

what's happening

Maine Medical Center
Portland, Maine 04102

Vol. 14, No. 37

April 13, 1983

Quality circles are a new part of MMC

A concept born in America, raised in Japan, and brought home in the 1970s is on trial at Maine Medical Center. Twenty-two of MMC's Laboratory employees have formed Quality Care Circles in three labs. The circles are a voluntary, structured coming-together of employees with similar responsibilities to solve specific problems related to their work. The three circles formed in the laboratory's pilot project are an exercise in what Lab Manager Joseph Fiore calls "a people-building philosophy."

In the words of the pilot project's formal guidelines, the quality circles are "a long-term participatory management process which will enable the Laboratory to further benefit from the intelligence and creative capacity of

all personnel to improve operational effectiveness and quality of patient care." The concept involves employees in the problem-solving process to improve performance and increase productivity, as well as improve their work lives.

In other words, according to Fiore, "the Quality Care Circle brings the solution of certain problems to the level at which that effort belongs. If you hire someone to do a certain job, and let them do just that job, you lose the benefit of their other talents. The circle gives the employees a significant responsibility for the quality of their work experience and for the level of efficiency and productivity in their areas, with the overall goal of increasing the quality of patient care."

Basically, the quality circle process consists of the identification of prob-

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State and hospitals looking at cost laws

Just a year ago, *What's Happening* reported on the recommendations of the Maine Health Facilities Cost Review Board, charged by Governor Joseph Brennan with reviewing the way Maine hospitals are financed and recommending changes in the system.

Now, the long-awaited legislative proposal incorporating those recommendations has emerged from the Governor's office. MMC administrators are currently reviewing the legislative package, said to be the most complex regulatory system ever proposed for hospital cost containment. That analysis is not yet complete, but the picture that is emerging is one of legislation admirable in its objectives but flawed in portions of its approach.

In essence, the legislation would create a state Health Care Finance Commission that would set, before each year begins, a limit on the amount of revenue a hospital could receive during the coming year. The Commission would be a five-member panel with powers similar to -- and in many cases much greater than -- those of the Public Utilities Commission that currently regulates public utility rates in Maine.

MMC President Edward C. Andrews, Jr., M.D., says, "We're sympathetic with the bill's objectives, but we have significant problems with parts of its approach. No one will argue against the Governor's belief that health care costs have risen higher and faster than we

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THE EMPLOYEE ACTIVITY COMMITTEE'S annual Arts and Crafts Fair was held March 17. Exhibits included photography, painting, needlework, and crochet. (A/V Photo)

The Tally for the April 1
Blood Drive at MMC:
158 presented,
140 donated,
including 10 first-timers



THE MOST RECENT GRADUATING CLASS of the MMC School of Surgical Technology took diplomas with them and left a special gift behind: a contribution to the MMC Capital Campaign. Front row, from left: Brenda M. Dame, Linda M. Cox, Elizabeth A. Blake, and Sarah K. Foster. Back row, from left: Diane L. Sanford, Francis P. Michaud, Tracy L. Tweed, Mary M. Farrugia, Deborah E. Jakowski, John W. Cooper, Jr., and Patricia L. Marshall. (A/V Photo)

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lems within defined limitations, the analysis of causes and effects, the collection and analysis of data, the determination of the best solution, presentation of the solution to management, and finally implementation and evaluation of the solution. All steps in the process -- including the presentation to management -- are conducted by the circle members.

The kinds of problems tackled by quality circles at various U.S. hospitals include the development of procedures to rotate uniforms for cleaning, the initiation of staff rotation systems to increase flexibility, efforts to decrease billing errors, delineation of nursing staff responsibilities during shift changes, and similar issues. The circles are not geared to major, institution-wide policy issues, or to such items as wages, salaries, and staffing levels, but to the task-related concerns of small, homogeneous groups of workers.

Fiore says the rationale of a quality circle is that "those who do a certain job know best the day-to-day problems they experience and are probably in the best position to solve them. The circle allows them to tackle the problems and makes them responsible for the outcome." The idea presumes that people want to and are able to contrib-

ute to organizational goals, and that when employees have a personal stake in the workplace their work will be better.

In Japan, where the participative management principles developed by American academics first found fertile ground, the quality circle concept has been enormously successful. In 1982, there were 880,000 registered circles in Japan, involving about ten million employees. Nippon Electric Company experienced a doubling of productivity at one plant within a three-year period, 25% of which it attributes to employee input.

Circles don't generally deal with major, big dollar issues, but the cumulative effect can be staggering. Nissan Motor Corporation, for instance, reports that of 30,000 quality circle projects in one year, no single project saved more than \$500 -- but the cumulative savings was \$2.4 million.

The Laboratory Quality Care Circles are a pilot program, to test the usefulness and feasibility of the concept at MMC. The process of forming and training the groups has taken about five months, and they are now beginning their work. Training is necessary because the circle is a very structured unit, operating under defined principles and within definite limitations. A Steer-

MMC Library observes its national week

The Maine Medical Center Health Sciences Library is observing National Library Week -- April 17-23 -- in a unique way this year. Instead of holding a formal Open House, the staff is inviting patrons to stop by whenever they wish, to talk about the Library or ask questions. The Library will also have Balloon Day, with balloons for all comers, and will have Story Hours on Pediatrics on Tuesday and Thursday.

Thanks...

Special thanks to the employees of Maine Medical Center for the thoughtfulness and generosity they extended to us during our hardship in losing our home and everything we owned in a fire in Westbrook in late March.

The opening of your hearts to our needs will never be forgotten.

Special thanks to a wonderful lady who helped our 4½-month-old son, Robby, receive a crib to sleep in.

Bless you all,

Robby & Rhonda Dalpee

ing Committee from the Laboratory staff and hospital administration guides the circles and provides assistance as needed.

Fiore reports the Lab circle participants are very enthusiastic about their project. Membership in the circles must of necessity be limited, and each lab has had to find a way to determine who from the many interested people will serve on the circle. In fact, Fiore says the first test of problem-solving teamwork for the three groups was selecting the members, and that each responded in its own way -- one drew straws, one cast ballots, and one asked for voluntary withdrawals.

In keeping with quality circle tradition, each MMC circle has a name, selected by the members. The three circles and the members of each are:

LAB-ORATORIANS (Phlebotomy)

Brenda Sampietro (circle leader), Pam Witham, Penny Fayan, Rose Milliken, and Judy Faren.

MICROCAUCUS (Microbiology)

Gretchen Genowich (circle leader), Janet Morton, Ellen Rutter, Don Piper, David Macisso, and Cathy Dragoni.

ALCHEMISTS (Chemistry)

Arlene Mure (circle leader), Paul Maniscalco, Jill Nash, Anne Needham, Betsy Smith, Pat Sansoucy, Kevin Scannell, Nancy MacDonald, and Tina Merrill.

Summer program open to Junior Volunteers

MMC is issuing its annual call for Junior Volunteers. Young men and women between the ages of 14 and 17 who wish to do something nice for themselves and others are invited to consider summer volunteer work in the hospital.

Junior Volunteer duties this year will begin on Monday, June 27, and will end Friday, September 2. No Junior can be considered for the program, however, without first being interviewed. Interviews will take place during school vacation week, April 19-22, and the following week after school hours. Prospective volunteers should call the Volunteer Office, 871-2205, for interview appointments.

Volunteers may be assigned to the Admitting Office, Art Cart, Audio/Visual Resources, Clinics, Coffee Shop, Craft Cart, Book Cart, Escort Service, Central Service, Flower Delivery, Canteen Cart,

Information Desk, Medical Library, Nursing Units, Pediatric Playroom, and other hospital areas.

Juniors are required to commit one day a week during the summer, but may elect to serve more. Days and areas of duty are assigned through the Volunteer Office. Those accepted into the program must attend orientation and training meetings on Saturday mornings, June 11 and 18, and a longer session on Saturday the 25th. Training is provided by MMC staff members and Staff Development Nurses.

The number of new Junior Volunteers accepted into the summer program is determined by the needs of the hospital departments, according to Director of Volunteer Services Audrey Gough. There are times when the number of applicants exceeds the need, Mrs. Gough says, and all who apply cannot be accepted. All applicants will be notified of their status by May 15.

Appreciation Days in April and May

Appreciation Days -- MMC's traditional "thank you" to the hundreds of generous donors who responded to the Annual Fund appeal -- are set this year for Friday, April 29, and Wednesday, May 11. The programs, sponsored by the Annual Fund Committee, have the added goal of providing extra insight into the workings of the Medical Center.

The two programs offered this year present guests with an interesting choice of information and insight:

April 29 (Morning Program): "Eye Care in the Eighties" will be presented by Elizabeth G. Serrage, M.D., Attending Physician in the Department of Ophthalmology. Leonard M. Keilson, M.D., Director of Ambulatory Care, will describe "Space Technology in the Care of the Chronically Ill -- A New Approach at MMC." The program begins at 10 AM following 9:30 coffee and registration. Brief guided tours at 11 AM will take in the Dietary Department and the Cardiology Division. Mrs. Michael T. Healy, MMC Corporator and Chairman of the 1983 Appreciation Days, and Edward C. Andrews, Jr., M.D., MMC President, will give opening greetings and introductions, and Widgey Thomas, Jr., Corporator and Chairman of the 1983 Annual Fund, will give closing remarks.

May 11 (Evening Program): "Why MMC

Is a Big Time Medical Center!" will be discussed by Donald A. Leeber, M.D., a Trustee, President of the Medical Staff, and Director of the Division of Nephrology. Frank H. Lawrence, M.D., Chief of Emergency Medicine, will present "Emergency Medicine at MMC: Critical, Caring, and Continuous." The program starts at 7:30 PM following 7 o'clock coffee and registration. Brief guided tours at 8:30 PM will take in the Department of Emergency Medicine and the Division of Radiation Therapy. Mrs. Healy, Dr. Andrews, and Mr. Thomas will also preside at the evening program.

Honor invitations go to 1,400 employees

Maine Medical Center's 35th Annual Honor Night will be celebrated Tuesday May 10th, 1983, at the Downtown Holiday Inn. Some 1,400 employees will be invited.

The long-standing tradition of Honor Night is to honor MMC employees for long and loyal service. Everyone who will have completed at least five years of service as of July 31, 1983, as well as retirees, will receive invitations to this special night of dining and entertainment.

Invitations will be out in the near future, and more details about the evening's program will be available soon.

MMC Trustees set \$1.1 million goal

The Trustees of Maine Medical Center have established a goal of \$1.1 million in the hospital's Capital Campaign, "To Meet the Need." Sally Fowler, Trustee Division Chairman, reported that the level of the goal presents a significant challenge for the Board, but she anticipates an enthusiastic response from the Trustees. She said the outstanding success of the Employee and Medical Staff Division campaigns had a great impact on the Trustees and thus influenced their decision to seek a higher goal.

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all would like, or that something needs to be done to curb them. The debate is over what factors have contributed to the rise and which factors are controllable by regulation and which are not. Inflation and demand, for example, are two major factors, and neither is controllable by either hospitals or regulators.

"The degree of regulation in this legislation," Dr. Andrews continues, "is very high, despite the state's disclaimers to the contrary. The level of precision required by the complex revenue capping formula is something that would be very difficult -- and expensive -- to attain. The proposed regional hospital corporation concept is, we feel, a disservice to sound health care planning."

The Maine Legislature's Health and Institutional Services Committee has scheduled a public hearing on the Governor's bill for April 28. On April 27, the same committee will hear testimony on an alternative bill from the Maine Hospital Association. The MHA's bill basically maintains the status quo, but changes the present voluntary budget review process to a mandatory system.

The specifics of the legislation aside, Dr. Andrews is hopeful that a spirit of cooperation will prevail during the debate over the two bills. "It's time," he says, "to sit down and hammer out a reasonable compromise. I think that's what the people of Maine want: they want us to be honest with ourselves and with one another about the causes of increased health care costs, and about the cost of cutting costs. They will want to know what their choices are."

What's Happening will present a detailed discussion of the Governor's bill and its ramifications, as well as background information on health care costs, in a future issue.

Marketplace

FOR SALE: 1976 Skyline mobile home, 14 x 60 feet. 2 BR, central air conditioning, newly remodeled bath and KT, w-w carpeting, large utility shed included. Enclosed porch, located in a pleasant mobile home park just mins. from Portland. \$20,000. Call 839-6807 after 5 PM.

FOR SALE: Boy's 10" Hedstrom bike, excellent condition. Call 839-3943.

FOR SALE: Ladies' Raleigh collapsible bicycle, exc. cond., practically new. \$125. Call 772-3343.

FOR SALE: 25% share of 35' sailboat. Call Dick for details. Days, 854-8451, or evenings, 799-4604.

FOR SALE: Kenmore gas dryer, harvest gold, exc. cond. \$125 or best offer. Call 846-3992.

FOR SALE: Donkey Kong and Carnival video cartridges, less than 1 month old. Originally \$32 ea. Asking \$20 ea. Call 892-3504 after 6 PM.

FOR SALE: Oak and glass coffee table and end table. Contemporary style. \$195. Cash sale. Call 767-4130 after 5:30 PM

FOR SALE: Solid pine cannonball bedroom set, includes full/queen headboard, footboard, sideboards, double dresser w/attached mirror, chest of drawers, nightstand. Exc. cond. New, \$2,000; asking \$1,500. Call 797-7014, keep trying.

FOR SALE: Old Town 16' canoe. Wood and fiberglass construction. One original cane seat. Old but in good shape. \$275. Call Bob at 799-6047 after 5 PM.

FOR SALE: 1978 Fiat 131, good cond., AM/FM stereo and cassette, A/C, 53,000 miles. \$2,800 or best offer. Call 929-6972 after 5 PM.

FOR SALE: Pioneer receiver SX 580, Pioneer cassette CT4, one pair of Advent speakers. \$500 or best offer. Call x2272, ask for Rick.

FOR SALE: Refrigerator in good condition. Call 799-1657.

FOR SALE: Four-year-old 12" black & white TV, excellent condition. \$45. Call 774-3366 eves.

FOR SALE: 1978 Subaru wagon, 30,000 miles, automatic, AM/FM, 4-door, very good condition. Call 767-2929.

FOR SALE: 1978 Triumph Bonneville 750cc, maroon, custom paint, 7,500 miles, exc. cond. Must see to appreciate. \$2,000 or best offer. Call 774-2067 after 4 PM. Ask for Brad.

HOUSE FOR SALE: 3 BR ranch, 4 years old, wooded lot, newer neighborhood, 23 Downeast, Scarborough. \$52,900. Call 883-9206.

FOR RENT: On Peabody Pond (7 miles from Sebago Lake), A-frame, waterfront, with boat. Beautiful view. Year'round or summer only. Also would be interested in selling same. Call 282-1007 after 4 PM.

HOUSE FOR RENT: No. Gorham, country setting, 3 BR ranch, garage and much more. \$400/mo. Call 774-1722 after 5 PM.

FOR RENT: Quiet 1 BR apt., all utils. including heat, 3 mins. from MMC. \$300/mo., sec. deposit and refs. Call 775-0532.

FOR RENT: 2-3 rooms, private bath, KT priv., furnished or unfurnished. \$300-\$325, heat included. Pets, but no dogs. \$100 security deposit. Near MMC. Call 774-1007 most anytime.

HOUSE WANTED: To rent, family of five, three small children desire Portland area. Needed by end of June or July 1 for one year. Call (218) 335-2062 or write: Stephen Brabeck, M.D., Route 2, Box 76, Cass Lake, Minnesota 56633.

WANTED: Female roommate, non-smoker, to share 2 BR modern apt. in Woodfords area. Old captain's home. Parking and laundry. \$187 plus heat. Need only BR furniture. Avail. April 1. Call Donna before 2 PM at 775-2667 or after 4 PM at 774-3921.

what's happening

WHAT'S HAPPENING is published every Wednesday at Maine Medical Center, Portland, Maine for members of the Hospital community and for friends of the institution throughout Maine and northern New England. Comments, questions and suggestions may be addressed to Public Information Office, MMC, Portland, ME 04102. Barbara Burns, Editor.

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FREE KITTENS: One mostly white male, one gray & white tiger male, born Feb. 26th. Good natured and completely housebroken. Call 839-6627 after 5 PM.

WANTED: To rent, 1-2 BR apt., low rent plus utils for surgical tech. student at MMC. Call 774-4705.

ROOMMATE WANTED: Quiet, responsible, nonsmoking female seeks same to share Westbrook apt. Must work evenings. \$192.50 /mo. includes heat. Elec. and phone separate. Sec. dep., avail. May 1. Call 856-6292 after 4:30.

ROOMMATE WANTED: To share house expenses in Scarborough, no pets, no smoking, washer/dryer available. \$200/mo. plus half utils. Call 883-4965 after 5 PM.

WANTED: Large bamboo rake, exercycle, croquet set-- to keep trim, then to relax. Call 781-2940 after 5 PM.

RIDER WANTED: Going south to Florida. Leaving 4/26 AM. Must be able to drive standard. Call Bob at 799-6047 after 5 PM.

BABYSITTING: Available full time, Monday-Friday in my home starting April 11. Call 846-9916 after 5 PM.

BABYSITTING: Responsible, experienced, and reasonably priced babysitter for nights and weekends. Call 761-0422 after 5 PM.

CLEANING: Spring cleaning; windows, dusting, vacuuming. Reasonable hourly charge. Weekends only. Call 761-0422 after 5 PM.

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