 children in 2009. Over all the hospital had 206 children for the month.

"Our daily census of just under 7 patients per day is only one less than needed to meet SHC targets for staff to patient ratios. That's do-able!" It is very do-able. Not only would it get the numbers up where we should be, it would increase utilization of the hospital, and we would be helping more children "Defy the Odds". (F.Y.I. A hospital's daily census is always taken at midnight and tells how many patients are staying over night. Also, it takes 5 outpatients to equal 1 on the daily census).

About the future of our great little hospital, there is a great amount of misinformation floating out there. Many of you attended the P.N.S.A. in Vancouver where several different what-if talks were given by the Imperial Sir and representatives of the Salt Lake, Portland and Spokane hospitals. Some of the topics included calling for the downsizing or closing of some of the hospitals in the system and billing of third parties (insurance companies). One of the things that I am worried about is long term solutions to short term problems. No, the market isn't any better than it was last month, and we are still seeing erosion of the trust fund. However, the board of trustees have been very reactive in controlling our costs and projecting out what our revenue needs are going to be. The Spokane hospital has an annual budget of approx. \$14.5 million. Interestingly enough, the Spokane unit generates approx. \$11.5 million in local contributions. As you can see, our little hospital is almost self-supporting.

The most important issue to be discussed at Imperial in July is collection from 3rd parties. A study has been taken that shows that the Shrine Hospitals could collect approx. \$165 million from insurance companies if we were to bill them. 2 important things to keep in mind are: 1.) the insurance companies will never dictate treatment to us. If they say that they will pay for 2 nights stay and our medical staff deems 5 nights appropriate, the child will stay 5 nights and we will collect from them for 2 nights. 2.) no family nor patient of our facility will ever be faced with a deductible or a co-pay. As always, our treatment will be without cost to the family. Right now, insurance companies are benefitting from our philosophies. They can pay their share.

So in the next few months, it is going to be very important that we communicate to our Imperial Representatives that they vote to keep our hospital open and for 3rd party billing, and also rally enough representatives from the other temples to ensure passage of these measures.

In closing, again I'd like to thank everyone for their continued support of the fraternity and our hospitals. The children are out there who we can help "Defy the Odds". Let's find them.

Until next month, Yours in Faith,
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