

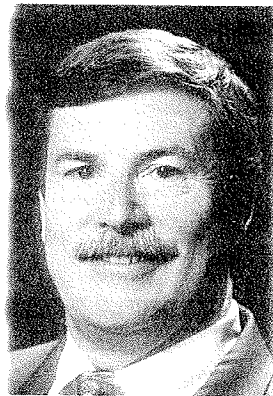
OFF THE CHART

February/March 1998

A quarterly publication for the physicians of Sutter Merced Medical Center

Straight Talk

by Brian Bentley, CEO



As I've had the opportunity to talk with physicians over the past few months, there have been two issues that continue to surface as items of considerable interest and concern...

contracting and facility renovations. I'd like to take the occasion of this inaugural issue of "Off the Chart" to provide an update on these obviously critical issues.

Contracting

Sutter Health has entered into discussions with Regency IPA and has proposed a method through which Sutter contracts could be made available to all Regency doctors. Under this proposal, Regency could have access to all Sutter Health contracts, or the association could pick and choose the contracts that were most advantageous to its membership. Regency could even retain the ability to contract separately with payors if there was a more favorable reimbursement arrangement available through a direct contract. Regency's Board has agreed to the general concepts, and the final paperwork for an agreement is being developed as this newsletter goes to press.

I am hopeful that by the time that you read this column that the legal review will be completed. With signed agreements in place we will be able to move into the New Year with the kind of contract accessibility that we all envisioned when Sutter began operations here in Merced a year ago. Look for an announcement from Regency regarding physician meetings to discuss the new contract changes, and for follow up training sessions for your office staff.

Renovation Update

One of the many benefits of our affiliation with the much larger Sutter Health organization is access to the capital that is necessary to update and upgrade our facilities. It is no secret that many areas of the hospital have been neglected in recent years, and I want our physician partners to know that the management team has facility renovations as one of our highest priorities.

I hope that you will soon have the chance to enjoy a free meal in the new Physician's Lounge. This area, located across the hall from surgery, will be significantly larger and more comfortable than the previous lounge area. We'll open the doors as soon as the rest of the furniture arrives, probably in late January.

2 West is getting a much-needed facelift, with new room drapes, new window coverings, and a fresh coat of paint. New patient furniture and beds are due to arrive in January, and we have heeded the suggestions of many

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Making a Difference

Sutter Merced's General Medicine Clinic



Hope Avalos, D.N. treats a patient in the orthopedic clinic.

A unique and valuable resource exists right across the street from Sutter Merced Medical Center. The General Medicine Clinic offers outstanding specialty and family care for all types of patients. "We see everybody," says Dr. Lidia Sanseau, the clinic's only primary care physician. According to Sanseau, the General Medicine Clinic's mission is to be a place where patients can receive outstanding specialty care, even if they have lost their insurance. "If a patient does not have insurance we try to channel them into Medi-Cal or another medical assistance program," says Sanseau. The clinic takes many steps to insure that Medi-Cal patients receive quality care, including maintaining an adequate supply of sample medications for patients who cannot afford expensive prescriptions.

While the clinic is classified as a rural clinic and does see a high percentage

of Medi-Cal patients, it does not exclude other types of patients. According to Vi Colunga, Director of Ambulatory Care, the General Medicine Clinic's patient base is composed of approximately 10% private pay and 90% Medi-Cal patients. And, with Dr. Sanseau as a primary care physician, the clinic is able to provide long-term family care as well as specialty services. For Dr. Sanseau, who was born and raised in Argentina, these long-term family relationships are the most rewarding aspect of her practice.

Specialty practice at the clinic includes dermatology, pulmonology, cardiology and orthopedics. In fact, the General Medicine Clinic has the only orthopedic physician in the area who will see Medi-Cal patients. And, while the services provided at the clinic are predominantly outpatient services, the clinic staff coordinates all aspects of patient care, including inpatient surgeries. This is one of the most unique aspects of the General Medicine Clinic, in that it takes a tremendous amount of coordination to bring a large number of specialty physicians together under one roof while simultaneously handling varied patient care.

Doctors and staff at the General Medicine Clinic have also developed some outstanding programs and sub-clinics to meet the specific needs of its culturally diverse patient base. For example, with the high incidence of

diabetes among the Hispanic population, the Center for Diabetes is an invaluable resource for both patients and physicians. The Center for Diabetes provides counseling, treatment and educational programs for diabetics, and doctors can refer patients regardless of insurance issues. In addition, the Center for Diabetes provides treatment for gestational diabetes. This type of care is not available anywhere else in the Merced area.

While Dr. Sanseau acknowledges that recent health care changes such as HMO referral policies and rural clinic guidelines are tough on the clinic, she remains adamant that the patient comes first. "We are having to do more with less," says Sanseau. However, she is very pleased with the incorporation of the General Medicine Clinic into the Sutter Health system. "As a Sutter facility we can do more for patient care -- it is a very positive thing."

Hoop Dreams!



The Sutter Merced residents have formed a basketball team and are participating in the Merced City league. Team members include

Drs. Rabago, Watson, Zimmerman, Taber, Bhatia, Occhino, Tacke and Gallery. If you see any of the slam-dunkers around, wish them good luck!

A **Rewarding** Experience

Straight Talk

Continued from page 1

As 1997 Chief of Staff, David Simenson got a first-hand look at some of the challenges facing the hospital. "Part of our mission is to become the hospital of choice," says Simenson. "To have the kind of facility and service that people will trust with their life -- that's a big challenge."

Simenson praises Sutter Health's plans for renovation of the facilities. "The renovations can't all happen over one weekend, but they are big steps in accomplishing our goal." He is particularly excited about the emergency room, outpatient surgery, and the hospital entrance, which are the areas most visible to patients. By improving these areas, he feels the hospital's image will be greatly enhanced. Later, the labor & delivery wing as well as the new physicians lounge will be big pluses.

We're doing a better job of using quality measurements to improve care

While the facilities are a high priority, Simenson is personally driving the issue of quality improvement through his involvement with the hospital's Quality Management Committee. "We're doing a better job of using quality measurements to improve care, but one of the things I'm really pushing for is having our efforts be more data driven, as well as more statistical analysis and graphical presentation of data."

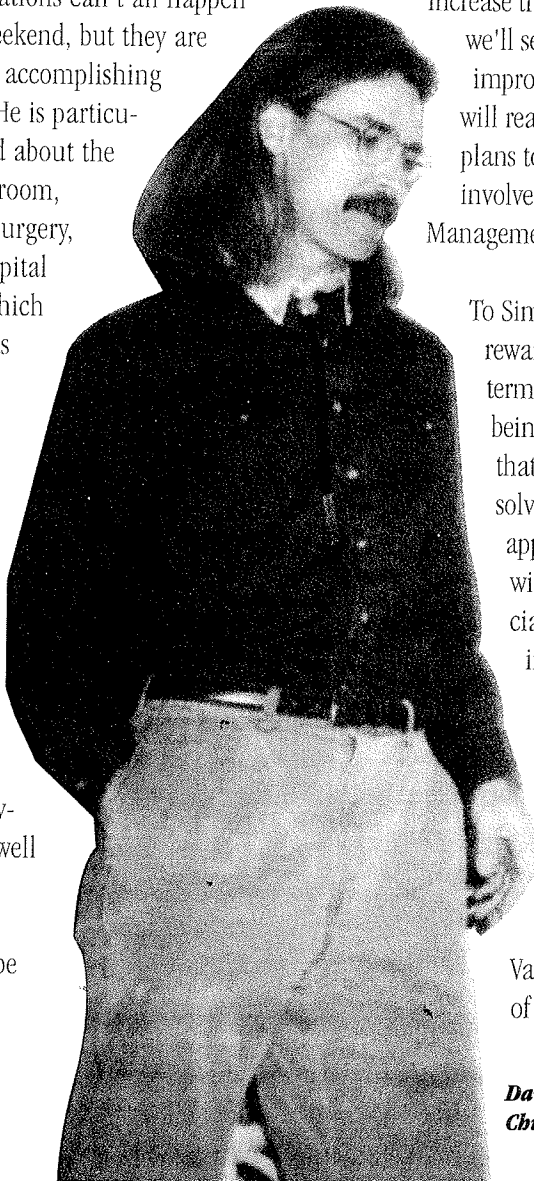
According to Simenson, "These methods increase the likelihood that we'll select something to improve the process that will really work." Simenson plans to stay actively involved in the Quality Management Committee.

To Simenson, the most rewarding aspect of his term as Chief of Staff was being part of the team that takes initiative to solve problems. He also appreciated working with the non-physician staff that make important contributions to the hospital. Dr. Simenson has been in family practice in the Merced area for 13 years, and is based at Golden Valley Health Center of Merced.

physicians and nurses who have urged that we dramatically improve the lighting in the patient rooms. We will also be making lighting improvements in the pediatric unit and the nursery so that you won't have to guess if it's jaundice or just a bad lighting filament.

In 1998, we will be replacing the Special Procedures room and the Cath Lab... an investment of \$1.8 million dollars to provide our doctors the best possible tools for patient care. We will also be renovating the ICU/CCU nursing station and rooms, including replacement of the beds and monitors. 3 West will be getting an update and we will continue enhancing other areas.

Future renovations which are currently under design include major improvements in the OB department, the recovery area, and the cafeteria. The main entrance on 13th Street will also get a major makeover, which, along with expanded parking and improved exterior lighting, will provide an outwardly visible reflection of the important changes taking place inside of the hospital which will make Sutter Merced the area's finest facility for practicing the art of medicine. We will stop at nothing short of our goal of making Sutter Merced fully competitive, both in terms of our facilities and clinical services, with hospitals in both Fresno and Modesto. Our community, and the physicians who serve it, deserve no less.

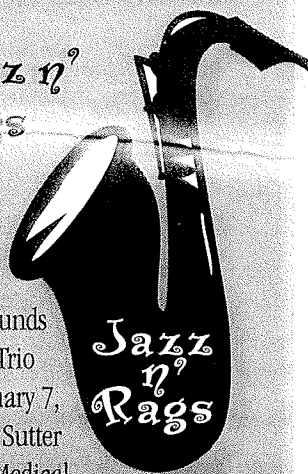


David Simenson
Chief of Staff 1997

Foundation News & Events

Jazz n' Rags

Hearts will be beating to the sounds of R&R Trio on February 7, 1998, as Sutter Merced Medical Center's Foundation presents "Jazz n' Rags" at the Merced Multicultural Arts Center. For only \$45 you can experience an evening of dinner, music, fashions, and exciting "romantic" surprises that are guaranteed to get you in the "Valentine" mood. Call 385-7859 for tickets.



Lucky Friday the 13th

Friday, March 13 marks the date for the 12th annual Patrick J. Maloney MD Memorial Golf Tournament. The luck of the Irish will be on every tee as each golfer participates for the possible \$10,000 hole-in-one. One hundred dollars gets a golfer, green fees, cart, tee prizes, dinner, refreshments and a chance at special hole contests. Call 385-7859 to try your luck on the greens.



Newly Elected Executive Board

January 1998 will begin the term for the newly elected Sutter Merced Medical Center Foundation Executive Board. New officers are:

Patrick Peer President

Peer has been with the Foundation since 1994 and served as Vice President in 1997. He is the Director of Physician Operations (Merced) at Sutter Gould Medical Foundation.

Patricia Leideritz Vice President

Leideritz is the owner of Yosemite Floral and has served on the board for two years.

Doreen Faiello-Burnett Secretary

This is Faiello-Burnett's first year on the board. She is the Director of Administrative and Clinical Services at Sutter Merced Medical Center.

Greg Spurgeon Treasurer

Spurgeon is the CEO for Hinds Hospice and has been on the board for three years. This will be his second year serving as treasurer.

January also marks the beginning for new members; **Nancy Whittaker**, SMMC Director of Nursing; **Pat Friesen**, owner of Starfish Catering; and **Von Goodin, DDS**.

They join Foundation members; Chris Timothy, Bobbi Robinson, Judy Pfitzer-Boyer, Anna Bolling PhD, Shawn Dwyer, Erik Ekizian DC, Julie Raefield-Gobbo, Marci Suddjian, Micki Rucker, Linda Puccini LVN, Debbie Kinchloe, and Foundation Liaison, Janice Wilkerson.

New Pediatric Unit

SMMC is in the process of remodeling several rooms in the 3 West patient area that will become the new pediatric unit. Patients will remain in the hospital's existing pediatric unit until the new patient rooms are completed.

Our new pediatric unit will keep the atmosphere of the current pediatric unit while enhancing patient care. The new rooms will provide a better call system, a more efficient nurses station, equipped with new monitoring equipment.

If you have any concerns or questions please call the Nursing Administration office at 385-7107.

We've Moved!





Marsha Cuttone, Dr. Ernst, Dr. Philp, Ann Kelley, Jim Cunningham and Dr. Loredo.

A Celebration of Life

The one-year anniversary of the Intermediate Care Neonatal Nursery was celebrated with a party and reunion for the families of babies treated there during the year. On October 28, we welcomed over fifty families, along with doctors and staff, for lunch and a

special welcome given by Brian Bentley. Families and staff shared stories and experiences, and the babies were given a teddy bear in Sutter Merced scrubs as a memento of where they spent their first few hours or days of life.

1998 Board of Directors

Jim Cunningham - Chair
 Neil Ernst, MD - Vice Chair
 Marsha Cuttone - Secretary
 John Aleman, MD
 David Benn
 Brian Bentley
 Mike Cohill
 Lynn Cooman, MD
 Terry Deak
 Ann Kelley
 Fernando Palomino

Pharmacology Update

For prevention of bacterial endocarditis...

The latest AHA guidelines are: 1. Only a single amoxicillin dose one hour before dental procedures is recommended. 2. Erythromycin is no longer recommended as the 1st line alternative in PCN-allergic patients because of its high incidence of GI upset. 3. A single dose of clindamycin or azithromycin or clarithromycin one hour before procedure is recommended as an alternative in PCN-allergic patients.

HIV protease inhibitors increase blood glucose

A new warning will soon appear in package inserts of protease inhibitors such as Crixivan (indinavir), Invirase (saquinavir), Norvir (ritonavir), and Viracept (nelfinavir). This is a result of observations that this new class of drugs

for HIV therapy can lead to new or worsen existing diabetes. The effect usually does not appear until after two months of initiating therapy but can occur as early as in just a few days. All health care providers should counsel patients to watch out for signs of hyperglycemia.

Good news for Migraines

Migraine headaches reportedly affect 17% of adult women and 6% of adult men each year. Besides ergotamine, Midrin, and sumatriptan (Imitrex), combination use of aspirin and metoclopramide may be a reasonable alternative. Researchers had used up to 1000 mg of aspirin and metoclopramide 10 mg for acute treatment of moderate to severe migraine headaches. The ASA + metoclopramide group had similar headache relief as the sumatriptan

group. There seemed to be less adverse effects in the combination group except for somnolence. Nausea/vomiting and fatigue were most frequently reported with sumatriptan. For those patients who failed traditional first-line treatments or in whom sumatriptan is contraindicated, the combination of aspirin and metoclopramide could be a reasonable alternative.



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February

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8	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 722-6201	9	<i>Stroke Links Stroke Support Group</i> 10-11 am SMMC Classroom 1 385-7756 <i>OB Tours</i> 6:30 pm 385-7197	10	<i>Lamaze Class</i> see below <i>"Women & Heart Disease"</i> Luncheon <i>SMMC Diabetes Educational Support Group</i> 11 am • 725-7520	11	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing</i> see above <i>The Merced Asthma Network</i> 6:30 - 8 pm 725-7555	12		13	<i>"Bridging the Gap"</i> Medical Interpreter Training 385-7117	14	
15	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> see below <i>Foundation of Hope</i> SMMC Classroom 1 392-6433	16		17		18	<i>Lamaze Class</i> 6 - 8 pm SMMC Multipurpose Room A&B 723-3704	19	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing Bereavement Support Group</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 358-4932	20	<i>Advanced Cardiac Life Support '98</i> 8am-4:30pm 385-7117	21	
22	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 722-6201	23		24		25	<i>Lamaze Class</i> 6 - 8 pm SMMC Multipurpose Room A&B 723-3704	26	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing Bereavement Support Group</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 358-4932	27	<i>Advanced Cardiac Life Support '98</i> 8am-4:30pm 385-7117	28	<i>Fair of the Heart</i>

March

1	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> see below <i>Foundation of Hope</i> SMMC Classroom 1 392-6433	2		3		4	<i>Lamaze Class</i> 6 - 8 pm SMMC Multipurpose Room A&B 723-3704	5	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing Bereavement Support Group</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 358-4932	6		7	
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15	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> see below <i>Foundation of Hope</i> SMMC Classroom 1 392-6433	16		17		18	<i>Lamaze Class</i> 6 - 8 pm SMMC Multipurpose Room A&B 723-3704	19	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing Bereavement Support Group</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 358-4932	20		21	<i>Southeast Asian Women's Health Day</i>
22	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 722-6201	23		24		25	<i>Lamaze Class</i> 6 - 8 pm SMMC Multipurpose Room A&B 723-3704	26	<i>Grief-Pathway to Healing Bereavement Support Group</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 358-4932	27		28	
29	<i>We Will Be Heard</i> 6:30 - 8:30 pm Multipurpose Room B 722-6201	30		31	<i>Physicians Office Managers Luncheon (Home Health)</i>								

Breast Feeding, Nutrition & Education classes also available. Call 385-7117 for information.

Coming next quarter:

"Living with Grief"
Teleconference
April 22

Spring Family Fair
April 25

Walk America
May 16

Stroke Awareness Day
TBA