

# CheckUp Extra

November 10, 1994

## *To All Employees and Physicians:*

Earlier this week, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) concluded its survey of Lehigh Valley Hospital, and will formally report its findings in two months.

However, we want to share with you, in advance of this report, some of the survey team's impressions of the hospital.

"Visionary," "superlative" and "knowledgeable" were just a few of the adjectives the surveyors used to describe our services, facilities and medical, clinical and support personnel. They were particularly positive in their evaluation of our employees and physicians, citing your competence, organization and dedication in providing patient care.

We do want to take this opportunity to commend you for your diligence in preparing for the JCAHO visit. Clearly, your efforts exceeded the expectations of the survey team which consisted of a team leader, a physician, a nurse and an administrator.

Zelda Green, director of medical record, is one of many shining examples of this. Prior to the JCAHO visit, Zelda provided eight hours of didactic and hands-on teaching to employees in 25 disciplines. Zelda's goal was to enhance our staff's understanding and ability to interpret entire medical records from patient rights to discharge planning. It was a phenomenal effort and one that did not go unrecognized by the survey team.

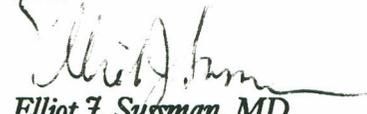
Similarly, our clerical staff and volunteers were responsible for assembling and copying what amounted to four bookcases of hospital documents, all of which the survey team found to be in accord with JCAHO standards. It certainly started the survey off on a high note that was sustained by many employees and physicians, 183 who met formally and 1,000 who met informally with the surveyors.

The results of all these efforts were overwhelmingly positive. The survey team found only one Type I deficiency, which the hospital plans to challenge. Nevertheless, this is a phenomenal achievement in our very complex organization, and a dramatic improvement over 19 such deficiencies reported in 1991 and 51 in 1988.

Again, our thanks to you and the entire hospital and medical staff for your efforts. We also want to extend special thanks to the employees who helped prepare our staff for the JCAHO visit and served as guides during the survey. They include: Debra Bubba, William Frailey, Mike Gilson, Emma Hooks, Denise Holub, Sue Lawrence and Sue Steward. And a very special thank you to George Ellis for his leadership role.

Given the positive feedback we received from the survey team, we are confident that we will be awarded a three-year accreditation by the Joint Commission. Should the Commission reconsider the Type I deficiency, we can expect accreditation with commendation, an honor that is accorded only two percent of the healthcare organizations surveyed by the Joint Commission.

Considering that the results of JCAHO surveys will be made public in 1995, we could not have been scheduled for a survey at a better time. Certainly, we could not have hoped for better results. Thank you again for assuming a prominent role in this process. It has impressed and inspired us in our leadership roles.

  
Elliot J. Sussman, MD  
President and CEO

  
Lou Stebbaber  
Chief Operating Officer

*"The survey provided your staff with an opportunity to take center stage and shine. They did just that. Individually and collectively, they have done a remarkable job."*

-Robert S. Condry, FACHE  
Administrative Surveyor  
and Retired CEO,  
Loyola University  
Medical Center