

CheckUp

this month

Medical Library

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VOL. 10, NO. 3 • MARCH 21, 1997

Working Wonders Catching On: Hits \$1 Million Mark

AS WORKING WONDERS ENTERS ITS SIXTH MONTH, IT SEEMS THAT THE SPIRIT OF CREATIVE COST CONTROL HAS BECOME contagious at LVHHN. The program reached its \$1 million mark this month, thanks to several big-ticket ideas.

A team of infection control and other clinical staff registered a \$250,000-plus idea late last month, the largest Working Wonders idea to date. The approved plan, which was implemented house-wide starting March 3, updates hospital guidelines for changing IV lines. It doubles the length of time that IV tubing can be used before being replaced. Hospice and home care have also adopted this practice.

According to Terry Burger, manager, infection control, the concept of extending the life of IV lines has been discussed off and on at LVH over the past decade. But research and support were needed from the Centers for Disease Control (C.D.C.) before hospitals would implement the change.

"LVH has always erred on the side of caution. But when the C.D.C. said it was safe to do it in '96, we decided to go ahead and adapt their recommendation to our institution," she said.

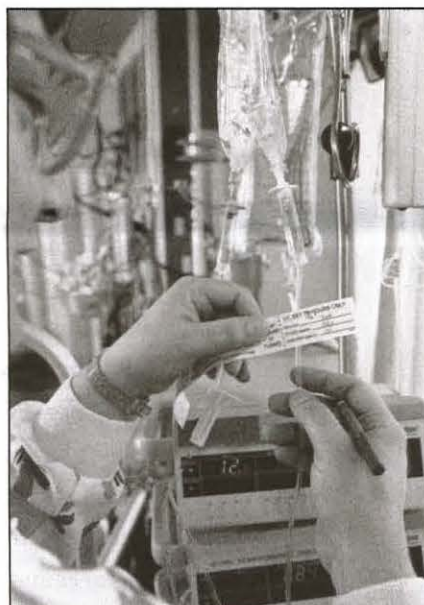
In addition to controlling costs by extending the useful life of the lines, this measure has the potential to improve clinical quality, Burger added. "By reducing the frequency of 'IV line violations,' the potential for infection is also reduced." Each member of the team (see list

of members at right) will earn 527 AwardsPerQs for the idea. Burger says they are preparing two other ideas for submission to Working Wonders; both focus on C.D.C. IV guidelines.

Other LVHHN teams also recently had ideas approved:

Margaret Bell and Patricia Riley, acute coronary care unit, suggested buying re-usable pulse oximeter probes instead of disposable ones for patients in units other than trauma, burn and pediatrics. The re-usable devices have a seven-year life expectancy, and converting to this practice brings a first-year savings of more than \$86,000. Bell and Riley each will receive 2042 AwardsPerQs for their idea.

**A Working
Wonders idea
filed by infection
control staff
saves \$250,000
by doubling the
useful life of
IV tubing.**



Please turn to page 2



WORKING WONDERS
Partners In Progress

IV Team Members

Terry Burger, manager, infection control (IC)
Bernadette Kratzer, IC practitioner
Rebecca Bartow, IC practitioner
Deborah Fry, IC practitioner
Deborah Mankos, IC secretary
Deborah Sterner, IC secretary
Luther Rhodes, M.D., chief, infectious diseases
Kate Quinn-O'Hara, patient care services administrator
Sue DeSanto, case manager
Louise Oswald, patient care director, MICU/SICU
Barbara Moyer, nursing education specialist
Mary Ann Bailey, special care unit

Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery Gain in Press, Ganey Results

THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT GAINED 1.6 POINTS IN THE LATEST PRESS, GANEY OUTPATIENT RESULTS, AN IMPROVEMENT that director of emergency services Betty Brennan said reflects the completion of the 18-month renovation project and the transition to patient-centered care.

Categories showing the greatest improvement were the convenience of parking, waiting time to see a doctor and patients being informed about delays. Nursing, physicians and staff on all shifts also showed survey gains, while radiology waiting time and the comfort of the waiting room also increased.

"Construction was completed in December and we have an improved waiting room, quieter rooms and a better flow of patients and staff," Brennan said. "These renovations have helped us realize the improvements in patient care that come with the transition to patient-centered care."

Brennan said volunteers in the waiting room also contributed to improvements in the survey, which measured

patient satisfaction from Nov. 1, 1996 to Feb. 1, 1997. The Press, Ganey ratings are obtained from the results of a patient satisfaction survey mailed to every patient discharged from the emergency department.

Ambulatory surgery was also surveyed in the latest Press, Ganey results, gaining 0.6 points to a score of 90.2. The areas showing the largest improvement were the anesthesia experience, waiting time in registration and the staff's ability to take blood.

The ambulatory surgery items ranking highest included the cleanliness of the operating room, which scored 93.4 and ranked in the 99 percentile of all hospitals in our peer group participating in the survey. The comfort of the waiting room and the courtesy of the person taking blood also ranked high in the survey results with nursing achieving the highest overall score of 92. ■

By Kerri Puskar

LEHIGH VALLEY
HOSPITAL AND
HEALTH NETWORK



Benefits Update

Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefits Improved

LVHHN recently signed contracts with new insurance carriers for your hospital-provided insurance and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefits. As a result, the following improvements were included in the policies, effective March 1, at no additional expense to LVHHN:

LIFE INSURANCE

The Accelerated Benefit rider provides the employee with a life expectancy of six months or less access to a significant portion of the death benefit while still living. Employees with at least \$20,000 of life insurance can receive 50 percent of the face amount, up to \$50,000. The death benefit available to an employee's beneficiary will be reduced by the amount of the Accelerated Benefit payment.

AD&D

The *Paralysis Benefit* rider provides the employee who sustained an injury resulting in paralysis from 25 percent to 100 percent of the AD&D benefit (percentage paid depends on the type of paralysis).

The *Rehabilitation Benefit* rider provides the employee who suffered an accidental dismemberment or accidental paralysis reimbursement for covered rehabilitation expenses. A maximum of \$25,000 will be paid for all injuries caused by the same accident.

The *Seat Belt Benefit* rider will pay the beneficiary the lesser of: 1) \$25,000 or 2) 10 percent of the employee's covered benefit if the employee suffered accidental death while operating or riding as a passenger in an automobile and wearing a properly fastened, original factory-installed seat belt.

The *Air Bag Benefit* rider will pay an additional benefit if a Seat Belt Benefit is payable and the employee is positioned in a seat protected by a functioning, original, factory-installed air bag. The additional benefit payable to the employee's beneficiary is the lesser of: 1) \$10,000 or 2) 10 percent of the employee's covered benefit.

If you have questions about life insurance and AD&D insurance benefits, contact your benefits counselor, Gerrienne Keiser, ext. 8839, or Maryjane Zanders, ext. 1230. ■



By Women, For Women and About Women...

a two-day conference focusing on the health, work and family issues that affect the lives of women.

April 3 and 4, 1997

Gateway Holiday Inn Conference Center, Rts. 22 & 512, Bethlehem.

For more information or to register, call 402-CARE.

Due to overwhelming response, April 4 is sold out. There are still seats available for April 3.

MEASURABLE RESULTS:

A Health Workshop Designed for Women

"... to change your behavior, you have to change your attitude."

IF YOU'VE HAD A NAGGING DESIRE TO "DO SOMETHING" ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, CONSIDER Measurable Results. This two-part women's health workshop includes an individual risk assessment and the information you need to change to a healthier lifestyle.

"Measurable Results is based on the theory that to change your behavior you have to change your attitude," says Fran Derhammer B.S.N., education coordinator, women's health services. The **first session** includes an overview of lifestyle practices, a detailed questionnaire, and screenings of blood pressure, cholesterol and body composition. The **second session** includes individual results and recommendations, plus breakout sessions on nutrition, cancer prevention, heart disease, osteoporosis, mental



Measurable Results is a cooperative effort of many LVHHN services and departments including medicine, neurosciences, cardiology and psychiatry. Fran Derhammer, B.S.N., education coordinator, women's health services, and Greg Salem, health promotion and disease prevention (pictured), are the program planners along with Barb Carlson, R.D., health promotion and disease prevention, and Kevin Siddons, director of community health studies.

Working Wonders *Continued from page 1*

Human resources staff saved nearly \$15,000 by streamlining benefits enrollment costs. Benefits counselors Gerrienne Keiser and Maryjane Zanders saved \$12,000 by using in-house services and volunteers for the 1997 open enrollment mailing to employees. They each pocketed 389 AwardsPerQs for their idea.

Also, a team comprising Keiser, Zanders, Leilani Souders, compensation/benefits analyst; Janet Miller, employment technician; and Carolyn Abeles, compensation tech, replaced seven benefits forms with a single benefits action form. The group's idea is worth \$1,768 in savings to LVHHN, and each member nets 21 AwardsPerQs.

Because of deadlines and space limits, not all approved ideas are included in this article. For more information on submitting a Working Wonders idea, contact a coach in your area or call headquarters at ext. 7551. ■

health and fitness, taught by nurses and other colleagues from LVHHN.

Susan Ockovic, senior counselor, human resource, went through Measurable Results last fall. "It's a wonderful opportunity to do a personal health check," she says, "and you learn things that apply not only to you, but to family members." Ockovic learned that her "numbers" are good, but she'd benefit from more exercise. She encourages others to try Measurable Results: "There are so many good programs available when you work here, and too often you don't make the time to take advantage of them."

The next series begins May 6. The cost of the program is \$15 which is reimbursable under the Choice Plus plan. For more information or to register, call 402-CARE. ■

Teamwork, Talent Save GSB Space Design Costs

PLANS ARE UNDER WAY TO RENOVATE 7,000-SQUARE-FEET OF SPACE IN THE GENERAL SERVICES BUILDING (GSB) AT Cedar Crest & I-78 to simplify and improve supply distribution processes, and free up space for clinical support. Interdepartmental teamwork and drafting "inside talent" for many project-related activities will save 15 to 20 percent of the total \$300,000 project cost, according to Carol Anne Bury, vice president, facilities and construction.

Modernizing the supply distribution function will bring better customer service and save costs, said Rick Cardona, director of logistics. He and his staff are working with facilities and construction staff to design the new area.

The project includes expanding the existing linen area and store room in the GSB, and relocating supply distribution function, the print shop, mailroom, courier and escort from the main hospital to the wing. A new 24-hour customer service office will be built at the GSB's main entrance to the hospital. About 4,000-square-feet of freed up space will become instrument processing space for the operating room. "Re-engineering distribution will save LVHHN

about \$330,000 in total," Cardona said. "These savings will come from streamlined work processes, improved space design and better use of personnel."

By doing its own plan design, project management and electrical work, LVHHN will save \$30,000 to \$40,000, Bury said. Traditionally, a major renovation project like this uses outside contractors exclusively. Only the improvements to the air-handling system and the construction will be done by commercial firms.

"The facilities and construction staff have the skills we need to do the work and they understand the building and needs of the users," Bury said. "Why pay someone else for something we have the expertise to do internally?"

Instead of hiring an architect, Brian Hardner, manager of planning and design, and Brenda Rocchino, designer, produced the plans for the space after reviewing the needs with its users. Hardner, a registered architect, and Rocchino also developed the construction documents for the project. They assembled the bid package, which was sent to the firms that will compete for the work.



Facilities and construction's Brenda Rocchino (left) and Brian Hardner helped design a plan that will save LVHHN \$30,000-\$40,000 in space renovation costs.

Cabinets, carpet and furniture will be ordered by Rocchino.

Sue Orlando, project manager, will switch on her electrical know-how to design the electrical systems for the project. Randy Shelly will oversee the entire effort.

Watch CheckUp This Month for progress reports on this project. ■

By Rob Stevens

Benchmarking Plans Factored into Budgets, OI

BENCHMARKING ACTION PLANS FROM MANY DEPARTMENT HEADS THROUGHOUT LVHHN HAVE BEEN APPROVED AND are being incorporated into budgets and operations improvement (OI) targets for fiscal year 1998, according to James Burke, vice president, operations, who is leading the project.

"It looks like people have come a long way in understanding and accepting the value of the benchmarking process," Burke said. "That's extremely important as benchmarking becomes part of the fabric of this institution."

The process proved difficult for many at first, as department heads struggled with unfamiliar data and experienced unforeseen delays in contacting their "InfoShare" colleagues at other hospitals in the data base. Instead of finding "easy answers" through those phone calls, department heads found it more a process of understanding their own information, learning from others, and then applying it to an action plan that was their own, unique product.

"By and large, our staff found the contacts and the interaction interesting and helpful, but not a Eureka!" There's been a lot of creativity," Burke said, "as people split up action plans, depending on the kinds of interventions, to keep different components of their business defined."

"It looks like people have come a long way in understanding and accepting the value of the benchmarking process." — Jim Burke

There are still some action plans outstanding, as department heads get assistance in determining yields and improving ratios. Sometimes, a "peer review" is scheduled with another department head as a way to raise questions and issues, and get advice.

"And when all's said and done, we'll want comments and feedback from everyone," Burke said. "Are there ways to improve our internal processes for next year? Do we have changes in the questions and the data to recommend to MECON? This is all about learning and improving to become the best."

By Mary Alice Czerwonka

THE FIRST RIDE'S A 'STEEL'

Ride the debut trip of 'Steel Force,' the newest roller coaster at Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom!

Blast off is scheduled for May. The date and time will be announced at a later date.

Seats are for sale for \$100 each. Proceeds benefit the LVHHN pediatrics programs.

To reserve your ride, call Sheryl Hawk, development, 402-3031. Reservations are first-come, first-served.



Lou Liebhaber

Issues Initiatives

Issues & Initiatives is a series of activities providing employees information about current health care issues at Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.



Attitude, Stress Management Help with 'Overload' Issues

MANY OF US MAY RECALL WATCHING M.A.S.H., A TELEVISION COMEDY POPULAR IN THE 1970S AND '80S.

Each week, we'd see the doctors, nurses and support staff of the 4077th division treat the wounded from the front lines in Korea. Although this show was a situation comedy, the underlying theme was quite serious: lives were held in the balance. Yet somehow, in the midst of trauma, death and related stress, Hawkeye, B.J. and the other characters were able to maintain a perspective and sense of humor. The 4077th boasted the best productivity and outcomes of any other M.A.S.H. crew in Korea, and I think that was largely because of the skills and attitudes of its people.

Life on the "front line" of patient care at LVH these days is somewhat similar to M.A.S.H. Our patient volume is higher than last year at this time, and staffing is unbalanced from time to time.

It's a classic "good news-bad news" scenario. We've improved our cost-competitiveness, and this, along with other efforts, has brought us an unanticipated abundance of patients.

LIVING WITH STRESS

LVHNN's organization development department lends books and videos on stress management to employees. Call Gwen Rosser, ext. 3053. Or attend one of the upcoming stress management programs sponsored by LVHNN. For more information, see the March/April edition of Healthy You or call 402-CARE to register.

♦ Finding a Healthy Balance

April 8; 6:30-8 p.m.; \$35
Wellness Center

♦ The Next Step

(Prior participation in "Finding a Healthy Balance" required)
April 15; 6:30-8 p.m.; \$25
Wellness Center

♦ Stress, Burnout & Quality of Life

Michael W. Kaufmann, M.D.,
chairman, psychiatry
May 8; 7-8 p.m. Free.
Auditorium, Cedar Crest & I-78

♦ Yoga

Eight-week sessions; \$52.
• Begins April 28; 6:30-7:45 p.m.
• Begins April 30; 6:30-7:45 p.m.
• Begins May 1; 6:30-7:45 p.m.
• Begins May 7; 10:30-11:45 a.m.
Classes held at 1243 S. Cedar Crest Blvd., lower level.

Unfortunately, while providing job security, these conditions can cause us to experience job-related stress.

It's hard to predict how long these taxing conditions will last at LVHNN. Last spring we had to furlough clinical staff because of the low census, but today things are different. In the last six months, the volumes at the PennCARE partners' hospitals have risen dramatically, while the Eastern Pennsylvania Health Network has seen their volumes fall. This uncertainty continues as the environment and many other factors change, and we must respond faster and more often, which can sometimes be overwhelming.

The good news is that help is on the way. We are implementing an aggressive plan to recruit and educate nurses and other clinical employees to better meet our staffing needs. Our strategy also focuses on revising timelines for introducing patient centered care on the remaining units and managing staff turnover. These efforts should help address the census-staffing issues, and inspire hope that "the sky isn't falling."

The M.A.S.H. characters worked long hours under difficult conditions. But they also took time to relax, play and laugh at themselves, no matter how grim and desperate the "workday" seemed.

Hawkeye and B.J. drove golf balls from the helicopter pad. The unit distilled liquor from its homemade still. There were contests, movies and other fun activities that distracted them from the daily dose of death and destruction. They were able to work very hard and enjoy life because they routinely used relief valves to temper the stress.

While many of the antics we watched on M.A.S.H. were inappropriate for LVHNN, there are many proven strategies to help you deal with stress. Here are a few that might help you:

1. Acknowledge your feelings of stress.
2. Find a personal outlet for your stress. Maybe it's a hobby, exercise or even just getting outside for a breath of fresh air.
3. Seek support and understanding from family members, friends and colleagues. Share your feelings with them. Ask coworkers how they deal with stress.

ATTITUDES

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do.

It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

We cannot change the past. We cannot change the fact that people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is attitude.

I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.

—Charles Swindoll

4. Negotiate for time away from the "front line" while at work. Routine diversion can be helpful, even if it's in small doses.

5. Where appropriate, try to see humor in situations instead of taking everything seriously.

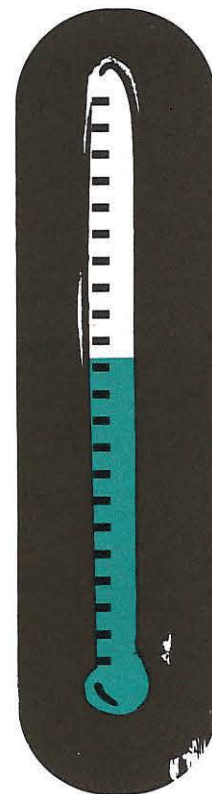
It's healthy to "laugh at ourselves" when an occasion presents itself.

6. Watch reruns of M.A.S.H. and other comedies.

Remember, we choose how we react to a difficult situation. Attitude plays an important role in how we approach the daily challenges and opportunities at LVHNN. The work still has to be done, and we should see workloads level as staffing is balanced. Meanwhile, keeping an upbeat outlook will make it a little more pleasant for our patients, our co-workers and ourselves. ■

Operations Improvement

**FY 1997 GOAL
\$22 Million**



**\$12.2
Million
through
January
1997**

CheckUp this month



Denise Rex, patient accounting clerk, celebrates winning an LVHHN windbreaker through the CheckUp Readership Survey raffle. Beth Johnson, lab info systems clerk, also won a jacket. All employees returning a completed questionnaire were eligible for the drawing.

CheckUp Survey Brings Improvement

BEGINNING WITH THIS ISSUE, YOU'LL NOTICE CHANGES TO CHECKUP THIS MONTH THAT SHOULD MAKE IT MORE professionally and personally relevant, easier to read and more interesting. These improvements are the result of what respondents told public affairs in the recent CheckUp Readership Survey sent to 1,000 randomly picked employees. To receive a copy of the survey results, call public affairs, ext. 3000.

The table of contents has been removed from the newsletter, because many survey respondents said they felt it wasn't particularly valuable. Also, most articles will be shorter to accommodate employees' available time for reading an entire article at one sitting. Most articles will have a name or phone number to contact should the reader desire more information. While each issue will still focus on information that staff need to do their jobs in the ever-changing health

care environment, more human interest content will appear.

You'll find more stories on how employees spend their time outside of LVHHN, with a special focus on their participation in community programs, and their personal and professional achievements.

Because you also like seeing pictures of your coworkers in CheckUp, there will be more photos of LVHHN staff in each issue.

CheckUp reader boxes will soon be installed in high-traffic areas in the network to increase exposure and readership of the weekly and monthly newsletters. Also, departments wanting to receive more or fewer copies of *CheckUp This Month* should call Mary Hobel, public affairs, ext. 3000. ■

By Rob Stevens

Partners in PennCARE

"Partners in PennCARE" is a regular feature in CheckUp This Month providing news about programs and other activities in the PennCARE network.

Easton Hospital's transitional year residency was recently granted reaccreditation for five years by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. This length of time is the most accreditation a physician training program can receive. Within the past nine months, Easton's internal medicine and surgical residencies have both received four-year accreditation.

Easton Hospital will open its new Community Care Center on April 16. Located at 111 North 4th Street, the facility will offer general medical and pediatric services to persons who live downtown or on the south side of Easton.

North Penn Hospital, Lansdale, is planning to build an 18-bed transitional care (subacute) unit on the hospital's second floor. Subacute care is more intensive than traditional nursing home care and less intensive than acute hospitalization. A September opening is planned.

North Penn entered into an affiliation arrangement with the North Penn Visiting Nurse Association effective Jan. 1. According to North Penn's president Robert H. McKay, "A linkage between our two organizations will allow us to provide, in an unbroken continuum, the most comprehensive, high-quality care possible to residents in our community." ■

Time Fore' Golf

Spring is here, so it's time to think about golf. The LVHHN Golf League is looking for new members for its 1997 season. It's a great way to have fun, get to know employees outside of work and improve your game.

Last summer, 25 golfers from all levels of the organization participated in the league's inaugural year. The 17 men and eight women were grouped by skill level in three flights. The champions in each flight were:

- Flight A—Scott Berger, lab information systems
- Flight B—Mark Hoffman, HLA lab
- Flight C—Kristi Hardner, organizational development



FLIGHT CHAMPIONS (from left): Scott Berger, Kristi Hardner, Mark Hoffman.

Other golfers of note included:

Lou Temprine, engineering — *Lowest Scoring Average* (43.5); Bob Morgan, M.D., resident — *Most Consistent Golfer*; Shelly Wagaman, info systems — *Most Improved Golfer*; Scott Berger, Mark Young, M.D. — *Lowest Round* (37)

The league plays at the Olde Homestead Golf Club, New Tripoli, Thursday evenings, May 1 through September. Annual membership is \$25 and is restricted to LVHHN employees. A maximum of 32 golfers can register. A substitute list will be started for anyone interested in playing but unable to commit to playing most Thursdays.

An organizational meeting will be held in late March or early April. For more information, contact Doug Helfrich, league president, ext. 0627. ■



Valerie L. Beichey was one of more than 200 employees and community members to participate in LVH's first bone marrow donor registration drive on March 4. According to national officials, LVH's drive was one of the most successful.

JCAHO Update: New Survey Focuses on Processes

THE JOINT COMMISSION SURVEYORS WILL DO OUR SURVEY THIS FALL. AS YOU KNOW, JCAHO ACCREDITATION LASTS three years. This will be our first survey under the new survey process, which was designed by JCAHO to support the patient-centered, performance-focused, functional orientation of the standards.

Rather than evaluate specific departments and services, surveyors will assess the performance of important patient-focused and organization functions.

The new process is designed to answer the following questions:

- Are the correct processes performed?
- Are those processes performed well?
- Is the organization improving its performance?

The survey is based on the standards that address:

- patient rights
- patient assessment
- education of patient and family
- coordination of care
- performance improvement
- environmental safety
- preventing infection
- managing information
- providing leadership
- managing human resources

A JCAHO survey helps an organization evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. A hospital receives accreditation from JCAHO when it passes the survey (accreditation means the organization has voluntarily met strict standards for its operation and the delivery of patient care). The highest level of accreditation the hospital can receive is accreditation with commendation. This means that the hospital scored above a 90 and has no Type 1 recommendations (a Type 1 recommendation means that the organization does not fully meet the provisions of the standard and the intent). JCAHO accreditation status is important. It is often considered when

competing for managed care contracts and also for some types of reimbursement to occur.

What happens during the survey?

A survey team, usually a physician, nurse and administrator, spend five days doing an on-site visit to evaluate our organization. Surveyors will walk throughout the organization and may stop any employee or physician and ask how we do certain things. They also observe how we conduct ourselves.

Some of the things they look for are:

- How do we maintain patient confidentiality?
- How do we maintain a safe environment?
- Do we follow the policies and procedures that we have developed and approved?
- What is our process to improve performance?

Along with the informal discussions and observations, some of the more structured activities will include:

- Holding an opening conference.

This meeting is held to introduce key LVHHN staff to the surveyors and make any last minute adjustments to the survey schedule.

- Listening to a performance improvement overview.

The overview is presented by hospital leaders and is designed to help the survey team learn about the hospital's programs to measure, assess and improve performance.

- Reviewing key documents.

This allows the surveyors to get to know the organization. The documents they review may include our mission statement, policies and procedures, and staff rules and regulations.

- Interviews with department leaders.

Department heads are given an opportunity to describe what happens in their departments. The surveyor may ask to see minutes from meetings, documentation forms and patient education material.

- Visits to patient care units.

The surveyors will observe first-hand where and how patients receive care. They will visit at least half of our inpatient and half of our outpatient areas.

During the visits, the surveyors will interview staff members and ask to see a patient's medical record.

The surveyor may ask questions about performance improvement activities, safety activities and policies and procedures. They will also visit and speak with a patient and their family, if available.

- Review of our competency assessment processes.

Human resources will be requested to pull staff records. The survey team will review how the organization evaluates staff credentials and how we provide for training and education.

- Other activities.

The surveyors will tour the buildings, review documents that relate to the environment of care, interview the medical record staff, review about 20 medical records to assure that the documentation is accurate and complete, and visit specialty areas.

At the end of the visit the survey team will again meet with the hospital leaders to give them a preliminary report of their findings and make recommendations. This is not the final decision about accreditation. The final decision will be made following an appropriate review at the Joint Commissions central office and will be communicated to us in the Official Accreditation Decision Report via mail.

Our preparations are continuing on a daily basis. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to the attention of your department head or call Beverly Snyder, ext. 5210. JCAHO updates will be provided regularly to assure we are ready for our survey. ■

When Not in the Hospital, Couple's Acting Out...

When Rod and Jonnie Gilkeson aren't working at LVH, chances are they're involved in local theater productions. The husband-wife team presented "Love Letters," a two-person play that chronicles a life-long correspondence between two people, on Valentine's Day at the Twin Lakes Country Club's dinner theater.

According to Rod, medical records, the couple met 15 years ago in an acting class. Acting together works out well for them, because of the familiarity. "We can bring an emotional charge to the stage that isn't always possible with strangers," he said. "The chemistry is already built in."

Rod and Jonnie, discharge planner, have appeared together in "Cabaret," "Annie" and several other shows. Rod will play King Arthur in "Camelot," April 4 to 20 at the Pennsylvania Playhouse, Bethlehem. Also, he'll direct and Jonnie will act in "Steel Magnolias," June 13 to 29, at the same theater. For ticket information, call the playhouse, 865-6665.



Rod (left) and Jonnie Gilkeson read "Love Letters" at the Twin Lakes Country Club's dinner theater.

Lehigh Valley Hospital Leader in Development of Robotic Laboratory

First Hospital in Country with Continuously Operating System

LEHIGH VALLEY HOSPITAL IS THE FIRST HOSPITAL IN THE COUNTRY TO INSTALL AND HAVE IN CONTINUOUS OPERATION THE LATEST ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGY IN ITS clinical laboratory, Health Network Laboratories (HNL).

The LAB-Interlink automation system and the Johnson & Johnson Vitros 950 AT chemistry analyzer with on-track sampling, recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration, became operational on Feb. 19 and has remained so since.

This development is the first stage in a full robotics initiative that will include robotized coagulation, hematology and immunochemistry work stations. This project includes the development and integration of automated instruments capable of on-track or robotic arm sampling, software with complex testing algorithms, and specimen transportation and routing systems.

"The application of robotics to perform clinical laboratory testing is a new concept to the health care industry," said David G. Beckwith, Ph.D., vice president of Network Laboratory Services. "Very few large commercial laboratories have successfully automated the analysis of clinical specimens

and even fewer hospitals have embarked on this venture. We are the first to employ a system without downtime. There is much interest in our success and we have visits planned by hospitals from every region in the country."

The robotics laboratory automates the entire sample receipt and scheduling, transport, analysis and reporting process. The result is a cost effective system with improved quality and productivity. "The system delivers results back to physicians in real time so important patient management decisions can be made in a timely fashion," Beckwith said.

But the success of the robotic laboratory, ironically, depends on the human component. "I'm proud of our staff who has accepted this paradigm shift in laboratory testing and have understood how their expertise and training is better utilized in result verification and trouble shooting than simply feeding an instrument with tubes."



Susan Gates works with the new robotic laboratory system.

Positioning itself to respond to changing market conditions, HNL undertook an organizational redesign in late 1996 that was supported by the robotic initiative. The design of the customized system was the result of a strategic partnership with Johnson & Johnson Clinical Diagnostics, LAB-Interlink Inc., Abbott Diagnostics and Sunquest Information Systems.

The automated testing division, which employs 10 people, combines the traditional laboratory disciplines of chemistry, hematology and coagulation, and some aspects of immunochemistry into one testing unit. Physician orders and the specimens are introduced to the automated system at a manual work station through a process called scheduling. An automated specimen carrier transportation system then uses robotics and specially designed software to deliver samples to the appropriate work station with advanced automated instruments for testing. This occurs with no human intervention. The sample then travels to an archiving station.

When complete at the end of this year, there will be 10 work stations for scheduling and testing. ■

By Constance Walker



Kelly Buss, an LVH medical technologist, trains for a marathon to benefit the Leukemia Society of America.

Buss to Run in Alaska for Seven-Year-Old Bethlehem Township Resident

JENNA HAYDUK DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO SAY WHEN SHE MET KELLY BUSS, BUT SHE DID COLOR the picture that now hangs on Buss'

refrigerator door. It is that picture that inspires Buss during her training for an upcoming marathon in Anchorage, Alaska.

Buss is a medical technologist for Lehigh Valley Hospital and Hayduk is a 7-year-old Bethlehem Township resident who has acute myelogenous leukemia. The two were introduced to each other by the Leukemia Society of America.

Buss, who two years ago participated in the local Miles For Matt benefit, learned about the marathon when she received a pamphlet in the mail from the Leukemia Society of America. Each year, the organization trains and sends hundreds of runners and walkers to local and international marathons, where they raise funds through pledges of support.

"Everyone has been touched by some kind of cancer in their life. My mother had breast cancer; my husband's aunt died of lymphoma," Buss said. "I exercise regularly and thought this would be a good way to team up fitness and doing something that would help others.

"Jenna's family really impressed me," she said. "They've been through a lot with hospitalizations, tests, doctors' visits, but they've kept it all together. They were very upbeat and I got the impression they had a strong faith."

Buss' training regiment entails aerobics twice a week and walking four times a week. Her exercise group includes her sister-in-law and her two dogs. The marathon will be held on June 21. To qualify for the marathon, Buss needs to raise \$3,400.

"Although the training is becoming more difficult, the fundraising is by far the hardest," she said. For more information or to make a pledge for Buss, call ext. 5595. ■

By Constance Walker

WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH



Looking for the perfect exercise for a healthier way of life? Try walking.

The advantages and health benefits are astounding. And now you can exercise, have fun and earn prizes at the same time through the W.O.W! — Walking Out Workout Club. LVH's Center for Health Promotion and Disease

Prevention offers the latest ideas, techniques and information to help you succeed with your walking program. When you enroll in our W.O.W! Club and record the number of continuous walking minutes (not miles), you are eligible for our W.O.W! motivational incentives. Simply record your walking minutes through the W.O.W! Walking Club Bulletin Board, e-mail your log and HPDP will monitor your progress. When you reach the milestones, you will receive a voucher to redeem your incentives.

Call 402-CARE for a list of W.O.W. prizes.

Mark Your Calendar

MARCH

25 Spring Flower Sale

Shop for lilies, hyacinths, tulips, daffodils and azaleas.

7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Anderson Wing Lobby

Sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Hospital Auxiliary

25 Take a Free Diabetes Test

Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death by disease in the nation. You can be alert to the risks of diabetes. Could you have diabetes and not know it? Take the test and know the score.

Pick up a free diabetes risk screening test at the information display at the following locations:

- Cedar Crest & I-78
- John & Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center
- 1243 S. Cedar Crest Blvd.
- 17th & Chew
- 2024 Lehigh St.

Sponsored by the Helwig Diabetes Center, a program of Lehigh Valley Hospital's Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention.

For more information, call ext. 9885.

6

Teddy Bear Clinic

Your ragged, wounded bears can be lovingly repaired by the physicians and staff of the department of family practice at the Teddy Bear Clinic at "kidsfest 97."

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Rauch Field House, Goodman Campus, Lehigh University, Bethlehem

11

Spring Fling!

Tickets are limited to two per employee but tables of eight may be reserved with full payment.

6:30 p.m. - Beer & Soda (cash bar available)

7 p.m. - Dinner Select your entree: Pasta Primavera or Spring Time chicken

8 p.m. - Dancing to 'Top Cat'

Allentown Hilton

Tickets: \$15/person

(Purchase tickets via interoffice mail or from a Recreation Committee member.)

Checks payable to LVH Recreation Committee.

13

National MS Walk

Team up with walkers from across the Lehigh Valley to fight multiple sclerosis. Elliot Sussman, M.D., president and CEO, serves as this year's honorary MS Walk chairman. Choose from a six- or nine-mile route winding through the beautiful Little Lehigh Parkway.

9 a.m. - Registration

10 a.m. - Walk begins

Hospital team walkers receives a t-shirt and prizes will be awarded to top achievers.

Sign up! Call Sharon Bartz, ext. 9830.

16

Hospice Teleconference

Lehigh Valley Hospice is the local sponsor for the Hospice Foundation of America's Fourth Annual Teleconference: "Living with Grief: When Illness is Prolonged."

1:30 p.m. - Auditorium, CC&I-78

Registration is free, but there is a \$15 processing fee (payable by check) for CEUs (available on request).

Teleconference panelists include:

- Cokie Roberts, moderator, ABC & NPR correspondent
- Betty Davies, Ph.D., University of British Columbia

- Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., College of New Rochelle
- Dr. William Lamers Jr., founding father of the American Hospice Movement
- Theresa A. Rando, Ph.D., Institute for the Study and Treatment of Loss

A local panel discussion is planned after the teleconference to include Rev. Anne Huey, director of support services, Lehigh Valley Hospice (moderator); Bernadette Sychert Cunningham, chaplain, Lehigh Valley Hospice; Kim Badillo, M.A., R.N., case manager, AIDS Activities Office; Lorraine Gyauch, M.A., R.N., director, Family Caregiver Cancer Education Program, John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center; and Jeanette Castellane, B.A., gerontologist, Luther Crest.

For more information, call Anne Huey, ext. 7399.

23

Adolescents in Despair

Adolescent psychiatry will present "School-based Interventions for Depressed and Suicidal Teens."

8:30 a.m. - Registration

9 a.m. to Noon - Program

Auditorium, 17th & Chew

Featured speakers: Brian McKain, R.N., M.S.N., assistant clinical coordinator, STAR outpatient clinic Western Psychiatric Institute/ University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; John Campion, M.D., medical director adolescent psychiatric unit, LVH; Michael Kaufmann, M.D., chair, LVHHPN, psychiatry.

There is no charge for the conference, but registration is required.

To register, call 402-CARE by April 16.

APRIL

4

1997 Art Auction

A fine selection of custom-framed artwork offered by Hamilton Art Gallery of Allentown and Quakertown. A variety of works by local artists will be featured.

6 p.m. - General Preview

7:30 p.m. - Auction

Anderson Wing Lobby, Cedar Crest & I-78

Sponsored by the Professional Nurse Council and Friends of Nursing

Tickets: \$10/person

For tickets/information, call the Office of Professional Development, ext.1704.

27

Walk America

Join the LVHHPN team and team captain John Hart, vice president, medical staff services, for the 12-kilometer walk - get a hospital t-shirt and be eligible to win some fabulous prizes!

9 a.m. Dorney Park

In 1996, more than one million walkers in more than 1,400 communities raised nearly \$60 million for the March of Dimes Campaign for Healthier Babies. Over the past 16 years, Lehigh Valley Hospital has received more than \$375,000 in grants from the March of Dimes.

For more information and to register, call ext. 3001.



SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to the following employees on their February 1997 service anniversaries! Thank you for your continuing service to Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.

Twenty-Five Years of Service

Michael J. Billowitch
Plant Engineering

Twenty Years of Service

Margaret Jessup
EEG
Steven R. Berman
Lab-Pathology
Virginia L. Hock
4S Medical/Surgical Unit
Douglas P. Litchfield
Master Facilities Administration
Gail J. Gillespie
Clinical Social Work

Fifteen Years of Service

Quang D. Tran
General Services
Marcella J. Barnett
Home Care - Skilled Nursing
Cathleen Webber
Post Anesthesia Care Unit
Lana Brago
General Medicine
Linda Hoskins
Volunteers Office
Carol S. Fortenbaugh
Obstetrics
Alice Vrsan
Clinical Nursing Program

Ten Years of Service

Suzanne D. Sofish
Lehigh Valley OB/GYN
Diane S. Raber
Lab-Automation
Susan M. Figuli
Lab-Automation
Laureen P. Leyden
Transitional Open Heart Unit
Rosemary J. Bossard
6B Medical/Surgical Unit
Nancy E. Kassis
Adolescent Psychiatry Unit
Bozena J. Madej
Medical Records
Irene G. Guldin
Cancer Program

Sherry Faux
General Administration
Anne Holler
Department of Medicine
Nancy E. Huber
Patient Accounting
David C. Fluck
General Services
Dorothy A. Wise
General Services
Elaine P. Kilgannon
Breast Health Services-
17th & Chew
David A. Leibensperger
Security

Five Years of Service

Susan M. Steiner
ABC Pediatrics
Carol B. Laurenzano
Psychological Testing
Marie T. Fleming
Pharmacy
Kelly S. Wanamaker
Radiation Oncology
Cynthia A. Payonk
Home Care-Skilled Nursing
Brenda L. Reed
Adolescent Psychiatry Unit
Susan K. Bomboy
Neonatal ICU
John M. Fritsch
Info Services Operations

Sandra L. Tkach
Hospice-Skilled Nursing
Carolyn E. Miller
Obstetrics
Heather S. Sunderland
Hospice-Dietitian
Erik W. Wonderly
Sterile Processing
Coleen R. Neiffer
Day Care Center
Rita A. Beller
Lutheran Apothecary
Wendy K. Cagigas
Home Care-Home Health Aide
David F. Zimmerman
Marketing/Public Affairs
Robin N. Christman
Home Care-Skilled Nursing

If you have news or a story idea for **CheckUp This Month**, send your suggestion by the 20th of the month for publication in the following month to Rob Stevens, editor, public affairs, 1243 SCC-PA, using interoffice mail or e-mail. **CheckUp This Month** is an employee publication of Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network's public affairs department. For additional information, call ext. 3000. Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network is an equal opportunity employer. M/F/D/V

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DESIGN Denise Golant

PHOTOGRAPHY Scott Dornblaser