

CheckUp

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Electronic-mail

A New Trend in Inhouse Communication

For a little over a year now, more than 2,000 hospital employees, physicians and medical office personnel have been communicating in an effective if unconventional way: by computer.

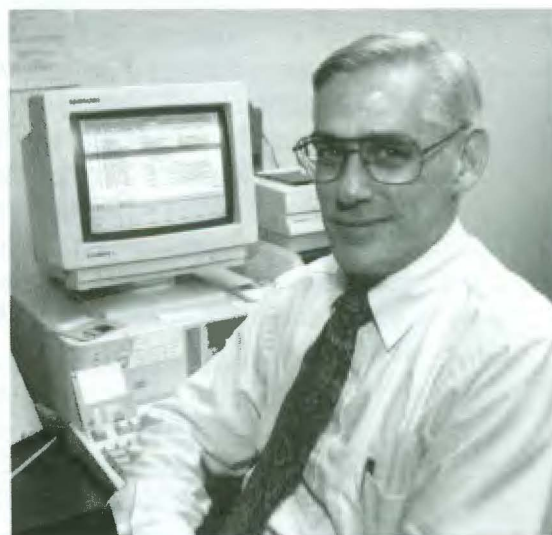
And while that may sound a bit impersonal, there's no denying the convenience and cost-effectiveness of E (electronic)-mail.

In lieu of phone calls and interoffice mail, personnel with access to this computer application can inform their colleagues of meetings, update each other about various programs or projects or simply exchange ideas by inputting that data and transmitting it with a few keystrokes.

Each month, hospital personnel send an average of 100,000 letters, messages and notices via E-mail. The estimated annual savings on paper costs alone is \$30,000. It is not as easy to calculate the amount of time saved on telephone tag.

In addition to facilitating communication among hospital personnel, E-mail offers access to documents that were previously only available in print including the employee handbook, job postings, the list of hospital interpreters, department head minutes and even cafeteria menus.

E-mail's evolution into a primary form of in-house communication does not surprise Mark Jones, E-mail administrator, who oversees the E-mail system. Jones routinely updates much of the information available through E-mail and handles numerous requests, an average of 50 a day, to expand the service.



Mark Jones: Making life easier through E-mail

"E-mail is efficient and convenient," he says, noting that it can be accessed 24-hours a day from anywhere in the hospital. "Because it cuts down on phone calls and paper costs, it is also a tool for operations improvement. More importantly, it provides people with access to the most up-to-date information available from expense codes (for purchase orders) to phone extensions (for hospital personnel.)"

Another plus is that users can send information from one-another, to several people or to the entire E-mail list, whichever audience is appropriate for the message. Confidentiality is a built-in feature.

Jones notes that as many as 2,500 personnel will have access to E-mail by the end of the year.

"It will literally put a wealth of information at their fingertips," he says. ■

■ IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 • E-mail
- 2 • Managed Care Update
- 3 • Bulletin Board
- 4 • Child Health Month
- 6 • About Our People
- 8 • Education

A Closer Look at Two Managed Health Plans: Valley Preferred and Choice Plus

The topic of healthcare benefits generated considerable discussion among employees during the summer months as Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) introduced and opened enrollment for the *Choice Plus* healthcare option. At present, approximately 1,500 employees have enrolled and will be covered under Choice Plus through December 31, 1995. Others have chosen to remain in LVHN's existing Health Plan.

Over this same period of time, several articles appeared in *CheckUp* in which Gregory G. Kile, Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Physician Hospital Organization, Inc. (LVPHO) discussed his office's role in bringing managed care to the Lehigh Valley through the healthcare network called *Valley Preferred*. Most recently, we filled readers in on the growth of the Valley Preferred network into the Hazleton area and introduced some of its clients.

Since the Choice Plus option and Valley Preferred network were introduced around the same time, some questions have been asked about whether they have any common features. In addition, there has been some confusion about which physicians participate in LVHN's existing Health Plan, the new Choice Plus option and Valley Preferred.

In the following Network interview Greg Kile helps to clarify these issues.

Q: Can you explain the difference between Valley Preferred Network and Choice Plus?

A: Valley Preferred is a preferred provider organization network created by LVPHO and its physician members. Physicians are reimbursed for a service and/or procedure performed according to a set fee schedule. The covered member's bill will vary by the

number of services/procedures actually received.

Choice Plus is a prepaid product where a co-payment is made by the covered member at the time of the office visit. The prepayment to the physician is a fixed amount. The co-payment made by the covered member, also a fixed amount, is for certain covered services including office visits.

Q: Why do some physicians participate in the Valley Preferred Network and not in Choice Plus and others participate in both?

A: As I mentioned in an earlier issue of *CheckUp*, more than 480 physicians on the hospital's medical staff joined together to form the Greater Lehigh Valley Independent Practice Association (GLVIPA). The IPA and Lehigh Valley Hospital are equal partners in the operation of the Valley Preferred Network. When Choice Plus was created, these Valley Preferred Network physicians, or IPA-PHO members, were given the option of participating in Choice Plus. Our results were quite favorable if you consider that nearly 90 percent of the Valley Preferred Network physicians also made the decision to participate in Choice Plus.

Q: Who is responsible for seeing that covered employees, their employer and healthcare providers—are properly billed, paid and/or reimbursed?

A: That is often the job of the third party administrator (TPA) and managed care network, whose services are contracted by the employer.

Q: What does a Third Party Administrator do and who is the TPA for Valley Preferred Network and Choice Plus?

A: A TPA meets clients' needs in the areas of claim adjudication, benefit design, consultative services, and the ongoing provision of a variety of specialized reports (e.g., claim listings, benefit payment analysis, top provider performance, etc.).

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Bulletin Board

Hot Chili? Cool!

As autumn arrives and the weather turns cool, Food Services is turning up the heat with a "Chili Challenge," Monday, Sept. 26 through Friday, Sept. 30. During the week, a special chili entree will be featured each day in the hospital cafeterias. Hospital personnel who select any of the featured entrees will be eligible for a daily prize. Those who dare to sample a week's worth of the mouth-watering recipes (antacid not included) have the chance to win Snapple apparel. The Chili Challenge will culminate with a Chili Cook-Off Competition on Sept. 30. Who makes the biggest, baddest, meanest chili at Lehigh Valley Hospital? A panel of judges will decide and award a matching pair of Snapple his and hers ski jackets to the grand prize winner; lunch for two at Lehigh Valley Hospital and two cases of Snapple to the first runner-up; and lunch for one in the hospital cafeteria and one case of Snapple to the second runner-up. Entry forms and rules are available in the cafeterias at both hospital sites.

IS Upgrading Processors

Information Services will move the PHAMIS system to faster mainframe computers, replacing the Cyclone processors with the new Himalaya processors on Saturday, Oct. 8 at 1 a.m. I.S., which anticipates a marked improvement in response time with the new processors, estimates that the system will be unavailable for at least eight hours during the

conversion although it has the potential to cause 18 hours of downtime. Personnel affected by this change are reminded to prepare for manual processing during the downtime and data entry after the system is activated. If you have any questions about this conversion, please call Sandy Haldeman, ext. 1433; Meg Schaffer, ext. 1436 or Harry Lukens, ext. 1410.

Walk This Way

Due to scheduling conflicts, the American Heart Association (AHA) Heart Walk will wind through the Allentown Rose Garden in place of the Little Lehigh Parkway, beginning at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 2. The walk will proceed from the pavilions at the west end of Honochick Street, off Ott Street, 1/2 block north of Hamilton Street. For more information, call Public Relations at ext. 3001.

Run For Your Life

Whitehall Parkway is the setting for "Run For Your Life" a 5K Cross Country Run on Saturday, Oct. 1. Registration begins at 8 a.m. with a 10 a.m. start time. The entry fee is \$10 per person; there is no fee for children 12 years and younger who run in costume. Proceeds from the run will benefit the Whitehall Parkway and the John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center. For more information and an entry form, please call the Development Department at ext. 3031.

(please turn to page 7)

Managed Health Care Plans (from page 2)

Spectrum Administrators, located at 2166 S. 12th, is the Third Party Administrator for Choice Plus and those Valley Preferred Network clients who opt to contract with them.

Q: Is a Third Party Administrator the same as a third party payor?

A: A TPA often performs services such as claim adjudication and the others described above on behalf of payors. Very often it is the insurers who are described as third party payors.

Q: How closely does Spectrum Administrators work with Valley Preferred Network and Choice Plus clients?

A: Spectrum Administrators is always available to assist with member services and client-customer relations. For example, if a Choice Plus covered employee has a question about a claim or is having trouble arranging an appointment with a participating physician, Spectrum Administrators can help. The office also performs quality assurance and utilization review functions. ■

Child Health Month Promotes Solutions Before Problems

As the theme of Child Health Month, "Solutions Before Problems" emphasizes the importance of prevention in reducing the incidence of injury and disease among children.

During October, that will be the focus of a variety of inhouse and community education programs and activities, including a four-part series of lectures on common childhood illnesses, parenting techniques and other childcare issues to students in the interim school at Allen High School.

Meanwhile, an injury prevention specialist from the Allentown Health Bureau will provide area families with information about injury prevention each Wednesday in October from 9:30 - 11 a.m. in Outpatient Pediatrics. Interested families will also have the opportunity to schedule a home safety inspection free-of charge by Health Bureau officials.

Also planned is an inservice on child abuse presented by Monica McCullough, RN, pediatric clinical nurse specialist, and Susan Durkin, RN, clinical nurse educator in the Emergency Department on Tuesday, Oct. 11 from 2 - 3 p.m. in classroom 3, CC&I-78, and Wednesday, Oct. 12 from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. in the pediatric classroom, 17th & Chew.

Because Lehigh Valley Hospital's observance of Child Health Month coincides with the March of Dimes' Campaign for Healthier Babies, both organizations are co-sponsoring a special health fair for new, expectant and experienced parents on Saturday, Oct. 1 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at K-Mart, 4701 Tilghman Street, Allentown and Saturday, Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at K-Mart in the Mountainville Shopping Center, 1502 S. 4th Street, Allentown.

The fair will feature everything from free fingerprinting and blood pressure screening to prenatal education and halloween safety bags. Other organizations participating in the fair

include the Allentown Health Bureau, the Pennsylvania State Department of Health, District 8 Kiwanis and the Allentown and South Whitehall Police Departments.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the health fair can call Darla Heivly at ext. 2820 or Cindy Max at ext. 2333.

Prevention is the Key To Health and Safety of Children

Most parents would agree: Caring for children, from their first steps to their first dates, is as challenging as it is rewarding. Kids don't come with instructions and, even if they did, they would all operate differently. There are, however, precautions that parents can take to help their children grow up healthy and strong. Here are just a few of them.

Keeping Kids Safe in the Kitchen and Bath

As children become more mobile and curious, they are at greater risk of injury.

Here are some recommendations for making your home a safe environment for children:

- Be sure of your children's whereabouts before moving any hot liquids in the kitchen.
- Keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove or cook on rear burners when possible.
- Use a fill-through-the-spout teapot, the kind without a lid, to prevent spills.
- Never hold a child while drinking a hot liquid.
- Purchase appliances with short cords and keep all cords from dangling over the edge of counters.
- Do not allow children to use a cooking/heating appliance until they are mature enough to understand safe-use procedures and tall enough to safely reach cooking surfaces.
- Before giving any microwaved food/liquid to a child, taste test it to ensure a safe temperature. Even though a bottle, for example, might not feel warm to the touch

after it has been microwaved briefly, there may be "hot spots" within the formula.

This could scald a baby's mouth or throat.

- Before placing a child into the tub, move your hand rapidly through the water to test the temperature.
- Never leave a young child unattended in the bathroom or tub.
- Use extreme caution if bathing small children in the sink. Many sinks have single-lever faucets that are easy for small children to turn on.
- Adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to produce a temperature of 120 to 125F or less. The lower the temperature, the lower the risk.
- Consider installing anti-scald devices on tub faucets and shower heads to prevent accidents.



Poison-Proof Your Home

In the eyes of a small child, most household products look colorful and *edible*. That's why it's so important for parents to regard all household items, from alcoholic beverages and cologne to detergents and plants, as potential poisons.

Here are some steps you can take to prevent accidental poisoning:

- Store all drugs and chemicals in their original containers, preferably in a cabinet and out of the reach of children.
- Never put chemicals in food containers.
- Use products with safety caps.
- Read and follow label directions on all products before using them.
- Obtain Mr. Yuk stickers from Lehigh Valley Hospital's poison education program at (610) 402-2536. Teach your children that Mr. Yuk's scowling face means DANGER, and have them help you put the stickers on any dangerous products in your home.

In the event that your child ingests a potential poison, call the Poison Control Center for

accurate up-to-date information about recommendations for treatment. The center provides emergency information 24-hours a day and can provide your doctor or hospital with specific information to assist with medical care. The free 24-hour hotline is printed around the face of each Mr. Yuk sticker. Place a sticker on your telephone to have the number handy in an emergency.

Shaking Won't Soothe A Crying Baby

It's not unusual for parents to become frustrated when their newborn baby never seems to stop crying. But, it is *inexcusable* to try and quiet the baby by shaking him or her. The whiplash effect that results, called "shaken baby syndrome," can cause brain damage or death. If you lose your temper when caring for your baby, put the child down. Offer a pacifier. Try putting the baby in a swing. Close your eyes and count to ten. And talk to your pediatrician about different approaches for caring for your newborn. But, never shake the baby. The consequences can be devastating.

Put On A Happy Face

While dentists have the skill and technology for putting sparkle back into a smile, there's a lot parents can do to help their children enjoy good oral health.

Here are a few recommendations:

- Start cleaning your child's teeth daily as soon as the first one comes in (at about six months of age.)
- Put only water in a child's naptime or bedtime bottle.
- Take your child to see a dentist before age two.
- Ask your dentist for instructions on brushing and flossing and for advice on your child's diet.
- Make sure your child gets the fluoride needed for decay resistant teeth.
- Brush and floss your child's teeth daily until the child can be taught to do this alone.

With your help, professional care and through their own efforts, children can maintain strong, healthy and permanent teeth all their lives. ■

About Our People

Recent graduates of the School of Radiology include: (front row, from left) Carole Gery, Kandy Kleppinger, Karen Groller and Mindy Herb and (second row, same order) Linda Schultz, Jen Drumheller, and Mike Federowicz.



The Lehigh Valley Child Care Center recently held commencement exercises for the Class of '94. Here the graduates are pictured lining up to receive their diplomas and performing a song and dance routine for a delighted audience of family and friends.



Sherry Waselus was among the unit clerks, including those who double as nursing technical assistants, who were honored during Health Unit Coordinator Day at LVH. Proclamations issued by Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey and Allentown Mayor Heydt made the observance official while a recognition program and reception helped make the occasion a memorable one.

■ Congratulations! ...

... to Judy Natale Sabino, Community Health, and her husband, Tony, on the birth of their son, John Nicholas, on June 8, 1994.

... to Douglas Litchfield and his wife, Linda, on the birth of their son, Jesse Colin, on Sept. 1, 1994. Jesse Colin joins a brother, Casey, at home. ■

Bulletin Board

Management Development Forum Planned

Susan Steward, nursing education, will discuss the issue of competence assessment and its implications for hospital managers at a management development forum on Wednesday, Sept. 28 from 10 - 11 a.m. in classroom 1, CC&I-78. No registration is required; however, seating will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information, please contact Jack Dunleavy at ext. 1211 or via E-mail.

Child Care Center Has Openings

The Lehigh Valley Hospital Child Care Center has openings for children ages 4 -5 in the pre-kindergarten class. For details, call Rhonda Beatty, director of the center, at ext. 8969.

Program Addresses Ethical Issues

The care of patients and families struggling with complex ethical issues is the focus of "Decisions Near the End of Life," a unique educational program open to all hospital personnel. The program consists of four one-hour seminars held during day and evening hours. For more information or to register, please contact Gale Brunst, critical care office, at ext. 8450 or via E-mail or Joseph Vincent, MD, Marilyn Guidi, RN, or the Rev. Emily Jean Gilbert, program coordinators.

Halloween In Store

Halloween is almost here, and the Tree Top Shop, CC&I-78, is brimming with decorative pumpkins, witches, scarecrows, skeletons, masks and the like. The shop has also added a great selection of Mickey Mouse and Nurse's Indiglo watches. Be sure to shop early for best selection.

Mark Your Calendar!

Instructor Con Gallagher offers lessons in Country/Western couple and line dancing, Mondays from 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Physical Therapy Department, CC&I-78. Cost per person is \$5. And, there's no better time to learn!

Saturday, Oct. 8:

The Recreation Committee is sponsoring a Country/Western Dance at the Alburdis Recreation Hall. Admission is \$10 per person. For tickets, please call Sharon Bartz, Physical Therapy; Erma Aquino, Purchasing; Barrie Borger, Information Services; Jill Biszek, Public Relations; Lynn Nagel, Accounts Payable; or Kay Zelina, Business Office.

Monday, Oct. 10:

Miller Memorial Blood Center will have a bloodmobile from 7 - 10:30 a.m. in room 900 on the ground floor of the School of Nursing. Employees interested in donating blood can sign up on the registration form posted in their department or contact Employee Health at ext. 8869 to schedule an appointment.

Thursday, Oct. 20:

John Cassis, a nationally-recognized motivational speaker, will present "Hospital Heroes," the 4th annual Medallion Lecture sponsored by the Professional Nurse Council from 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. in the auditorium, 17th & Chew and 1:15-2:15 p.m. in the auditorium, CC&I-78. All hospital personnel are invited to attend.

Thursday, Oct. 20:

Nurses who completed the hospital-sponsored preceptor course during 1993-94 will be honored at a special recognition reception at Hotel Bethlehem. Watch unit bulletin boards for details.

Thursday Nov. 10 and Friday, Nov. 11:

Dates, but not location, have been set for the hospital's annual Holiday Bazaar. Any craftsperson interested in participating can contact Sharon Bartz at ext. 8480.

Sunday, Feb. 26 - Sunday, March 5, 1995:

The S.S. Oceanbreeze will cruise to Aruba, Barbados and other Caribbean islands. Total cost per person is \$1,258 based on double-occupancy in the ship's inside staterooms. A \$200 deposit is required by Sept. 30. For details, call Kay Zelina at ext. 9455. ■

HR Development Information

Hospital Orientation

The next hospital orientation will begin at 8 a.m. at CC&I-78 on Monday, Oct. 3. An optional tour of both sites will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 5 beginning at 1 p.m. at 17th & Chew and 2:30 p.m. at CC&I-78. Reservations are required for the tour. To register, call ext. 1211.

CPR Certification

CPR Certification will be held in two parts and attendance is required at both. Part I will be held Friday, Nov. 14 from 9 a.m. to noon in room 900, School of Nursing, 17th & Chew. Part II will be held Friday, Nov. 11 from 9 a.m. to noon, also in room 900, School of Nursing. To register, complete and return the appropriate form located on the monthly HRD calendar, outside HRD, room 1914, School of Nursing, 17th & Chew, or outside the AV Services area at CC&I-78.

CPR Recertification

CPR Recertification will be held in the 24-hour period beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 28 at CC&I-78, Nursing Learning Lab, 2nd floor, General Services Building.

Symposia Reminder

The Human Resource Department has announced the next topic of the Regional Symposium Series which will be held in the auditorium at CC&I-78.

■ *Preventive Medicine 1994* will be held Saturday, Oct. 1. Topics will include: "Immunizations," "Nutrition and Prevention," "Cancer Screenings in the '90s," and "The Preventive Examination."

■ *Sixth Annual Neuroscience Symposium: Outpatient Management of Neurological Disorders* will be held Friday, Oct. 14. Topics will include: "New Avenues in Seizure Management," "Outpatient Approach to Neuromuscular Disease," "Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Disorders in Neurology," "Management of Low Back Pain - When to Apply the

Cutting Edge," "Outpatient Management of Multiple Sclerosis," and "Headache Management in the '90s."

■ *Cancer Update 1994: Ovarian Cancer* will be held Friday, Oct. 21. Topics will include: "The Diagnosis of Early Carcinoma of the Ovary," "Surgical Treatment of Ovarian Carcinoma," "Radiation Therapy for Ovarian Carcinoma," "Chemotherapy for Ovarian Carcinoma," and "Nursing Care of the Woman Experiencing Ovarian Cancer."

■ *Provider Responsibilities in Managed Care ... Do You Follow the Rules or Write the Rules?* will be held Saturday, Nov. 5. Topics will include: "Provider Responsibilities to the Community in Establishing Managed Care Relationships," "Critical Success Requirements for Integrated Delivery Systems," "Strategic Joint Ventures with Plans and Insurers," "Impact of Organized HMO Delivery Systems on Private Practice Physicians," and "Physician's Perspective on Health Care Reform."

For more information and to register, please call ext. 1210. ■

AHA Teleconferences Available

Issues relevant to healthcare providers are addressed in American Hospital Association teleconferences available through HR Development. The cost per program is \$600 which can be split among interested departments. The teleconferences are usually approved for CEUs by a professional organization. For more information, please call Jack Dunleavy at ext. 1211 or via E-mail.

Oct. 6 Coding for ICD9-CM

Oct. 27 Strategies for Aligning with Other Organizations for Community Networks (AONE)

Nov. 17 Governance Models for Newly-Emerging Health Networks

Dec. 15 Reporting Performance Information to the Public ■