

what's happening

Maine Medical Center
Portland, Maine 04102

Vol. 12, No. 50

July 15, 1981

Hill-Burton steps set Admitting pace

Maine Medical Center's policy of providing care to patients without regard to their ability to pay is not new. The policy is long-standing and consistent with legal requirements to give a certain amount of service without charge or at a reduced charge to eligible persons who cannot afford to pay for care.

What is new is a set of federal directives for posting the availability of uncompensated care, processing patients' requests for such care, and determining their eligibility. Guidelines impose several new steps in the actual admitting process, most of them requiring on-the-spot interviewing and processing -- and causing considerable new delay in a process which is already extremely detailed and time consuming.

Director of Patient Accounts Robert J. Pratt admits to a certain degree of awe and a lot of admiration for the people who are dealing with the process; everyone is coping, he says, or trying to cope with varying degrees of success.

"Patients themselves and Admitting personnel are the ones who come first to mind," Pratt says. "But remember the ancillary departments." He is long on praise for hospital personnel who book patients for all types of testing and treatments and for referring physicians -- most of whom have become good at "alerting people to arrive early and be prepared to wait a while." And he says most departments have adjusted and are doing their best at accommodating patients who are, nevertheless, still late.

The new guidelines were established in 1980 and MMC, along with most Maine hospitals, completed compliance steps earlier this spring. Specifically those steps include posting notice of

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ALL MMC PATIENTS RECEIVE a red plastic ID card for use in dealing with the hospital. New Hill-Burton guidelines for free or subsidized care (as noted in the dual-language signs on the wall) require extensive processing before the ID can be issued. Above, Central Outpatient Registry Clerk/Interviewer Pat Leighton hands a completed card to a patient. (A/V Photo)

MSFCU now offering a better check idea

A new system of check writing is now available to MMC employees, a system that is "great leaps beyond ordinary checking" and is available only to members of the Medical Services Federal Credit Union. MSFCU is offering Share Drafts, a credit union version of the popular NOW checking account -- with a few distinct advantages:

1) Money in the share draft account earns 6% quarterly dividends, as compared to the maximum of 5 1/4% offered by banks.

2) No minimum balance is required. The only requirement for a MSFCU share draft account is membership in the credit union, which entails opening a savings account. The savings (or

share) account earns 7% interest itself.

3) There are no per-draft charges or monthly service charges for the share draft account, only a charge to purchase the drafts.

4) The draft book looks like a regular checkbook, but there is no need for a separate register. Each draft is backed by a carbonless copy, which records the transaction as you write it and stays in the book as a permanent record. This eliminates the need to make a separate record each time you write a draft and also ends cancelled check storage problems. A separate register is included, however, for those who wish to use it.

As with a MSFCU savings account, deposits to the share draft account may be made by payroll deduction,

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availability at three locations in the hospital (at MMC in the Emergency Department, the Admitting Lobby, and Central Registry). Also, patients who wish to request uncompensated care can now do so upon arrival in the hospital -- and their request must be processed, their eligibility determined, and the determination reported to them, all before they receive their red card. That, of course, is the time-consuming part. Pratt says: "The process is precise and detailed, and it takes time -- both for the patient to be accurate with family and financial data, and for the admitting person to make the determination. Once the patient's status has been determined, a letter is typed up, right then, and given to the patient, stating his degree or lack of eligibility."

The process can back up on patients who are not applying for uncompensated care as well, Pratt says, even though he currently has one person on each shift dedicated to processing patients who apply. He hopes soon to have another person dedicated to the process, but even then, he foresees delays.

The pressure on all involved is great, Pratt acknowledges, from the patient who is pressing to get to an appointment on time, to the health care personnel waiting for the patient -- and it

all zeroes in on admitting personnel.

"They've taken a lot of pressure," Pratt says. "Frankly, I'm not sure I could take it every day. I'm grateful they've got the temperament for it."

"As long as everyone can keep their patience, we'll keep adapting," he adds. "Everyone should understand that the process takes time."

Brief background: The process described here is MMC's compliance with new guidelines for the administration of uncompensated care as provided for under the Public Health Service Act of 1949. Commonly called the Hill-Burton Act, it requires that any medical facility which has received federal assistance in construction or modernization must provide, over a specified period of time, free or reduced-charge care to persons eligible according to national guidelines.

Since MMC has used federal funds to help with construction for several building programs -- starting with the 1956 Building -- Hill-Burton guidelines determine our procedures. With ten years remaining on our current Hill-Burton obligation, we are notified each year of a specific dollar amount that we must give in uncompensated care. When we have given that amount we continue to give free or reduced-charge care, still applying the same guidelines.

Still need Spanish in Language Bank

Response to a request for Language Bank volunteers (*What's Happening*, April 1, 1981) was rewarding. It was also interesting: we netted volunteers who speak Ukrainian, Spanish, German, Portuguese, French, Arabic, and one who signs.

Even though we have five new Spanish speaking volunteers, we need more to assure a more comfortable spread across all shifts, weekends and holidays. To volunteer, please call the Public Information Office (x2196) days, and Unit Manager Ed Moore (R.P. 253) nights.

New Medical Staff appointments made

Turner Bledsoe, M.D., Vice President for Health Affairs, announces the following Medical Staff appointments, as approved by the Maine Medical Center Board of Trustees:

Effective immediately -- Lewis Golden, M.D., MMC, to the Associate Staff, Department of Medicine; Arthur W. Larson, M.D., 19 West St., Portland, to the Associate Staff, Department of Surgery; Paul G. Meadows, M.D., 258 Main St., Saco, to the Courtesy Staff, Department of Medicine; John Lear Randall, M.D., Chief, Department of Family Practice, to the Active Staff with a dual appointment in the Department of Pediatrics;

John H. Siegle, M.D., MMC, to the Associate Staff, Department of Anesthesia; John Kelly Sullivan, M.D., 180 Park Ave., Portland, to the Associate Staff, Department of Medicine, Division of Neurology; Richard Marc Wexler, M.D., 131 Chadwick St., Portland, to the Associate Staff, Department of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology; Steven H. Zimmerman, M.D., MMC, to the Associate Staff, Department of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary Medicine, with a dual appointment in the Department of Critical Care Medicine.

Upcoming Nursing Educational programs

• *Pancreatitis - Part I: "Medical Approach,"* John Attwood, M.D.

July 28, 1981 3:30-4:30 PM
R8 Conf. Room

Approved for one CEARP

For further information, please call Staff Development, x2397.



ELEANOR GEE, retiring from the Food Services Department after 41 years with MMC, greets guests at a coffee held in her honor. Standing by is department Director **Robert Underwood**. (A/V Photo)

Catholic chaplaincy team at MMC grows

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland has added a second chaplain to the Maine Medical Center ministry, in order to extend and improve spiritual care for the hospital's Catholic patients. Joining Father Edward A. Thompson is Father Frank J. Murray, on his first assignment since his ordination last month. The two will overlap their schedules at MMC, and also work at the Osteopathic Hospital of Maine and fill in for the Catholic chaplain at Mercy Hospital.

Father Murray's ordination followed his recent graduation from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. with a Master of Divinity degree. During his training, he gained clinical experience at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and in the campus ministry. Last summer, he was a Deacon at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland.

Before entering Catholic University, Father Murray was a high school mathematics teacher and also a Democratic Representative to the Maine Legislature from Bangor. He graduated from the University of Maine at Orono with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics.

Father Murray is looking forward to his work at MMC, and feels it will be very helpful in his development as a



FATHER FRANK MURRAY, recently named to the Roman Catholic chaplaincy team at MMC, takes a moment to get acquainted with R4 Physical Therapists Carmen Chabot, left, and Corkey Kelley. (A/V Photo)

priest. He is pleased that there will be two chaplains available to the hospital, because it "effectively doubles the hours during which a priest will be readily available. This means we can provide better service." Working at the NIH exposed him to cancer patients, but he's finding that a hospital ministry carries a much wider variety of problems and opportunities.

Teachers to learn about genetics

A Maine Medical Center employee and several members of the MMC Research Department's Associate and Scientific Advisory staffs will act as faculty members for a special educational conference scheduled for July 13-17 at the University of Southern Maine. "Human Genetics for High School Biology Teachers," organized by USM and the Foundation for Blood Research in Scarborough, is a week-long course designed to familiarize teachers with the various facets of human genetics.

Topics included in the course are: clinical genetics, cytogenetics, cellular immunology, population genetics, genetics of cancer, genetic engineering, prenatal diagnosis, genetic counselling, and ethical issues in genetics. Lab sessions are scheduled in PKU testing, Karyotyping, and the Ames test for mutagens.

MMC Cytogenetic Technology Lab supervisor Gloria Marchilli is on the faculty for the course, as are MMC Research Associates James Haddow, M.D. and Donna Thompson, M.D., and Scientific Advisory Staff member Paula Romano, Ph.D.. Dr. Haddow is Acting Medical Director of the Foundation for Blood Research in Scarborough, where Dr. Thompson is Director of Cancer Research and Dr. Romano is Director of the Cellular Immunology Lab.



THE GOLDEN EAGLES, a Gorham-based motorcycle club, sponsored a ride from Standish to Mt. Washington and back last month. Proceeds from the ride, totaling over \$900, were donated to the Maine Medical Center Burn Unit. Presenting a check to Burn Unit Head Nurse Ed Thompson, RN, at the group's July 7 meeting, is Golden Eagles President Geraldine Miller.

Marketplace

FOR RENT: 3 BR house in Cape Elizabeth, avail. Sept. 1st. 2 baths (up & down), full basement w/utills. hookup. Fuego fireplace, 5 cords dried hardwood stacked in back yard for sale. Large, sunny back yard w/garden & woods. Great for children and pets. \$500/mo. plus utills. Call 767-3716, keep trying.

FOR RENT: 7½ room house, off Shore Rd., Cape Elizabeth. ¼ acre lot in quiet family neighborhood. New wood/coal/oil furnace. Avail. Sept. thru June. \$500/mo. Call 767-4359.

FOR RENT: Furnished 6 room duplex, 48 Kenwood St., Portland, near USM. Disposal, washer, refrig., freezer, garage. Adults, no pets. Avail. Sept. thru June. \$400/mo. plus utills. Call 774-7304.

FOR RENT: House on Peaks Island, panoramic view of Portland from the waterfront. 15 min. ferry ride, minimum 12 trips daily. Completely furnished. Avail. Sept. to June. No pets. Refs. and sec. dep. req. Call 766-2242 for interview.

FOR RENT: Unfurnished apt., 137 Clinton St., avail. Sept. 1st. 2nd floor, LR w/frpl., DR, 2 BR, den, Kw/stove, refrig. and dishwasher. Back porch. Washer & dryer hookups, garage, parking. \$360/mo. plus sec. dep. Call 799-3984.

FOR RENT: Unfurnished apt., 18 Cottage Lane, Cape Elizabeth, avail. July 15. LR w/wood stove, dining area, 1 BR, family room, ocean view, refrig., stove, sun deck. Washer & dryer hookups. Garage, parking. \$425/mo. plus sec. dep. Call 799-3984.

FOR RENT: Hill St., efficiency apt., LR/BR combination, w/w carpet, close to MMC. \$200/mo. utills. included. 1-yr. lease plus sec. dep. Call 799-3842 days and 854-8081 eves.

FOR RENT: 1 BR Western Prom apt., near MMC. Hardwood floors, working frpl., large bay window, stove, refrig., disposal, laundry room. Off st. parking. Adults, no pets. Avail. Aug 1. \$350/mo. plus utills. Call 772-0881 after 6 PM.

FOR SALE: Octagonal antique pine trestle table, 2 captain's chairs, 2 mate's chairs. \$400. Call 773-5406 after 5 PM.

FOR SALE: 1978 Datsun, front wheel drive, AM/FM radio, 4-speed, ex. cond., rust proof still under guarantee. Call 799-5223.

FOR SALE: New parts for 1973 Opel-Manta: air filter, spark plugs, upper radiator hose, section of exhaust assembly. Call 797-6472.

FOR SALE: Hand hewn beams and used bricks. Call 865-6988 eves.

FOR SALE: Tappan Corningware countertop range, 4½ x 20¼ x 32¼, ¾ inch lip. \$225 or best offer. 2 years old, never used. Call 655-4924.

FOR SALE: 1978 Dodge Omni. Two-tone, standard trans., 30 MPG, PS, AM/FM cassette. Ex. cond. \$300 below book value. Call 797-8191.

FOR SALE: Four 14" white spoked wheels for Datsun truck. \$100. Call 637-2415.

FOR SALE: '72 blue Dodge Polara. 76,000 miles. \$900. Call 774-5060 after 5 PM.

FOR SALE: 1978 Monza 2-door, 4-speed, 46,000 miles, 4 new all-weather radial tires, sun roof. \$3,300. Call 774-8347 after 6 PM.

FOR SALE: White dresser and bureau, \$45/ea. Call 883-9044.

PAINTING: Two college students are offering exterior home painting at low prices without sacrifice to quality. Call Mark at 854-2334 eves.

ROOMMATE WANTED: To share 2 BR Western Prom apt. thru Labor Day. Furnished. \$180/mo. includes utills. Call 774-4125.

WANTED: Mature sitter to care for 16 mo. old in my home. Mid-afternoon to early evening, 2 days/wk., occasional weekends. Call 773-4197.

WANTED: 1 large, clean rabbit pen, approx. 4' x 6'. Call Polly at 829-3194.

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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 the Editor, Public Information Office, MMC, Portland, Me., 04102. Barbara Burns, Editor.

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WANTED: Girl's 20" bike in good cond. Call 773-5844.

WOOD CUTTING: Professional cutting and splitting of firewood. Fast, efficient, reliable. Also offered: tree felling, cutting & splitting. Insured. Call Jay Condon at 775-5411, x497, leave name and number.

FOOD SERVICE EMPLOYEE OF THE WEEK

is

DAVID BAILEY
DIETARY AIDE

MSFCU, from page 1

direct deposit (for retirement and social security checks), or deposit from any other source. The monthly statement for the share draft account lists all the information contained in a regular NOW account statement, including all draft transactions for the statement period and dividends accrued during the period.

MSFCU members received share draft flyers with their quarterly statements this week, and non-members wishing to take advantage of this program may join the credit union by calling 871-2811 or visiting at the Chisolm House garage, second floor, on the Western Promenade. Anybody working in the health care field in Portland is eligible for membership in MSFCU, although not all employers offer payroll deduction services. Spouses of members may also join the credit union.



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