

# what's happening

Maine Medical Center  
Portland, Maine 04102

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## DRGs II: reducing all ills to 467 groups

There may be only 467 Diagnosis Related Groups in the new Medicare payment system, but that doesn't mean there are only 467 ways a Medicare patient can get sick. According to the definitive source on the matter, there are 10,000 possible diagnosis classifications and 7,000 surgical and medical procedure classifications known to medicine. This source — the *International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM)* — is the basis of the DRG system.

The 10,000 diagnosis codes of the ICD-9-CM are broken down by the DRG system into 23 Major Diagnostic Categories (MCDs). This is done primarily on the basis of organ system, such as "Diseases and Disorders of the Hepatobiliary System and Pancreas." The MDC groupings, and the Diagnosis Related Groups contained within them, are supposed to be "medically meaningful." That is, they are similar medically, require similar treatment, and consume approximately equal amounts of hospital resources.

The DRG for a given case is determined at or immediately following discharge. It is first assigned to one of the 23 MCDs, according to the physician's determination of the Principal Diagnosis, defined as "that condition which, after study, is determined to be the reason for admission to the hospital." This is not necessarily the admitting diagnosis, or the most serious of a patient's problems, but the one which on retrospective analysis caused the admission to the hospital.

Once a case has been assigned to a MDC, it is subjected to a computer program that "splits" it into a DRG using a "yes/no" logic process. The first split is on the basis of surgery: "was a surgical procedure performed?" Further splits are based on the pres-

ence or absence of:

*Substantial Comorbidity*, a pre-existing condition that will, because of its presence with a specific principal diagnosis, cause an increase in length of stay of at least one day in 75% of the cases.

*Substantial Complication*, a condition that arises during the hospital stay that prolongs the length of stay by at least one day in approximately 75% of the cases.

*Age over 70*, treated as a comorbidity in most cases.

The result of the computerized splitting process is the designation of the case as falling into one of the 467 Diagnosis Related Groups. Payment is then made to the hospital at a predetermined price for the DRG, on the assumption under the system that all

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October 19, 1983

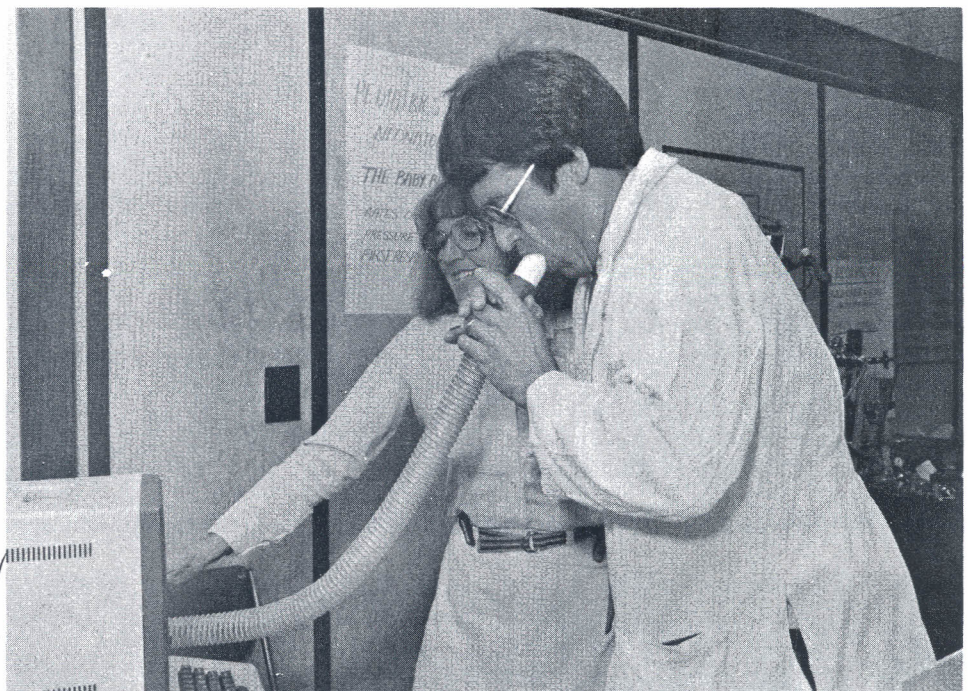
## Copy Center to see some new . . . faces?

[The following memo, sent on September 29 from the Copy Center Staff to Copy Center Patrons, is reprinted with the staff's permission.]

Xerox 9400, who has been an active member of the MMC family for almost five years, has recently announced his intention to retire from his post of Chief Copier. His assistant, Xerox 8200, after hearing the news of his mentor's retirement, has announced his own resignation.

The search committee for the replacement of these two invaluable positions has been in full swing to find the best possible combination of characteristics and personality to guarantee quality

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**EMPLOYEES had a chance to learn about Respiratory Therapy September 30, and to learn a little about themselves as well. Above, Radiation Safety Technologist Jeff Sanborn, B.A., follows instructions from Respiratory Therapist Rose Whiteside, RRT, for a pulmonary function test. (A/V Photo)**



## DRGs, from page one

cases falling into the DRG require about the same consumption of resources.

The DRG process is anything but simple. The Principal Diagnosis, for instance, is not necessarily the most severe or the one initially thought to be the reason for admission. A man presenting to the Emergency Department with chest pains may be assigned an admitting diagnosis of Acute Myocardial Infarction (heart attack), for example, but if tests rule out heart attack the actual cause of the chest pains becomes the principal diagnosis.

Similarly, a patient admitted for thrombophlebitis, the development of clots in blood vessel walls, will have a Principal Diagnosis of thrombophlebitis even if an underlying carcinoma is found to be responsible for the development of the clots, and even if the clots precipitate a fatal heart attack while the patient is hospitalized.

Other difficulties with the system:

- Complications and comorbidities may or may not be considered "substantial" under Medicare's rules.
- If a patient has several surgical procedures, only the one deemed by Medicare to be the most resource-consuming is counted.
- Length Of Stay in the hospital is not considered — the same DRG assignment (and therefore payment) is made whether the patient is in the hospital two days or fifteen days (in certain cases unusually long stays are placed in an "outlier" category eligible for a slightly increased reimbursement).
- The number of tests, number of physician visits, intensity of nursing care, etc. are not considered — the DRG payment is based on the historical average of the amount of those items, not on the amount rendered to a specific patient.

The burden for ensuring that the hospital receives appropriate payment falls first and foremost on the physician, who must make accurate and timely determinations and records of diagnoses, procedures, comorbidities, and complications. Medicare cannot be billed until that information is complete. The other side of the DRG burden, maintaining quality of care, will fall on physicians, nurses, and others.

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*Next week, a look at the medical and nursing implications of the DRG system.*

## FACES, from page one

service to the patrons of the Copy Center. The committee members believe they have found the perfect mix and have hired the following replacements:

Xerox 9400, III is the grandson of the Chief Copier who is retiring. He possesses all the impressive characteristics of his grandfather, but also brings with him the energy and efficiency of his youth. The committee is confident that he will follow in the footsteps of his granddad prior to his ill health.

Assistant Chief, Xerox 8200, is being replaced by a young, vibrant cousin — Xerox 1075. Xerox 1075 has had some additional training and education, and is enthusiastic about building a positive reputation for himself and the department. It was the opinion of the Search Committee that the superior education, training and attitude of this candidate would provide the hospital with some new and innovative services. The additional capabilities that Xerox 1075 possesses will introduce greater flexibility to the production of the Copy Center.

Both replacements are well qualified to produce any job that is requested of the Copy Center, and with the help of the experienced Copy Operators, the service level of the Copy Center should, once again, resume consistency in speed and quality.

Xerox 9400, III and Xerox 1075 should be joining MMC in approximately six weeks. Until then, Xerox 9400 and Xerox 8200 have agreed to be on their best behavior and serve their customers to the best of their ability.

In closing, the Copy Center Staff would like to thank all of you for your endless patience and cooperation.



**LINEN SERVICES held a very special retirement party recently. Above, Director Ken Davis watches as Sidney Grant cuts the cake celebrating her retirement after 48 years of service.**  
(A/V Photo)

## Sail away, sail away ... and back again

The Employee Activity Committee is offering its final round-trip cruise of the season to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia Friday, October 28. The MS Scotia Prince will leave the International Ferry Terminal Friday and return Saturday, October 29. Round trip cost, including passage, cabin, breakfast and dinner buffet, and complimentary cocktail, is \$59.50 per person, based on double occupancy. Entertainment, dancing, gambling, and duty-free shopping are also available. Call Sue Morrison, x2416, for more information.

## The United Way: Progress Report I

How's this for a good start: MMC's employees in Linen Service have already hit 100% participation. General Campaign Chairman Dick Balser received that report exactly one week into the campaign. "That's heartwarming and impressive," Balser said. "And I hope it serves as a challenge to other employees who are considering contributing now."

The terrific turnout by all 38 people in Linen Service, and the determined effort by volunteer solicitors in all departments, will be reflected soon in the United Way window in the cafeteria. How are we doing hospitalwide? Watch the window for a running tally.

For those of us still contemplating giving, Balser has provided these statistics:

- With just a \$2 per week contribution the Holy Innocents Home Care Service can provide one week of Homemaker service to four elderly clients who need help with bathing, grocery shopping, laundry and housework. Or that \$2 could allow a homebound disabled person to live independently with the assistance of Homemaker service for a full month.
- With just a \$1 per week contribution the YWCA could teach two children to swim; or provide nourishing snacks for 50 children twice a week for a full month in the Teen Parent Services Program Nursery; or support the YWCA's Encore Post-Mastectomy Exercise Program for 20 weeks.
- For \$2 a week Ingraham Volunteers can help 14 deaf students contact their hearing friends; or refer 10 child abuse cases to the Department of Human Services; or help 8 women to enter the Family Crisis Shelter.



## Gannett Publishing makes \$100,000 gift

Receipt of a generous commitment by the Gannett Publishing Company of \$100,000 to the Maine Medical Center Capital Campaign, "To Meet the Need," has been announced by Campaign Chairman, Vincent B. Welch, Esq. In the formalization of this gift, John R. DiMatteo, Gannett President, noted, "The Company has been a strong supporter of the Medical Center for many, many years and continues to be deeply committed to the support of the fine institution that it has become."

Mr. Welch expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the Gannett gift. He said it typifies the community spirit of both the company and its Board Chairman, Mrs. Jean Gannett Hawley, an Honorary Trustee of MMC. "This Company's gift certainly is a leading example of just how the people of Portland have endeavored 'To Meet the Need' of MMC. It is really great and indeed heartwarming to me as Campaign Chairman," Welch said.

The Gannett Publishing Company is one of the oldest companies in Port-

To Meet  
the Need

land, founded in 1882 as the *Portland Evening Express*. In 1925, Guy P. Gannett took over the *Evening Express* and founded the Publishing Company. Today this Company has interests in television and newspapers throughout the State, including *WGAN-TV*, the *Portland Press Herald*, the *Evening Express*, the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, the *Kennebec Journal* of Augusta, the *Central Maine Morning Sentinel* of Waterville, and the *Gannett Graphics* of Augusta.

## Continuing Nursing Education Programs

- *Principles of Chemotherapy*, Karen Kane, RN, and Steve D'Amato, R. Ph.

Wednesday, October 26, 1983  
4:00-5:00 PM R1 Classroom

- *PTCA: Nursing Considerations*, P. Camire, RN, CCRN

Thursday, October 27, 1983  
7:30-8:30 AM and 2:00-3:00 PM  
CICU Conf. Rm.

## Child Abuse is topic of Bangor conference

A major statewide conference on child abuse, set for Friday, October 21, in Bangor will include people from Maine Medical Center and other organizations. "The Psycho-social and Behavioral Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect" will be an all-day session at the Bangor Hilton, open to health professionals and others interested in learning about child abuse.

The conference will be moderated by Paul H. LaMarche, M.D., Chief of Pediatrics at Eastern Maine Medical Center, and feature presentations by Maine Commissioner of Mental Health Kevin Concannon and Eli H. Newberger, M.D., Director of Family Development Study at Childrens Hospital in Boston. MMC Chief of Pediatrics George Hallett, M.D., will chair a panel discussion following Dr. Newberger's presentation, and MMC Director of Child Psychiatry Training Peter Goldfine, M.D., will be on the panel.

Topics covered include Mental Health Casualties of Child Abuse and Neglect, Battered Child Syndrome, Child Abuse Issues in the 1980's, Diagnosis of Emotional Abuse, Treatment of Emotional Abuse, and Prevention Programs.

For registration information contact Paul Lamarche, M.D., Eastern Maine Medical Center, 947-3711.

## TSAs are way to plan now for the future

The time has come once again to think about Tax Sheltered Annuities, according to the Employee Benefits Office. Representatives of the three TSA plans available to MMC employees will be here for scheduled open presentations at the end of this month and early next month.

A TSA is a method of saving for retirement by means of payroll deduction. Money is deducted from your pay and sent directly to the company, and that money as well as the interest it earns is tax-free until it is withdrawn.

Representatives will be here for presentations every hour on the hour on the following schedule:

- **Monday, October 31 Mutual Benefit Life**, Cafeteria Conference Room A, 8:00 - 11:00 AM and 1:00 - 5:00 PM.
- **Thursday, November 3 Capital Guardian Trust**, Cafeteria Conference Room A, 1:00 - 5:00 PM.
- **Friday, November 4 Kemper Investors Life**, Cafeteria Conference Room B, 8:00 - 11:00 AM and 1:00 - 5:00 PM.

If you have any questions, or would like to set up an individual appointment, call the Employee Benefits Office at x2973.



**THE WOMEN'S BOARD** of Maine General Hospital has given \$100,000 to the MMC Capital Campaign, honoring their pledge made in January 1983. Veteran volunteer and past president of the Women's Board Charlotte Moore, made the check presentation at the Board's September meeting, and a grateful MMC President Edward C. Andrews, Jr., M.D., accepted the gift. (A/V Photo)



# Marketplace

**FOR RENT:** 5 Walker Street. 2 rooms, shower, hot water, stove and refrig. Avail. Nov. 1. \$52/wk plus util. Call 797-5047.

**FOR RENT:** 516 St. John St. (A-3). \$340 includes heat, water, parking. 1 or 2 people. \$325 deposit. References. Unfurnished, 1 BR. Call 773-6486 or 766-2819.

**FOR RENT:** Home on ocean. Everything furnished. Ferry commute requires 8-5 schedule. 1 or 2 people. \$400 deposit. References. \$295/mo. plus elec. Call 773-6486 or 766-2819.

**FOR RENT:** 1 BR apt., LR, DR, KT, parking, washing machine. 1st floor, 2 blocks from Eastern Prom. Avail. Nov. 1. \$350/mo., heat included. Call 773-2259, anytime.

**FOR LEASE:** Professional office space. 5,000 sq. ft. in Casco Bay Professional Park, U.S. Route 1, Falmouth. Ample on-site parking. Call 781-5292. Ask for Dr. Luck.

**ROOMMATE WANTED:** Female non-smoker to share 2 BR apt. on Eastern Prom. Rent \$165/mo., heat included. Call 774-6338 after 5 PM.

**ROOMMATE WANTED:** Non-smoking. Furnished house in So. Portland near Willard Beach. \$200/mo. plus share of util. Call 799-1621, weekdays after 6 PM.

**FOR SALE:** 1977 Subaru GF, one owner, 5-speed, many extras. Excellent condition. Must sell quickly. \$1,900 or best offer. Call 797-0892, mornings. Keep trying.

**FOR SALE:** 1974 Olds Delta 88 deluxe. Running gear excellent; needs body work and tires. \$400 or best offer. Call 774-5327 after 5 PM.

**FOR SALE:** 1982 Pontiac J2000. 37,000 miles. \$4,800. Call 693-6066, evenings.

**FOR SALE:** 1978 Datsun B210 sedan, one owner. Excellent running condition, economical. Asking \$2,000. Call 865-3453.

**FOR SALE:** Sea Otter ocean touring kayak in excellent condition, complete with Mitchell paddle, spray skirt and two floata-tion bags, \$700 or best offer. Call 846-5515, afternoons and evenings.

**FOR SALE:** 1975 Cadillac Sedan DeVille, low mileage, luxury interior with many extras. Asking \$2,000. Call 865-3453.

**FOR SALE:** 14 ft. Hobie Cat, includes new sail, trailer and sail lesson. \$2,000. Call 767-4272.

**FOR SALE:** 2 Cooper Weathermaster pre-mium fiberglass belted snow tires, size G 78-15. Call 799-1951. Keep trying.

**FOR SALE:** Medical office equipment, one yr. old: exam room cabinets (fawn); Pelton & Crane sterilizer; Welch-Allyn illu-minator set for disposable sigmoidoscope; nasopharynx & larynx illuminator attach-ments for W/A transformer; adult physi-cian's scales; small lab incubator; Schuco suction machine. Also, two executive desks; two matching bookcases with sliding doors; two secretarial chairs (rust); two typewri-ter tables; 5 matching upholstered arm chairs (rust and walnut); upholstered exe-cutive chair and two matching arm chairs (gray velvet/chrome); padded stool for lab (dk. brown); misc. disposables and lab supplies. Closing practice — must sell! Call 797-5906, days; 799-8743, evenings.

**FOR SALE:** Olin Mark IV 160s with Salomon 226 bindings; one yr. old, \$150. Call days at 799-7303, X366. Evenings, call 799-2354.

**FOR SALE:** Chubby Junior coal stove; one yr. old, \$385. Call 775-7285.

**FOR SALE:** Antique sword and sabre, \$50 for both. New fondue set, \$10. Black bor-ganzia fur, double breasted winter coat in excellent condition, \$25. White king-size fur spread, would make excellent rug, \$25. Two oriental scatter rugs, \$40 each. Call 772-5103.

**FOR SALE:** Olivetti electric typewriter in good condition, \$60. Call Dave at 775-1305 after 5 PM.

**FOR SALE:** Freezer lambs. Grass fed, low fat, \$2.25 lb. hanging weight. Ready Oct. 27. Call Eleanor Lacombe X2163 or 926-4611.

**LOST:** Wire-framed glasses with plastic lenses. Finder please return to Lucille Poulin: box in the mailroom.

## what's happening

WHAT'S HAPPENING is published every Wednesday at Maine Medical Center, Port-land, Maine for members of the Hospital community and for friends of the institution throughout Maine and northern New Eng-land. Comments, questions and suggestions may be addressed to Public Information Of-fice, MMC, Portland, ME 04102.

Barbara Burns, Editor

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**BOOKKEEPING SERVICES:** Permanent part-time bookkeeping or special projects. Full charge bookkeeper with 14 yrs. ex-perience. References avail. Call Sandy Dudley at 772-0076, days or 282-5703, evenings.

**HOUSE CLEANING:** Reliable, experienced woman. Local references furnished. Every-thing from dirty refrigerators to dusty base-boards. Will also clean offices. Call Sparkles Service AM or evenings after 8 PM, 773-3079. Will clean only in the Portland area.

**HOME REPAIRS AND CARPENTRY:** This year, why not be ready for winter? Call 774-4899.

## New Employees

CSD: Philip Bouchard

LINEN PROCESSING: Maria M. Ashby, Stella F. Folsom

PHLEBOTOMY: Julie A. Caiazzo, Nancy A. Carabia, Sandra E. Garland

OR: Shirley P. Gauthier

HOUSEKEEPING: Virginia S. Goodwin, Carl C. Hatch, Cynthia Hysom, Jean L. Tibbetts

HEMATOLOGY: Kimberly L. Hatt

CAFETERIA: David B. Hau

RADIOLOGY: Dennis T. Leaver

POISON CONTROL: Richard J. Shryock

PHYSICAL THERAPY: Shawn H. Wyman

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## Murphology

### LORD FALKLAND'S RULE

*When it is not necessary to make a decision, it is necessary not to make a decision.*