



St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center.
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St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center

medical staff newsletter

April 28, 1980



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NEONATAL UNIT TRAINS FAMILY PRACTICE PHYSICIANS

Certainly the primary function of any hospital's neonatal intensive care unit is caring for high risk babies. St. Paul-Ramsey's neonatal division of its Perinatal Center plays another important role, however. It is a major training ground in newborn medicine for family practice physicians, according to Dr. Norman Virnig, the Perinatal Center's medical director.

"I am very proud of our program," he says. "Family practice physicians who have trained here are clearly superior." Residents are given major responsibilities during their neonatology rotation. First year residents spend one month in the unit. Second year residents work in the facility for six weeks.

No other neonatal intensive care program in the state devotes as much time to training family practice residents, according to Dr. Virnig. "With the breadth of our program and the exposure given to family practice residents, I feel we really provide a major service to medicine in the state of Minnesota," he says.

Perinatal education does not stop at the graduate level. Recently, a two day Perinatal Symposium at St. Paul-Ramsey, offered through the Continuing Medical Education Office of the University of Minnesota, was attended by 75 family practice physicians. Many wrote to thank Dr. Virnig and Dr. Erick Hakanson for the excellent program, which was coordinated by the Departments of Pediatrics, Family Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology.

"I believe this kind of continuing education is extremely important to family practice physicians, especially those in small, private practices who don't have much pathology in the high risk area," he says.

The Perinatal Center also has conducted educational programs for nurses, including a recent three day refresher course in neonatology for nurses from rural community hospitals. Next fall the center will hold a perinatal nursing symposium.

The fact that St. Paul-Ramsey is a teaching institution has strengthened the neonatology unit by giving it excellent emergency support, according to Dr. Virnig. Three full-time neonatologists are at the medical center all day, and there is house staff support during off hours with neonatologist available in emergencies. The three neonatologists on staff, Dr. Virnig, Dr. Charles Alward and Dr. Pakshirajan Athinarayanan, rotate responsibilities each month, alternating patient care, outside consulting, education and research.

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Dr. Virnig and his associates have found little time to work on research, however, because the neonatal intensive care unit's activity has increased over the past few years. Last year patient days increased more than 15 percent over the previous year, according to Dr. Athinarayanan. The unit's occupancy rate was 76 percent, he reports, which was much higher than in previous years. Admissions went up also, while the average length of stay went down.

In addition to their work in the unit at St. Paul-Ramsey, the neonatologists have consulted on many cases throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Often the babies they treat will remain at their local hospitals. Dr. Virnig reports that the group visits hospitals in Long Prairie, Forest Lake, Stillwater and even Brainerd.

One of the features the neonatal unit offers referring physicians is a follow up clinic. The neonatologist here will follow a high risk baby, giving repeated check ups at six months, one, two, four, six and eight years. They look for any medical problems that might have arisen such as brain disorders, behavioral disorders or cerebral palsy. There is no physician charge for this service. The patient pays only the hospital out-patient fee of \$13. After a neonatologist has examined a patient, he sends a letter complete with a recommendation to the referring physician. "We look at this clinic as sort of a quality control measure," says Dr. Virnig. "We offer it as a service to our referring physicians."

MEDICAL CENTER RESEARCH INCREASED IN LAST BIENNIUM

Documented research at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center increased substantially in the 1978-79 biennium, according to recent report to the MERF Administrative Committee by Dr. Kent Crossley, chairman of the St. Paul-Ramsey-MERF Research Committee.

Dr. Crossley found that approximately 150 papers originated from the medical center over the last two years, and an equal number of abstracts were presented by staff physicians.

"These documented numbers represent a three to four fold increase over documented activity for the period of 1976-77," said Dr. Crossley in his report.

MERF directly supports about 15 percent of papers and abstracts authored by medical center physicians, according to Dr. Crossley. Many projects are "spinoffs" of MERF supported ones and receive funds from outside sources, he said.

The MERF Administrative Committee has allotted \$275,000 for support of research grants in 1980. The figure is a 10 percent increase over the amount awarded in 1979.

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MARCH AND FIRST QUARTER STATISTICS

Visits to St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center's Emergency Room in the first quarter have increased by 1.7 percent over the same period last year, according to a report by Rudy Jensen, controller. The rise in ER visits reverses a downward trend that began last year.

Although utilization of the medical center on an inpatient basis has dipped slightly in the first quarter compared to last year, outpatient clinic visits have increased more than seven percent. Patient days, number of patients admitted and occupancy rate have decreased marginally.

The total days in gross receivables, an important financial figure, shrank by 7.8 days during the first quarter of 1980. A patient day of receivables is worth \$160,000.

	1980 March	1980 First Quarter	1979 March	1979 First Quarter
Inpatient days	9938	29,599	10,603	29,717
Percent Occupancy	76.7	77.8	81.8	79
Patients Admitted	1119	3,453	1,200	3,505
Av. Length of Stay	8.82	8.58	8.83	8.59
ER Visits	5,031	14,958	4,956	14,704
O.P. Visits	12,926	39,152	13,039	36,510

IN-HOUSE CONSULTATION HELPS IMPROVE PHYSICIAN TRAINING PROGRAMS

Educational consultant Nancy Mosier has been helping St. Paul Ramsey medical departments to take a more "systematic" approach to their physician training programs.

An expert in "course design and evaluation of courses and participants," Miss Mosier was hired in 1978 to redesign undergraduate medical courses in the Departments of Surgery and Radiology. She studied mass communications and educational psychology at the University of Minnesota and worked in the university Medical School Curriculum Affairs Office before coming to the medical center.

One of her first projects here involved setting general course objectives for the undergraduate radiology rotation. "The staff knew what it wanted to

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teach; it was my job to decide how to teach it best," she said. She did much the same thing for the Department of Surgery's rotation for third and fourth year medical students, adding to the course a five page reference list about general procedures, diseases and conditions. She also coordinates one hour staff lecture slots every day and schedules extra lectures featuring speakers from other medical departments.

Miss Mosier also has helped the Departments of Family Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology with their graduate training programs. In consultation with staff and residents, she implemented a system for evaluating Ob/Gyn residents. The program asks head nurses from various units, staff physicians, senior residents and faculty advisors to look at the medical skills and personal attributes of residents. Done four times a year, the evaluation is used as a complement to an annual exam. Miss Mosier and Dr. Erick Hakanson, chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, will present the results of the evaluation at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' annual meeting in New Orleans next month.

Lately, Miss Mosier has worked with the Department of Family Medicine structuring objectives for all of its rotations. The project is funded by a grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In addition to her work in course design, she has implemented a resident self evaluation system for these rotations.

Why do physicians training programs need educational consultants in the first place? Miss Mosier believes part of the reason is because the core content of many program has increased greatly in the past ten years. This fact parallels the specialization trend in medicine, she says. With so much data available to be digested, someone needs to define what is important to be learned.

Other medical departments are welcome to use Miss Mosier's services. She can be reached at extension 2131 or through the Surgery Department office.

NEW PHYSICIANS

Two physicians have accepted appointments as full-time staff at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center effective July 1.

Dr. Jacalyn DiCello, a St. Paul-Ramsey resident, will remain with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She attended medical school at the University of Wisconsin. Currently she is researching the affect of terbutaline on premature labor. Dr. DiCello lives in West St. Paul with her husband.

Dr. John Mauk will join the Department of Neurosurgery. He attended medical school at the University of Texas in San Antonio and completed his neurosurgery residency at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Mauk will concentrate his work here in pediatrics and on spinal cord injuries. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two children.

FUNDS ALLOCATED TO REMODEL LARGE ANIMAL FACILITY

The MERF Administrative Committee recently approved the release of \$125,000 to finance remodeling of the large animal facility.

The grant will be used to upgrade runs for the animals and their cages so that the facility will comply with the standards set for accreditation by the American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care.

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John L. Simensen has been hired as administrative associate, support staff services for Ramsey Clinic Associates. In his position, Mr. Simensen will work with the Medical Referral and Information Center; assist in the clinical administration of River Valley Health Consultants' operation in Stillwater; act as the staff resources to the HMO Committee; and begin work on several projects including an analysis of RCA's inpatient fee generation system.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota's Masters Program in Hospital and Health Care Administration, Mr. Simensen has worked as an associate consultant for James A. Hamilton Associates, a hospital consulting firm, for the past two years. He also worked as an administrative resident at Fairview Community Hospitals and as an administrative trainee at Hennepin County Medical Center.

Mr. Simensen lives in Minneapolis and plans to marry soon.

A health fair sponsored by River Valley Health Consultants will be held at the St. Croix Mall in Stillwater April 21-22 in honor of High Blood Pressure Month. The fair, which will offer free blood pressure checks and vital capacity testing, also will be part of the mall's 25th anniversary celebration

A Finance Committee has been appointed by Dr. Claude Swayze, chairman of the RCA Board of Directors.

The committee will review P.A. income distribution, methods of funding programs; and the impact of fund development programs on medical department revenue and budgets.

Members are Drs. Cass (chairman), Cicero and Campion. Ex-officio members are Don Landis and Craig Suwinski.

"Mature indeed is the consultant who accepts help with gratitude, for he must develop a technique for treating a patient not fully his own," says Dr. Richard Bates, a Lansing, Mich. internist.

Dr. Bates, in an article entitled "The Two Sides of Every Successful Consultation" which appeared in the Dec. 10 issue of Medical Economics, has outlined what he considers to be the consultant's role.

"Never allow residents to substitute for you in any way," he says, "either in answering a consultation request or in carrying out surgery." He states that doing so insults the referring physician. "He's asked for a top man for his patient, and he should get nothing less."

Consultants should use available studies, according to Dr. Bates. "With office patients, it's very bad form for a specialist to repeat previous X-ray

studies if adequate films are available. Not only are you subjecting the patient to unnecessary irradiation and expense, but you're also insulting the referring doctor and his radiologist."

He also stresses that consultants should report their findings in a report that is "prompt, typewritten, succinct and efficient, accurate and helpful." He says that consultants many times fail to realize that anxious relatives may ask referring physicians for results the very same night--even though the consultant hasn't discussed his findings with the patient. "If the report hasn't yet been received by the referring physician, such circumstances subject him to the embarrassment of knowing less than his patient."

A top-notch consultant, according to Dr. Bates, will render a report that informs without patronizing, educates without lecturing, directs without ordering and--sometimes most difficult of all--solves the problem without making the referring physician appear to be stupid. He also says, "Reports should also be as brief as completeness permits."

Respect is the key word in consulting, states Dr. Bates. "A specialist knows a lot about a little; a generalist knows a little about a lot. Neither can disparage the other without imperiling a system that can work well for both."

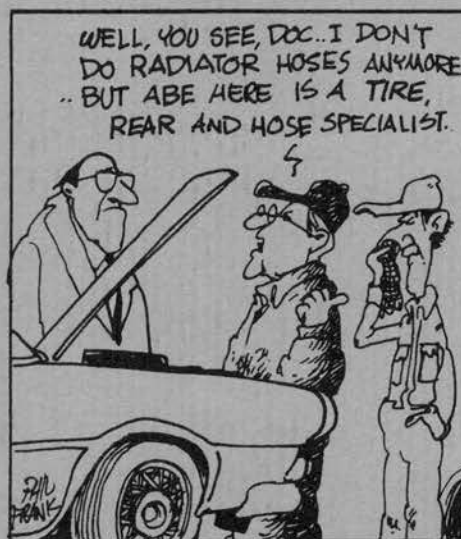
An HEW report released recently on the status of health professions personnel predicts that the supply of physicians probably will be sufficient to meet U.S. needs in the 1980's and "could actually exceed requirements," according to an article in Hospital Week.

The report cautions, however, that an adequate supply does not guarantee that all will have access to physicians; "barriers such as money, language, education and geography" will keep many from receiving needed health care.

According to the report, the number of active U.S. physicians increased from 323,000 in 1970 to 379,000 in 1978, a gain of more than 17 percent.



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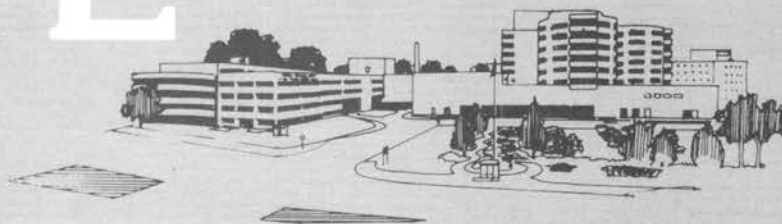
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UPDATE

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EMPLOYEE PHOTOGRAPHY HIGHLIGHTS ART FESTIVAL

More than 75 Gillette Hospital and St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center employees' photos were displayed April 29 at the Spring Arts Festival sponsored by Gillette, St. Paul-Ramsey and the United Arts Fund.

First Place winner William Frey II, a biochemist in the Department of Psychiatry, and second place winner Keith Ford, a technician in the Department of Cardiology, received a \$50 and \$25 gift certificate respectively good at Finn's Camera in St. Paul.

The contest was judged by Bob Walsh, photo editor of the St. Paul Dispatch Pioneer Press; Mike Rifkin, media consultants with the United Arts Council; and Carlton Rust, a medical and commercial photographer. The judges commented that overall the photography was excellent.

ENERGY SAVING IDEAS AUDITED

BAD ideas related to energy savings are undergoing an audit by an energy consulting firm, according to Mike Judge, BAD program coordinator.

"Based upon the results of the findings, we will act upon those ideas one way or another," he said.

Jan Hanson, who also coordinated the BAD campaign, reported recently that three medical center units recorded 100 percent participation in the program. They were the neurology and the Ob/Gyn clinics and the chaplains' office. Nursing and medical center administration had 90 percent participation.

The BAD implementation committee found several ideas that saved little or no money that they thought were of value nonetheless. Some of the suggestions were: leave lights off in rooms not being used; use paper for scratch before throwing it away; call maintenance if you notice a faucet that drips; and use the stairs instead of the elevators.

BORDENS WORK HALF A CENTURY AT MEDICAL CENTER

One family has contributed more than 50 years of service to St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center and Ancker Hospital.

Leonard and Venear Borden have worked here 27 and 26 years respectively. The couple was honored at the Employee Recognition Dinner last week.

Leonard works as a painter in plant operations and Venear is a clerk in the emergency room.

SPEAKER PHONES FOR PATIENTS AVAILABLE

Nursing personnel should note that speaker phones for hard of hearing patients are now available. Contact Betty Sheehan, switchboard supervisor, to exchange the regular phone for a speaker phone. The phones are free.

METEOROLOGIST TO TALK ON TORNADOS

John V. Graff, a meteorologist with the Twin Cities Weather Forecast Office, will talk about tornados May 13 at 1:30 in the medical center amphitheatre.

His program entitled "Skywarn," is sponsored by the Disaster Committee and is open to all employees. For more information, call the Emergency Medicine Office, ext. 3311.

NEW DENTAL PLAN OFFERED

Medical center employees may now choose to subscribe to a new HMO dental plan, it was recently announced by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.

The county will offer the Viking Dental Plan to all eligible employees (full-time employees whose bargaining units have

settled their contracts) beginning June 1. An employee may apply for this dental coverage from April 21 to May 21 for the June 1 effective date.

Information regarding the new plan may be obtained from your department head or by calling the Ochs Agency at 298-3789.

Ramsey County will pay the current monthly premium of \$11.05. Applications must be completed listing a dentist from those listed on the Viking Dental Plan brochure. All applications should be forwarded to the Ochs Agency at 345 Cedar St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

LAB TO MOVE TO GYMNASIUM

The laboratory will move to the gymnasium May 3 in one of the first phases of the third floor remodeling project.

Specialty labs will move to other locations. The Microbiology lab will be in Building 2 in the pediatric research area; the histology lab will be in room 150-151, Building 2; and the toxicology lab will be on the 4th floor, Building 2. Call ext. 8536 for any information concerning test results, with the exception of surgical pathology and autopsies.

Done in several phases, the remodeling of the lab, CSR and the residents' sleeping quarters will be completed in May 1981.

Construction on the project is expected to begin June 1, barring trade workers strikes.

NEW PAYCHECKS APPEAR

New payroll checks were issued to St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center employees April 25.

Blue in color, the checks are lighter paper weight than the previous ones and have more payroll information printed on them, including and shift premiums.

If you have any questions about the new checks, please call the payroll office.

RADIO PAGING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTED

The first phase of the new radio paging program has been implemented and is going well, according to Blaine Pieper, administrative resident.

The second phase of the program, in which hospital departments will exchange their existing pagers for the new Mosman pagers, will begin sometime in May.

A slide orientation program is available in the medical center library for those who missed the training sessions held this month. For more information, contact Betty Sheehan, switchboard supervisor.

MAY IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MONTH

May has been designated as National High Blood Pressure Month. Here are some facts on high blood pressure.

Do you think that people with high blood pressure are uptight? The fact is high blood pressure is not related to nervous tension.

An easygoing way of life and relaxed manner are not guarantees against high blood pressure. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have it measured.

What are the most common symptoms of high blood pressure? There are none. But, some people mistakenly think that high blood pressure produces symptoms, such as headaches, dizziness or anxiety. Because they have no symptoms, some people who have high blood pressure make another mistake and stop taking their medication. Their feelings aren't reliable indicators of high blood pressure. They should continue to take their medicine and follow their doctor's advice.



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