

Dear Nobles and Friends of the Hospital:

As you would expect, the main topic at this month's Board of Governor's Meeting at the Spokane hospital, was the vote for hospital closures. This vote is to be conducted at the Imperial Session in July. The board today feels more optimistic about the future of our hospital than we did just last month.

In attendance was Bob Smith, member of the board of trustees, member of Calam Shrine and well known guardian of the Spokane unit. Upon conferring with Bob, it is our belief that the hospitals will not be closed. However, considerable changes will need to be made to the system to prevent reconsideration next year; it is unlikely that it would be voted down twice.

The rumors and uncertainties surrounding the possible closure have been very hard on the hospital staff. While each one has shown an incredible amount of loyalty to the hospital, they are torn between the hospital and their own survival, which we can understand. Income and family should always come first.

Our staff is being spread thin because of a hiring freeze and resignations of key staff. We have been directed to take an additional 7% out of our 2009 budget. As I have said before, we have cut the fat and are now cutting flesh. Any additional cuts to our budget could be construed as a hospital closure because there is no more to be cut without sacrificing the treatment and service to the children.

Speaking of the budget, the hospital year to date is under budget. The staff has done a great job of controlling costs by outsourcing some of our services that qualify for third party billing (ex. procedures done at Sacred Heart can be billed to insurance companies by them). Due to third party billing, we have saved \$750,000 in outside services.

One of the rumors that seems to be circulating, is that we have 180 employees to take care of just 6 children per day. The truth is, the six is our daily census (the number of children in the hospital at midnight). While during the course of a normal work day, we see 60 to 70 children. Ralph Sembs, chairman of the board of trustees, wants Spokane to be an ambulatory care center (ambulatory = to walk on your own without aid). Sending all other surgeries to Portland. Currently, Portland has a backlog of 600 patients. Why would we send them 700 more?

Volunteers are an intricate part of our hospital, currently over 100 people volunteer at the Spokane Hospital with all positions filled. On April 22, we had Volunteer Appreciation Day. We had the opportunity to thank all of these wonderful folks for their time and effort.

Bagdad had 1 approved application in April and 22 year to date. This puts us at an average of 5.4 per month. This is ahead of the 4 per month in 2008. With our goal being, 6 per month, we are running a bit behind but with the screening clinics held last month, May is looking good. Bagdad is ahead of Al Bedou in number of applications but behind Algeria.

I would like to thank the clubs and units within Bagdad that have already held a screening clinic in their areas and urged others to get theirs on the calendar ASAP. The kids are out there that we can help to defy the odds. It is our duty to find them. I know we can.

Until next month,

E.G. Leipheimer