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Neurosciences Reg. RC
CC 989

Volume 3, No. 16 Oct. 26, 1990

What's News...

Coping With Stress

Topic Of Special Program

Handling stress in both the workplace and in personal life is the topic of a special two-hour lecture, "Achieving Your Personal Best" that features nationally-known clinical psychologist Cynthia Scott, Ph D, at LVHC site auditorium Nov. 29 at 7 p.m.

Scott's program is sponsored by HealthCounts and the Chronic Disease Education Committee of TAH—LVHC and is free to all hospital and HealthEast employees, family members and staff physicians.

A highly respected speaker and organizational consultant in the areas of stress management and self-esteem, she will help participants:

- Learn how to use their "stress" for energy and enhance their "personal power".
- Increase positive attitudes to build a healthy lifestyle.
- Begin to practice self-care and relaxation exercises.
- Uncover their stress "hotspots" and pinpoint areas for change by completing an individual StressMap Personal Diary. The diary, valued at \$15, will be available to registered employees free and to family members for \$5 each.

Scott is affiliated with the Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of California, and is president of the HeartWork Group in San Francisco. Her books in-

Continued on Page 2

New Benefit Options

Flexibility Key To Offerings For Employees

An assortment of new supplemental benefits will become available for employees of TAH—LVHC and HealthEast in January 1991, and Human Resources has organized an extensive program of explaining them to employees.

The Mini-Flex benefits do not replace or alter existing benefits and plan participation is voluntary.

Of all the mini-flex benefit offerings, the ones most likely to draw attention are flexible spending accounts for healthcare and dependent care. The healthcare account can fund, on a pre-tax basis, the difference between what the current health and dental plans pay and the total cost of services, such as the \$100 deductible in the health plan or items not covered, such as eyeglasses and hearing aids. The dependent care account can be used to pay dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis.

Other offerings include supplemental group life insurance, group dependent life insurance and additional accidental death and dismemberment insurance.

Details of all the options will be distributed to employees in the next few days, and those interested are urged to study them carefully. A series of employee meetings has been

scheduled to answer questions about the plans.

There are two separate flexible spending accounts: one for healthcare expenses and one for dependent/child care expenses. Both are pre-tax options.

The healthcare account works like this: Anticipating use of the HHP deductible, vision expenses and non-covered dental expenses, an employee agrees to have a total of \$500 withheld from gross pay over the course of the next year. Up to \$500 in reimbursements are then possible for items not covered by HHP, co-payments, deductibles and

Continued on Page 8

In This Issue...

Lab employees attack hassles

— Page 2

Tips for great family snapshots

— Page 4

Respiratory: a breath of fresh air

— Page 6



The Allentown
Hospital—
Lehigh Valley
Hospital Center

A HealthEast Hospital

What's News...

Continued from Page 1

clude *Coping Skills, From Burnout to Balance, StressMap, Eldercare and Take This Job and Love It!*

With Dennis T. Jaffe, Ph D, she will participate in a Friday, Nov. 30, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. conference on stress management at the Holiday Inn, Fogelsville, also sponsored by HealthCounts and the Chronic Disease Education Committee. Fee for the conference is \$45 plus \$15 for the StressMap book.

Additional information and registration about both programs is available by calling HealthCounts at 821-2150.

Varied Activities Mark National Diabetes Month

November is National Diabetes Month and the Helwig Diabetes Center has accordingly scheduled a variety of events for both the public and healthcare professionals.

"Diabetic Foot Disease: Diagnosis and Treatment" will be the topic of a Nov. 17 symposium in LVHC site auditorium.

Participants include Frank B. Pomposelli Jr., MD, assistant professor of surgery, Harvard Medical School, division of vascular surgery and co-director of the diagnostic vascular laboratory, New England Deaconess Hospital, Boston; Larry N. Merkle, MD, chief of Endocrinology, TAH—LVHC; and Lee J. Sanders, DPM, chief of the podiatry section, Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, Department of Veteran Affairs Medical Center, Lebanon PA.

The symposium is from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and registration fee is \$60. For additional information, contact Human Resource Development, TAH—LVHC.

Nursing Conference

On Wednesday, Nov. 28, the Metabolic Regional Resource Center, Helwig Diabetes Center, and NEPE&R will co-sponsor a one-day diabetes nursing conference, "Diabetes Through the Life Cycle: Nursing's Expanding Involvement."

The conference will feature regionally known healthcare professionals beginning at 8 a.m. and concluding at 4:30 p.m. in LVHC site auditorium. Registration is \$40 to NEPE&R prior to Nov. 16. For additional information, call 778-1700.

Diabetes Classes

Classes for diabetes patients and their families resume at Helwig Diabetes Center, begin-

Continued on Page 3

Total Quality Focus

Tracking Annoyance, Labs Boost Service

Quick: how many people do you know who enjoy having their blood drawn for routine lab tests?

It's essential in a hospital, of course: wince and stick. Most would argue that the fewer times a patient has to have it done, the better. Now imagine having to go back to a patient and explain that it wasn't done right, so in addition to a longer length of stay they have to face "wince and stick" again.

Hematology technicians and technologists report that, on an average of 22 times a month, they're hassled to find blood specimens with clots in the tubes — rendering them useless and requiring the patient be stuck again.

To Dolores Benner, MT, supervisor, 22 times a month is 22 times too many. In the overall scheme of things, the price of nonconformance — about \$2,700 a year — is relatively small, and the incidence level of clotted specimens is minuscule

when considering the thousands processed each month.

But it still means the patient gets stuck a second time. "That's not good service," she insists. "Beyond the time lost at the bench and the time lost in getting results back promptly, we have the intangible issue of the impression it makes on a patient, who talks to friends and family, and so on."

So she headed up a department study to learn what was causing the problem and learned it is spread rather evenly throughout TAH—LVHC. The team learned some personnel were drawing specimens, but not immediately inverting the tubes several times — a necessary step to mix in the anticoagulant in the tube and thereby prevent the blood from clotting.

Rather than respond with harsh indictments, the team concluded that when individuals were trained,

Continued on Page 3



GEOFFREY MEHL

Emergency Department nurses celebrated their special day recently with the added touch of a pair of cakes purchased by and delivered to each site by Peg Parry, RN, TAH site. Among those who paused to enjoy it at LVHC site are (from left) Katy Piorkowski, RN; Gloria George, RN, head nurse; Joseph Rycek, RN; Tom Gavigan, RN; Sue Hackman, RN; Beverly Snyder, RN; and Parry.

The \$92,000 Challenge: Make A Checkmark

Would you make 25,000 checkmarks for \$92,000? How about just one for \$3.68?

That's the question posed by Geoffrey Correll, MT (ASCP), STAT lab. It's also the price of nonconformance for lack of essential information when ordering two blood tests. According to Correll and Daniel Kaczor, MT (ASCP), Coagulation, ongoing frustration at the bench prompted an internal audit that identified this straightforward problem:

When the lab is asked to check prothrombin time and partial thromboplastin time (known as PT and PTT, which assess whether the patient is a

bleeder and help the physician monitor anti-coagulation therapy), it also must know whether the patient is being treated with one of two drugs — heparin or coumadin. Without that information, results can be meaningless, but with it accurate conclusions can be made.

Using the principles of the Quality Improvement Process, they found that with staggering regularity — in as many as nine

out of 10 specimens — the information was missing. It means work in the lab stops while calls are made to units to get the information — also interrupting and distracting employees in the units. Studies revealed that a minimum of half hour of employee time was devoured with each inquiry — and that it also added to stress and annoyance all the way around.

Somewhere in the process, they reasoned, there had to be a cause. Rather than issue a memo demanding conformance, the corrective action team used the opportunity to evaluate the entire process. It wasn't a matter of sloppy work. They learned forms ordering the test are unclear. In Emergency at TAH site an altogether different form didn't require the information at all.

A "quick fix" reminder about the importance of complete information and screening incoming tests for the missing checkmarks was instituted. That helps, but it's not a permanent solution. In the meantime, with whole new systems on the horizon, plans are in place to make it impossible to order the tests without providing all the needed information.

Kaczor and Correll agree that while the dollar amount is significant, the intangible benefits of improved efficiency and an end to thousands of telephone calls from the lab to the unit, quicker turnaround time on tests and better patient service are as important.

They also quickly point out that using what they learned was of great value. "We knew what the problem was before we took QES (Quality Education System)," Kaczor says. "But QES was instrumental in helping us solve it." A significant part of that was in working with Nursing to find solutions. QES training gave both groups a common language and understanding.

"It was really terrific. We weren't butting heads or passing the blame," Kaczor explains. "Everyone was eager to cooperate and solve the problem."

Labs Use TQF To Enhance Service

Continued from Page 2

greater emphasis had to be put on importance of inverting the tubes. It represents a more permanent solution.

Following training in QES, Benner shared with the team the technique of how to break down a series

of work processes and investigate each one to determine what problems exist, how to measure them, and how to use them to take corrective action.

A slightly more complicated situation, involving tests that are shipped out to other labs because

Continued on Page 8

What's News...

Continued from Page 2

ning with a Nov. 6 presentation about the disease itself. Nine topics will be covered, including exchange lists, special food situations, monitoring blood glucose, diabetic complications, medicines, exercise, high and low blood glucose and coping with the illness. Classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. and tuition is \$20 for each class. For additional information, contact the center at ext. 8890.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Topic Of Symposium

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is the topic of a one-day symposium organized by NEPE&R and coordinated by Nancy Eckert, RN, and Karen Peterson, RN, to be held Nov. 27 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in LVHC site auditorium. Faculty include Tamar Ernest, MD; Dwight Edward, executive director of the Vietnam Veterans Health Initiative Commission; Kathryn Jean Gress, RN, 7B, Overflow Trauma; Yvonne Kay, PhD, therapist and radio talk show host; Steve Martin, Emergency Medical System Council of Eastern Pennsylvania; JoAnne McLaughlin, RN, director, Professional Affairs, Burn Prevention Foundation; Lisa Oncay, RN, 7B and Overflow Trauma; Brian Stahl, RN, 5A Trauma, and David Tomb, MD, chairman, Psychiatry.

The fee is \$45, due Nov. 13, and additional information about the symposium is available by calling ext. 1700.

HealthCounts Announces September Winners

Prize winners in the September "I'm Worth It" Incentive program were announced by HealthCounts.

They included: Frank Ballo (TAH site) and Sharon Bartz (LVHC site), tickets to the Radio City "Holiday Show"; Nancy Kassis (TAH site) and Charlotte Wallace (LVHC site), Samsonite luggage set.

Also, Carolyn Abeles, (TAH site) and Kathy Masters (LVHC site), exercise mat and hand weight set; Shirley Saeger (TAH site) and Hugh Marsh, (LVHC site), Fall Foliage Train Ride; Pat Metzgar (TAH site) and Mary Ellen Nangle (LVHC site), a HealthCounts gift certificate.

Mildred Rivera (TAH site) and Jody Porter (LVHC site) won a three-month HealthCounts exercise membership.

Continued on Page 4

What's News...

Continued from Page 3

LVHC Site Housekeeping Announces Top Employee

Carol Ann Kindt, housekeeper, 6A, LVHC site, was named employee of the quarter by Housekeeping at the site. She will receive \$100 worth of ServiceMaster home products, a \$50 gift certificate at Widow Brown's restaurant, \$50 in cash and have her photo included in the department's "Wall of Fame."

Prior winners include Charlie Gauder, Lester Lauer, Nancy Christman and Dottie Wise. With the merger of the department, the awards program will be extended to include employees at TAH site.

Special Events Holiday Bazaar

LVHC site Auxiliary will hold its annual Holiday Bazaar on Nov. 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the lobby at LVHC site and will sell poinsettias on Dec. 6 in the lobby from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Italian Dinner

Tickets are now available for the annual Italian Dinner and Raffle sponsored by the Auxiliary of TAH site on Nov. 1 in TAH site cafeteria. First sitting is 5:30 p.m. and the second at 7:15 p.m. Tickets for the full-course candlelight dinner and live music are \$7 for adults and \$3 for children; raffle tickets are \$1 each (six for \$5). Both are available at the Alcove Gift Shop (TAH), Tree Top Shop (LVHC), Volunteer Office (TAH) and Medical Affairs (both sites).

Christmas Bazaar

Employee Activities Committee will sponsor a Christmas Bazaar in TAH site lobby on the evening of Dec. 6 and all day Dec. 7. Employees wishing to sell handcrafted items should contact Marge Scaria, ext. 9454, for additional information.

New York Excursion

Two trips to the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Show in New York City are planned by the Employee Activities Committee. The bus departs LVHC site south lot at 8 a.m. Nov. 24, leaving New York at 4 p.m., and from TAH site Lot 5 (16th and Gordon streets) 8 a.m. Dec. 1, leaving New York at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$52 per person. For reservations, call JoAnn Kelly at ext. 8915.

Race Track Excursion

An outing to the Penn National Race Track, sponsored by the Employee Activities Com-

Continued on Page 5

About Our People

Want Better Snapshots? Ask This Skilled Nurse

Since she was a little girl, capturing compelling slices of life has been a passion for Linda Tomaszewski, RN, Short Procedure Unit. And once again, the career operating room nurse is knocking on the door for a major cash award in a national photography contest.

Tomaszewski was one of eight regional winners, selected from 800 entries, whose work is currently being judged for the Kodak International Newspaper Snapshot Awards. She's been at this level before. While the first prize is a \$10,000 cash award and a trip to Disney World, works of the top 100 in the national competition are exhibited for a year at the famed Florida resort.

Tomaszewski has a charming photo of one of her sons on display there now. A duplicate print was exhibited at the headquarters of *National Geographic* magazine.

Her interest started with the simplest of box cameras, and expanded when, at the age of 12, she got her first serious equipment. Since then, her camera is invariably loaded and nearby.

One of the acknowledged bits of good advice when it comes to taking photographs is to look right in your own backyard. In Tomaszewski's case, it's a family farm near Fleetwood, with a big backyard and two active sons, Janos and Jozef. Not surprisingly, the Tomaszewskis have a family album that would make most parents drool with envy. There's photo after photo of the sort of pictures major film companies use to advertise their film.

And while entering contests is exciting, her purpose is to provide her children with a priceless book of memories.

Tomaszewski is relieved when she is not asked what

make and model of camera she uses, because that's not the key to good pictures. She acknowledges that with children, automatic features are helpful to allow concentration on subject matter.

And she encourages parents to put cameras in the hands of children and let them go; Janos, who is 6 years old, was one of 18 who received honorable mentions in the regional competition. There were no age categories.

Tomaszewski never took a photography course or any other formal training, and with the encouragement of relatives chose nursing as a career. Her interest lies in OR work, which she finds challenging in the technical sense and continually varied.

And while she thinks videotape has its place, it isn't a substitute for still photos, she believes. A single

Continued on Page 5



Linda Tomaszewski, RN

GEOFFREY MEHL



LINDA TOMASZEWSKI

All parents yearn for those priceless snapshots that make the family album a treasure. So how do you get pictures like this? Originally in color and a lot larger in size, it's the work of Linda Tomaszewski, RN, of Short Procedure Unit (LVHC site).

How to Get Those Great Pictures

frame evokes memories far beyond the immediate moment, and she says her children, when looking at pictures of themselves, can remember events as early as when they were 2 years old.

Her suggestions to parents eager to build a collection of fine photographs of their own families is relatively basic: keep a camera loaded and handy at all times, and avoid trying to pose kids in their Sunday best. Some of her finest work was taken while the children are playing, often oblivious to the camera itself.

"Go for emotions," she says of portraiture. "Happy, sad, laughing, crying." And sometimes she'll stalk her own children and use a zoom lens to get close enough not to disturb them from something that has their full attention.

At other times, they're hammering it up and those make good pictures, too. When the child is interrupted from what he's doing, encouragement to return to the task is sometimes all that's needed to capture that priceless treasure.

"Be patient with them. Get involved in their activity. Keep shooting until you get the picture you want," she advises. That can sometimes be a single shot or a half a roll.

After the film is developed, it's

time to edit. She prefers print film to slides, except for vacation landscapes that deserve to be on the big screen. Over the year, photos pile up in boxes and then, in January or February, she culls out those to be enlarged. This is the material destined for picture frames or the family album, and with enlargements running as much as \$7 each, the 20 or so pictures from the entire previous year are chosen with care.

But each is stunning in terms of composition, lighting and subject matter; picture after picture of children enjoying childhood. And from the family vacations, landscapes that color print labs ask permission to copy for their own promotional purposes.

And from it all, a contest entry or two, just for the challenge of it.

Tomaszewski is contemplating another contest, with a trip to Australia as a prize, while she awaits word on how her snapshot of "Berks Co. 6:21 P.M." will fare. In the meantime, there's the nursing challenge of the Short Procedure Unit at LVHC site, the horses, goats and chickens at the farm where she admits to being "a closet veterinarian", and a loaded camera, waiting for the next moment when her sons, like all young children, create the perfect picture.

What's News...

Continued from Page 4

mittee, will depart TAH site at 5:15 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2. Cost is \$24, which includes bus transportation, dinner and clubhouse. For reservations, call Hazel Kramer at ext. 2391.

Benefit Bowling

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will benefit from a bowling event sponsored by the Employee Activities Committee on Nov. 18 at noon in the Parkway Bowling Center. Bowlers are invited to contact Kay at ext. 9455 for sponsor sheets.

Poinsettia Sale

Members of LVHC site Auxiliary will sell poinsettias in the lobby of LVHC site from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on December 6.

Leather Sales

Dates have been changed for a local vendor displaying leather goods outside the cafeteria at TAH site. Twenty percent of the total sales will be donated to TAH site Auxiliary. New dates for the sales are Friday, Nov. 9 and Friday, Dec. 7. Items for sale include leather handbags, briefcases and small suitcases in the \$10 to \$25 range, and all purchases must be in cash (no credit cards).

Wellness Programs

Help For Smokers

The next Smoke Stoppers series of eight sessions begins Nov. 7 from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 22nd and Tilghman streets, Allentown. And the next Smoking Cessation Hypnosis session is Nov. 14 in Classroom 1, LVHC site, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.; registration deadline is Nov. 7.

For information on employee discounts and registration, call HealthCounts at 821-2150.

Journey Through The Heart

Sharon Holmes, exercise program coordinator at HealthCounts, reports that the "Journey Through the Heart" program is off and walking at LVHC site and the numbers are flying on the odometer.

It started Sept. 19 with 460 participants, including 56 work teams, 39 family teams and 56 individuals.

"We are very excited about the progress of the program," Holmes says. Already, a large number have entered the first chamber of the heart, and she encourages everyone to "keep on trekkin'."

Respiratory —

Caring, Skilled Technicians Offer Breath Of Life

"The breath of life" is a slogan that members of TAH—LVHC's department of Respiratory Care take very seriously.

The recent Respiratory Care Week recognized the professionals who work toward sustaining the lives of patients with breathing diseases. Respiratory Care was promoted with displays at both sites which addressed the current issues of smoking and allergies and their relation to respiratory diseases. Seminars about various topics were held at noon, each day during the week, at both sites.

Respiratory Care employees are very familiar faces to most patients who arrive at the hospital, and are usually a critical factor to their departure. On any given day the respiratory care practitioner interacts with approximately 20 percent of the hospital's patients; providing routine oxygen and inhaled medication therapy, performing diagnostic testing of the lungs, analyzing blood specimens for oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, and monitoring over 40 patients who cannot breathe on their own and require mechanical ventilation to assist their breathing.

At LVHC site, the majority of the patients seen are on the critical care units, including Shock/Trauma, Intensive Care, Acute Coronary, Transitional Open Heart, CNS, Burn, and Special Care. Patients are also seen on the medical/surgical and outpatient units as well.

Department professionals monitor the ventilators on these units, but also care for patients in the trauma rooms who require ventilator assistance due to severe trauma. "In these types of injuries, when a patient's lung compliance is severely restricted (stiff lungs), our presence in the trauma operating room can make a significant difference," says George Guldin, day-shift supervisor at LVHC site.

Keeping in step with the new technology and with the goals of Total Focus Management, 29 New Generation ventilators have been purchased for both sites during the last 18 months. "These ventilators have state-of-the-art integrated microprocessors and are better for the patient," says Guldin. "This equipment can be used on children from 25 pounds to adults of all ages."

Wally Smith, equipment specialist, is charged with the repair and maintenance of this equipment and all Respiratory Care's lifesaving machinery, in addition to evaluation of new equipment purchases, troubleshooting existing machinery and inservice to staff members.

There are also portable ventilators used when transporting patients for special studies. A member of the Respiratory Care team will accompany the patient and ventilator while being transported for X-ray and nuclear medicine studies or CT scans; or outside of the hospital. "We have even transported patients to weddings and funerals," says Guldin. Respiratory care practitioners have brightened the lives of some chronic ventilator patients by celebrating birthdays and assisting on trips outside the hospital.

At TAH site, the focus of treatment is on neo-

natal and pediatric care as well as a variety of adult patients, including those with renal failure who need ventilation and AIDS patients.

"In the neonatal area, we currently utilize the 'Bear Cub' and 'Bear BP 200' ventilators," states John DelVillaggio, manager at TAH site. "This equipment is designed for the tiny lungs of the neonate." High-frequency equipment, specially designed to deliver quicker breaths at 200 to 500 breaths per second, is currently being studied for use in this area.

Pediatrics patients are treated with aerosol therapy and oxygen for such conditions as bronchitis and cystic fibrosis. Other types of therapy performed are oxygen therapy, which is provided with a nasal cannula or aerosol mask and is used on patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, such as emphysema. Renal patients are seen when pulmonary conditions occur.

Aerosol Pentamidine treatments are administered to AIDS patients, on both an in- and out-patient basis. "This aerosol therapy, used to prevent pneumocystis carinii, a form of pneumonia these patients are highly susceptible to, is administered in a specially-designed room at TAH site," states DelVillaggio. This service is offered on the average of 50 to 60 patients per month.

The pulmonary laboratory personnel component of the department perform various pulmonary function diagnostic studies to measure the lung capacities of patients and assess the obstructions or restrictions in the patient's lungs. These individuals also analyze approximately 75,000 blood specimens per year to assess oxygen and carbon dioxide levels.

Under the guidance of their new administrative director, George Ellis, employees in the merged department go "above and beyond" on a daily basis in treating the acute and chronically ill patients with respiratory disease.



SCOTT DORNBASER

Laurel Fedak, respiratory therapy technician at TAH site, monitors equipment.

Two Nurses Among Finalists In Statewide Recognition

Two TAH—LVHC nurses were among the 15 finalists for clinical and administrative awards presented by the Nightingale Awards of Pennsylvania, a new non-profit organization established to recruit, retain and recognize nurses across the commonwealth.

Carol M. Fox, RN, CNS, and Linda M. Woodin, RN, project director and clinical nurse specialist of the pain management program, were chosen from 280 nominees in registered and licensed practical nursing.

Fox, certified in critical care nursing, holds a bachelor's degree from Cedar Crest College and a master's from Pennsylvania State University.

Woodin is a graduate of the hospi-

tal school of nursing, has a bachelor's degree from Metropolitan State College, Denver, Colo., and a masters from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

The Nightingale organization, which plans to provide scholarships for eligible nursing students in 1991, shares similar objectives with Friends of Nursing, says Elisabeth Williamson, RN, coordinator of the hospital's nursing recruitment and recognition program.

"We are equally committed to promoting nursing as a positive career choice," she says. "The Nightingale program merely reaffirms the value and importance of what we've been doing all along."

Scouts Ask Help In Finding Eagles

Are you an Eagle Scout — or know of one?

If so, the Minsi Trails Council, Boy Scouts of America, wants to hear from you.

The council is participating in a nationwide search for "lost Eagles," and it is believed that there may be as many as 2,200 of them in the Lehigh Valley.

These are Eagle Scouts whose names have been misplaced over the years by the Boy Scouts. And, as any Eagle knows, there is no such thing as an Eagle Scout in the past tense.

The eldest known Eagle in the

area is 84-year-old Donald P. Miller, former owner and publisher of *The Morning Call*.

As the highest rank in Boy Scouting, only about 1 percent of all scouts ever attain the distinction, and it is so prestigious that its worth lifelong mention on professional resumes. Well-known Eagle Scouts include former President Gerald Ford, FBI Director William Sessions, film director and producer Steven Spielberg and astronauts James Lovell Jr and Neil Armstrong.

Those who are or know of an Eagle Scout are urged to call the Minsi Trails Council at 264-8551.

LVHC Chorus Seeks Male Voices

If you're a big hit in the household shower, you're definitely a candidate for the LVHC site Chorus, a group of 14 amateur singers who are especially seeking male voices to round

Human Resources CPR Certification Set

Human Resource Development will offer CPR certification in two sessions on Nov. 8 from 9 a.m. to noon and Nov. 13 from 1 to 4 p.m. Testing is included. Sessions meet in Room 900, School of Nursing, TAH site. To register, call ext. 2430.

CheckUp Oct. 26, 1990

out the group.

All interested in music are welcome.

For the past two years, the chorus sang at both sites during the Christmas season, the Festival of Trees and Lights, and the June LVHC site Auxiliary Luncheon. It would like to sing at other events during the year as well.

Those interested in joining are urged to contact Sylvia Hajewski at 432-9862 or the Rev. George Williams at ext. 8465 to get information on the next rehearsal.

The Hotline

What telephone number can an employee call to cancel Vim & Vigor to help conserve paper?

If you wish to discontinue your subscription to *Vim & Vigor*, please call ext. 7914.

The sandwich bar in the cafeteria at TAH site causes congestion at the fire exit. Can it be moved to another location?

We will address your concern this fall during the upcoming cafeteria refurbishing. Space is a major issue in the cafeteria and we continue to search for ways to make our customer traffic flow more efficient.

Are employees allowed to use two emergency sick days so that they don't count against their record? Some departments allow this and some departments don't. Please explain.

The attendance policy does not refer to the use of emergency sick days. Individual departments may allow employees to use personal time for emergencies. This is up to the discretion of each department.

The Hotline is a service for TAH—LVHC and HealthEast employees who have questions or concerns. Callers are asked to leave their messages on a tape machine, by calling ext. 2999. Please indicate your site.

CheckUp is a biweekly publication of the Communications Department. To submit an article, or for additional information, call ext. 7916.

Our mission is your health.

We welcome contributions from employees of TAH—LVHC and HealthEast. Information concerning professional achievements should be sent to "Making The Rounds." Announcements of employees engagements, weddings and dependent births should be sent to "Congratulations." Submissions for Marketplace should be printed and include the employee's name, department and extension.

All submissions should be directed to Communications, 50 College Drive.

HealthEast, a not-for-profit regional healthcare system, is more than 8,000 professionals, employees and volunteers working to provide you with quality, comprehensive health services.

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Mini-flex Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Site	Location
Nov. 12	3 p.m.	HE	Board Room
Nov. 14	2 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 15	10:30 a.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 15	2 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 16	2 a.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 16	2:45 a.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 19	10 a.m.	HE	Board Room
Nov. 19	2 p.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 19	9 p.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 20	6:45-7:30 a.m.	LVHC	OR
Nov. 20	9:30 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 20	3:30 p.m.	HC	Home Care
Nov. 21	7:30 a.m.	Health	Spectrum
		Medical Products	
Nov. 21	8:30 a.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 21	11:30 a.m.	Trexertown	
Nov. 21	2 p.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 27	6:50-7:30 a.m.	TAH	OR
Nov. 27	2:30 p.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 28	2 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 28	2:45 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 28	3 p.m.	HEIS	Cafeteria
Nov. 28	4 p.m.	HEIS	Cafeteria
Nov. 28	9 p.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 29	9 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 29	10:30 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 29	1:30 p.m.	HE	Board Room
Nov. 29	9:30 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Nov. 30	9:30 a.m.	TAH	Auditorium
Nov. 30	2 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Dec. 3	9:30 a.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Dec. 3	2:30 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium
Dec. 3	9 p.m.	LVHC	Auditorium

New Benefits Program

Continued from Page 1

such items as contact lenses, eyeglasses, cosmetic surgery or orthodontics.

For the dependent care account, the employee estimates expenses for the year and may contribute up to \$5,000 per year (if married and filing a joint income tax return). The dependent care program is applicable only for day care of children under 13 years of age and the employee must provide tax information about the provider — such as a tax identification number of the day care center. This information, in turn, is shared with the Internal Revenue Service. To withdraw from the dependent care account, claims must be submitted to Spectrum Administrators as often as every two weeks to receive reimbursements for the dependent care expense.

Once enrolled in the healthcare spending account, the only allowed change in deduction is an increase — as a result of a change in life status, such as marriage, divorce, or birth of a child.

Contributions to the dependent care spending account may be reduced only after a divorce or death of a spouse or dependent. For this reason, it is important to carefully esti-

mate the amount to be contributed to spending accounts.

Another reason for accurate estimation is the Internal Revenue Service regulation that requires any amount left in the account at the end of the year to be forfeited.

In spite of those regulations, the advantage of these spending accounts, besides budget planning, is the tax savings enjoyed by not paying Social Security or federal income taxes on contributions.

A little less complicated is supplemental group life insurance, purchased in multiples of \$10,000 with a minimum of \$20,000. Rates are based on age and payment is by post-tax payroll deduction. Similar offerings are available for dependents: \$5,000 or \$10,000 for a spouse and \$2,000 to \$5,000 for children.

Voluntary accidental death and dismemberment coverage is available, also by deductions from net pay, for amounts up to \$300,000 for employees and lesser amounts for spouse and children.

The mini-flex benefits evolved from expressed interest by employees earlier in the year with particular attention to funding services not covered by HHP, deductibles and co-payments.

Labs Use TQF To Enhance Service, End Hassles

Continued from Page 3

they are uncommon and expensive, began when a patient complained. According to Sharon Boley, MT, coordinator of clinical lab peripheral sites, it was normal practice to package up specimens and ship them by mail to 30 different laboratories across the country. In this particular case, the shipment was delayed in transit, the specimen spoiled, and a whole new specimen collected. The patient, a child, had to be imposed upon, and Boley said the child's mother was understandably upset.

"It would be easy to blame the Postal Service," Boley adds. "So our quick fix was to use Federal Express — but that adds \$6,000 a year to the cost of tests."

Instead, the corrective action team began looking at the heart of the situ-

ation. The list of laboratories had been assembled, patchwork style, over many years. Investigation revealed that two to three techs spent half their day packing specimens for shipment. And some of the labs had changed their requirements but never notified the hospital — other than to reject specimens.

Having chosen Federal Express as a temporary shipping alternative, the team chose several quality laboratories in the area and sought proposals for better prices, faster service, and, especially, courier pickup. Now, instead of waiting for four or five days for lab results, information is available as early as the next day.

The price of nonconformance, says Beth Cepil, coordinator, Quality Assurance, is about \$16,000 a year. Again,

though, the monetary cost shrinks in comparison to providing better and faster service to the patient.

Cepil, Boley and Benner agree that the ongoing emphasis on quality performance and measurement in the laboratory setting was helpful, but that the Total Quality Focus (TQF) approach of zero defects, process analysis, price of nonconformance and corrective action was of great value in developing solutions.

They add that involving techs at the bench in the process spread the concept of TQF in a positive way and boosted departmental morale. Small problems are not to be accepted, but instead serve as triggers for corrective action and the means to continually improve work routines, financial matters and ultimately in patient care.