

PULSE

Muhlenberg Medical Center

VOL. 17, No. 1

MUHLENBERG MEDICAL CENTER, BETHLEHEM, PA

FEBRUARY 1983

HOUSEKEEPER KEY TO SAFE, CLEAN HOSPITAL



HEALTH PAVILION in Moscow, USSR. Susan Oliver, R.N., and Mary Ann Young, R.N., MMC nurses, gained a first-hand knowledge of oncology nursing as performed in the Soviet Union. (see article on page 3)

Staff-Volunteers Show Dedication In Great Blizzard

At a time when newspaper headlines target health care costs as an issue of paramount concern, perhaps it's appropriate to reflect on a recent experience concerning health care here at Muhlenberg Medical Center.

The Weekend of February 11-13 saw the largest snowfall of the century in the Lehigh Valley. In this snow emergency, numerous nurses, technicians, dietary employees, supervisors, volunteers and physicians volunteered to remain and care for patients. For most of these people, their day began at 7 a.m. on Friday and did not end until Saturday evening. Many others braved the winds, snow and impassable roads to come into the hospital and help where needed. The vast majority of these people had the opportunity at some (continued on page 2)

Myrtie Prosser Early Supporter

Mrs. Myrtie Prosser, one of Muhlenberg Medical Center's earliest friends and supporters, died December in her Hellertown home. Mrs. Prosser's association with the hospital goes back to its earliest planning stages. Along with her husband Harrison, she offered valuable guidance and advice to the Lutheran pastors and lay persons working to make Muhlenberg Medical Center a reality.

The Prossers' generous initial funding got the project started, and a section of the original hospital was named the Prosser Pavilion. They continued their faithful support of the hospital programs over the years.

Charles W. Carlson, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Hellertown, summed up Mrs. Prosser's lifelong concern for others: "It was never the quantity of the gift that mattered to her, always the quality of love shared. She far surpassed the usual definition of the word 'philanthropist'."

Infection Control Expertise Part of Good Housekeeping

The role of the Housekeeping Department has changed drastically over the years. No longer is a housekeeper handed a mop and bucket and sent on his or her way. Instead, today's housekeeper plays a vital role in maintaining a safe, sterile and pleasant environment for patients, visitors and staff. The housekeeping staff must be experts in cleaning, knowledgeable about infection control procedures and ambassadors of good will.

Theresa Makos, MMC director of housekeeping, points out that it takes the efforts of a staff of 32 to routinely remove trash, vacuum carpets, polish floors and clean patient rooms. Mrs. Makos is assisted in her duties by Lester Frable, assistant director, and Jackie Evans, supervisor.

The bulk of work is the daily cleaning and disinfecting of patient rooms and ancillary departments. Other areas cleaned daily are the corridors, stairwells and offices. Not only must the environment be spotless to the eye, but also germ-free, and this calls for specialized skills. Infection control procedures help meet this priority, preventing staff members from picking up infections and protecting the patient rooms from external contamination.

"I believe most people notice the superficial appearance of the hospital, and we hear positive comments from patients, visitors and staff. But it's our responsibility to go beneath the surface, to poke in corners and closets and to look for things you can't see — germs."

The record speaks for itself. According to Norma Bicking, infection control nurse, Muhlenberg Medical Center has a very low infection rate.

To maintain these high standards, formal training for all housekeeping staff takes place annually to update them on procedures for cleaning isolation rooms and medical areas. Em- (continued on page 2)



EVEN THE ELEVATORS get a "white glove" inspection by Theresa Makos, MMC director of housekeeping. At the right is Alice Horninger, 1st floor housekeeper.



HOUSEKEEPING. Karen Rogers is housekeeper in Muhlenberg Medical Center's 4-South Nursing Unit.

BLIZZARD (cont. from page 1)

point to leave, but chose not to, being concerned that the weather would create emergency situations that could more readily be handled if they stayed.

That Saturday I had the opportunity to observe these dedicated people in action. With hospital occupancy reaching nearly full capacity, the staff continued to provide high quality care. They displayed professionalism and enormous care and concern for patients.

All I can say is "thank you" to the first class professionals who worked so hard to keep the hospital running smoothly during the great blizzard of '83.

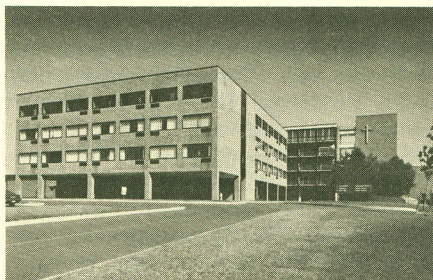
Joseph W. Fitzgerald
President
Muhlenberg Medical Center

Effie Kistler Auxiliary Head

Effie Kistler, president of the Auxiliary of Muhlenberg Medical Center from 1971 to 1973, died last month in the Tipton Lutheran Home. Before her retirement, she was a teacher in the Allentown school district for many years.

Under her energetic leadership, the Auxiliary supported a number of hospital projects, including construction of a surgical wing and purchase of equipment for the radiology department.

Her fifteen years of service to Muhlenberg Medical Center was an important contribution to the progress of both the hospital and the Auxiliary.



HOUSEKEEPING (cont. from page 1)

ployees also have the opportunity to attend one-day seminars relating to housekeeping and infection control, as well as cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. These in-services are held in conjunction with the ancillary services instructor.

Routine and random inspections are done by Mrs. Makos. Quality control inspections, using guidelines of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), take place six times a year on patient floors and four times in ancillary departments. The key to success is, in Mrs. Makos' words, "to stay on top of things."

The Housekeeping Department reports to Nursing Services and works in cooperation with the nursing staff and supportive services. Mrs. Makos noted, "Positive contact with patients is important, and we seem to be doing the job. Responses in the patient questionnaires consistently compliment us. The housekeeping staff is excellent. They're intelligent, friendly and take pride in their work. And it's gratifying to know our efforts are appreciated."

USSR AND USA NURSES HAVE SAME CONCERNS

MMC Nurses Oliver And Young Recall Soviet Study/Tour

"When asked what I learned from my trip to the USSR, I reply that nurses are nurses... everywhere. They have the same concerns, the same problems, the same feelings."

Muhlenberg Medical Center nurses, Susan Oliver, R.N., and Mary Ann Young, R.N., were part of a tour/study group of nurses who traveled to the Soviet Union. Led by a team of nurses well-known in the oncology nursing field, the group spent hours in the classroom, traveled to five cities, toured hospitals and clinics and presented oncology-related papers.

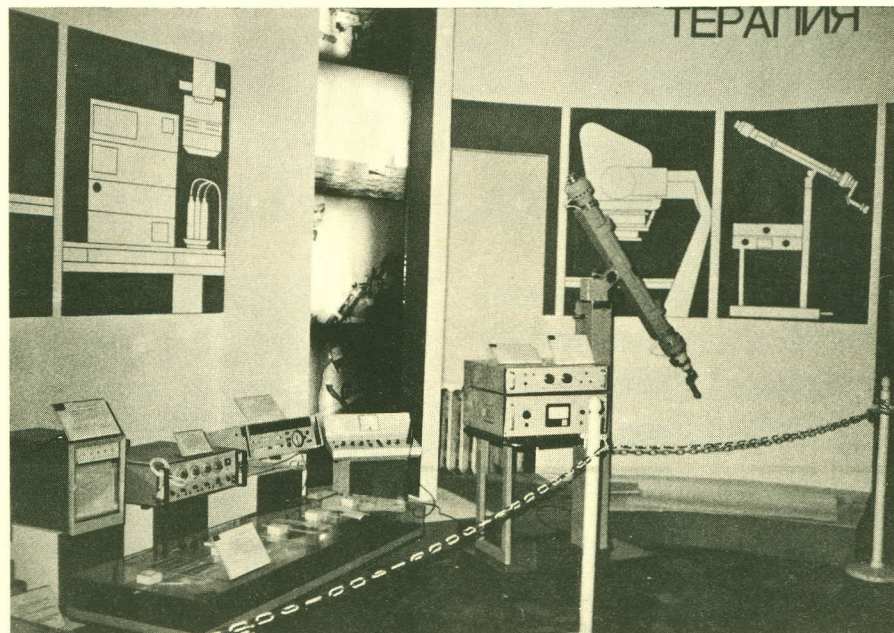
More than the continuing education units they earned, these nurses gained firsthand knowledge of a health delivery system and an approach to oncology nursing quite different from our own.

Both are nurses on 4-South, and Mrs. Oliver also works part-time in the employee health/infection control area.

She explained that the health conditions in the USSR over the past 60 years have improved dramatically. The average life span in Czarist Russia was 32 years. After the Revolution in 1917 it was decided that for socialism to continue, healthy workers were needed.

Health care today in the Soviet Union is totally free and provided by state health institutions. A major thrust of the Soviet health delivery system is to keep the patients as close to home as possible — quite an undertaking for such a large land mass. In cities "polyclinics" exist for approximately every 2000 adults; in rural districts for every 5000-7000 adults. For more specialized treatment there are district hospitals or "dispensaries," and highly specialized treatment takes place in regional or territorial hospitals which average 700 beds. Higher up the ladder of specialization are research institutes. Health facilities have also been established within major industries.

The two nurses described an approach to oncology nursing much different from our own. At no time is the patient told he or she has cancer. Instead, the patient is told he has a tumor, and the recommended treatment is then discussed. In a



Display in the Soviet Health Pavilion in Moscow. The equipment at the right is a laser used in the treatment of arthritis.

society which exists under substantial restrictions, the patients accept this approach without question.

A glance at the photographs taken at the clinics toured shows room furnishings and equipment that might have belonged to a bygone era in American health care. The photographs do not depict the gleaming, spacious surroundings we associate with modern health care.

"In an oncological dispensary in Moscow, the hallways were full of waiting patients — quiet, accepting people," noted Mrs. Young. "You see no plastics, nothing disposable. Even in a hospital hardly a year old, there is nothing fancy. One patient's drainage tubes were routed into a soda bottle, not even one with a cap. They see no reason to update supplies. As long as it works, it works."

Almost exclusively a female profession, nursing and the entire medical profession are not highly respected in the USSR. "Nurses were constantly compared to cooks," explained Mrs. Oliver. All nursing schools are located in Moscow and offer standardized curriculum, and continuing education is mandatory. The maximum salary for a nurse is 150 rubles a month, the value of the ruble being \$1.50.

The usual application for medical school consists of four written tests, for an honors graduate (top 10 per-

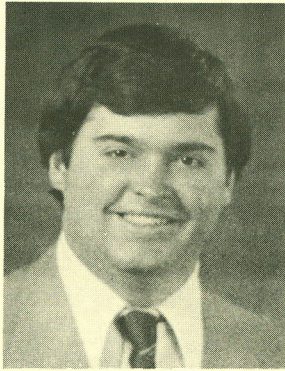
cent of the class) of a nursing school, only one written test is required. Thus, an astonishing 76 percent of Soviet physicians are female.

Both nurses recounted that during exchanges of questions with the smiling, friendly Soviet nurses, the topics of concern were the same: nursing care and treatments, patient rights, nurse-patient ratio, "burn-out," wages and benefits, dress codes and reprimand procedures. They summed it up: "There are definite differences in the two health care systems, but nurses are nurses everywhere."

MMC Grants Staff Privileges to Dr. Harold Campbell

The following physician was granted privileges by the Board of Trustees following his recommendation by the Credentials Committee of the medical staff.

Harold Stearns Campbell, Jr., M.D., internal medicine. A native of Bethlehem, Dr. Campbell is a graduate of Loma Linda University in California and was a resident at Loma Linda University Medical Center.



William Munley

New Resident Plans Health Care Career

William Munley will spend this year at Muhlenberg Medical Center as an administrative resident. The residency is part of his preparation for a master's degree in health services administration from George Washington University. MMC is one of 70 hospital residency sites to which the university refers students. The resident, in addition to spending time in the hospital's departments, will work on assigned special projects.

A native of Clark's Green, Pennsylvania, Bill received a bachelor of arts degree in general science from the University of Rochester. For over two years he worked as the evening shift team leader in emergency department registration at a major trauma center.

Bill gained additional hospital "experience" when he played varsity football. "As offensive tackle," he recounted, "I suffered broken bones, concussions, knee cartilage damage and shoulder separation. I've seen a lot of emergency rooms."

He is considering health care administration as his career, preferably in Pennsylvania or the Northeast in general.

PULSE

Published every month by
Muhlenberg Medical Center
Schoenersville Road
Bethlehem, PA 18017

Editor: Karla Morales
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We are grateful to the volunteers
who contributed their time
in preparing PULSE for mailing.

Address correction requested

NURSES CERTIFIED IN CLINICAL AREAS

A number of Muhlenberg Medical Center nurses recently have taken the extra step beyond licensure and met the requirements for certification in their specialty areas.

Linda Graber, R.N., and **Diana Billman, R.N., B.S.N.**, clinical instructor, are certified critical care nurses (CCRN). **Virginia Stover, R.N.**, clinical nursing director, attained certification in this same area over a year ago.

Cas Lencheski, R.N., clinical nursing director, and **Mary Dorosh, R.N.**, nurse manager, are certified operating room nurses (CNOR).

Jack Satkovich, R.N., is a certified emergency nurse (CEN). **Gayle Keim Levas, R.N.**, clinical nursing director and the most recent to receive certification in her area, is now a certified psychiatric mental health nurse.

Certification is voluntary, and depending upon the particular professional association, the process entails meeting education and/or practice requirements in a given specialty and passing a written examination.

According to the American Nurses' Association, which has 15 certification programs in nursing practice, the purpose is to validate an individual nurse's qualifications, knowledge and acquired skills in a chosen field.

But certification goes beyond that. The process is a challenging one and calls for a commitment to the very highest professional standards. Furthermore, certification is a temporary status conferred for a few years only. The next challenge comes with renewal in which the nurse must demonstrate updated knowledge and skills.

Shirley Ragsdale, director of nursing, commented: "I'm proud of these nurses who have shown the initiative and desire to be certified by their professional organizations. Once again this proves that our nurses are interested in giving quality patient care by keeping their skills and knowledge updated in their specialty areas."

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News Update

- The Auxiliary of Muhlenberg Medical Center presented a \$10,000 pledge payment to the Board of Trustees last month. This represented the fourth payment on the \$50,000 pledge made last year and earmarked for the Intensive/Coronary Care Unit.

- Muhlenberg Medical Center's Laboratory has been awarded a two-year accreditation by the Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists, as the result of an extensive on-site inspection. In a letter to the lab, the chairman of the commission noted that this national recognition indicates the excellence of services provided to patients and their physicians.

- The Radiology Department has a new radiographic and fluoroscopic procedure room. The new system, which has just been installed, offers a choice of routine x-ray examinations and fluoroscopic studies. In addition to its convenient touch panel controls and easy-to-read digital display, the chief benefits include versatility and increased efficiency. Because the system is easy to use, the technologists have more time for patient contact and positioning, elements which are integral to image quality.

- Joseph W. Fitzgerald, Muhlenberg Medical Center president, was named Eastern Region Representative to the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) Board of Trustees. Serving a two-year term, he represents the counties of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill.

- Construction of the second floor Intensive/Coronary Care Unit is proceeding on schedule and March is the target date for completion of the project. The new area will accommodate 8 beds and includes an isolation room, large and versatile nursing station, conference room, staff lounge, clinical nursing director's office and utility rooms.

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