

Who Determines Hospitals' Fate?

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Painted Post—Questioned at the conclusion of the first annual meeting of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) here April 19, the FLHSA executive director and a lobbyist for the state Hospitals Association offered differing views on the requests by three Catholic hospitals that their obstetrical units be exempted from impending financial sanctions.

Msgr. James F. Fitzpatrick lobbyist and senior vice president of the Hospitals Association of New York State, was the featured speaker at the dinner meeting. The FLHSA is currently preparing recommendations that some obstetrical units and other health facilities close as a cost-cutting measure. Included in the discussion are St. Joseph's, Elmira, St. James, Hornell, and St. Mary's, Rochester. As a religious-sponsored hospital, St. Joseph's has requested a waiver of penalties so its obstetrical unit can remain open.

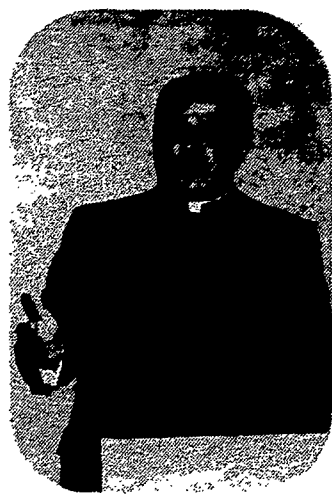
Msgr. Fitzpatrick noted that he has not become involved in the closing of obstetrical units at Catholic hospitals. The questions are local problems, he noted, and should be solved by the Health Systems Agency involved rather than at the state level. The waivers could be granted, he said,

but "I don't know where it is now."

Anthony Mott, FLHSA executive director, provided a different view, stating that his group would not be making a recommendation that waivers be granted. If a waiver is granted to the Catholic hospitals, it would be granted by the state Health Department, he said. When asked if his agency could recommend that St. Joseph's waiver request be granted, he commented that "I would not expect that we would do that." He called the issues involved "moral and political" questions which the agency doesn't deal with, he said. He pointed out that the final decision will be made at the state level, and the agency's recommendations do not have to be followed.

In his address to the FLHSA Board of Directors, Msgr. Fitzpatrick commented on the current situation of health care in New York, and provided a preliminary look at President Carter's "cap" program, designed to put a ceiling on health care costs.

The Hospitals Association announced last January that they favored shrinkage of the state hospital system, Msgr. Fitzpatrick said, which "shocked people." The statement was made, he said, because the situation was causing a decrease in health care quality.



MSGR. FITZPATRICK

He received a draft copy of President Carter's health care legislation the previous day, he said. He noted that the plan doesn't yet include specific growth limits, but nine per cent, with a four per cent exception, have been cited. While the program's "impact is going to be very difficult to establish," he noted, "it would give us a heck of a lot more flexibility than we now enjoy."

States that have had a cost containment program, such as New York, could be excluded from the regulations, he noted. He emphasized that the Hospitals Association will lobby against an exclusion for New York. Currently the state is working on a three per cent reduction in costs, he explained, and if the rest of the country has a nine per cent growth, it would harm health care in the state. He noted that currently there are several positions vacant in teaching hospitals, because they are unable to attract qualified persons to the state.

Hospital Request Considered

Binghamton—Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital here has received a letter from the state Health Department stating that the hospital's request for a waiver of sanctions against its obstetrical unit will be considered.

St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, also has requested a waiver of financial sanctions so that its obstetrical unit can remain open, and has launched a letter-writing campaign to support its request.

The letter, dated April 12, was sent to Sister Geraldine, Lourdes administrator, by Frank D. Cicero, MD, deputy commissioner of the state Health Department, explained Jack Logue, Lourdes assistant administrator. The letter informed Sister Geraldine that the state planning committee will examine the situation of the religious-sponsored hospitals' obstetrical units, and defer the sanctions against the hospitals involved "until the issue is resolved."

The letter goes on to state that there was "obviously no intent" by the state health planning committee "to be discriminatory," and that the special position of the Catholic hospitals would have to be explored by the committee. No date for a decision is specified in the letter, Logue reported. He noted that the sanctions are scheduled to go into effect in the Binghamton area on Jan. 1, 1978. —Toombs



Father William Cosgrove, pastor, and parishioner Harry Lambert inspect the new carillon at St. Patrick's, Savannah.

Savannah Honors Father Coonan

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

An electric carillon, a set of stationary bells programmed to play music, and a portrait of Father John T. Coonan, were dedicated in his memory at St. Patrick's Church, Savannah, on April 17.

Father Coonan, who served as pastor of St. Patrick's and St. John the Evangelist, Clyde, died Sept. 7, 1976 as he was preparing to celebrate Mass.

The carillon will play at 12 and 6 p.m. daily and three times every Sunday

morning. The formal portrait was donated by Photographers Two, in Newark, and will hang in the church.

During the dedication Father William Cosgrove, pastor, and Father Ralph Fraats, associate, gave the welcoming prayer and benediction. Joseph Kolczynski, chairperson of the fund raising committee, and Harry Lambert, president of the parish advisory board, spoke about Father Coonan.

Father Coonan had served as pastor of both parishes since 1967.

Region Demands Notice On Future Programs

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — The Seneca-Cayuga Regional Assembly met April 18 at Sacred Heart Church here for the election of officers and a business meeting.

Father Robert Rice, regional human development chairman, presented a proposal dealing with the problems that arise when materials on diocesan-level projects arrive too late to be

useful or after parish schedules have been set.

If we are going to link into a program, we want to do a good job, Father Rice said. Reference was made to annual events which can be anticipated in advance. The main areas of concern dealt with lenten and Human Development programs.

There was some discussion as to the appropriateness of dealing

with this issue at the regional level, but the following proposal was passed by the assembly

We, the Seneca-Cayuga Region, conclude that henceforth only those projects and programs of diocesan-level which have been adequately presented at least three months in advance will be supported. This pertains to all activities. However, three months notice is not required in emergencies.

In other assembly action, a questionnaire was distributed asking for opinions on the Chrism Mass held at St. Mary's this Lent. The results will be evaluated by the regional liturgy committee.

A steering committee will be formed to consider a regional parish council workshop in the fall.

Elected to serve as officers for the regional assembly are Ms. Kathy Fox, re-elected assembly president, Ms. Patricia Delaney, secretary and Ms. Barbara Arthur, treasurer. The nomination for vice president was delayed until the June meeting of the assembly.

Elected to serve as delegates at large are Mary Franchina, Ann Salato and Patricia Biaconi.

The June 21 meeting will be a picnic at St. Patrick's, Aurora. The event will be open to past and present members of the regional assembly and parish councils.

FASHION SHOW

Elmira Heights — A fashion show to benefit the District 15 Special Olympics, which includes Tioga, Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties, has been scheduled for Friday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Edison High School. Fashions will be provided by local merchants, and modeled by Special Olympics participants. Tickets are available from participants or at the door.

Tuition Charges, Budget Approved For Chemung Schools

Elmira—The Chemung County General Education Board approved a budget and tuition charges for 1977-78 in the shortest board meeting of the year April 14.

The \$564,000 budget was approved without a dissenting vote. School

system business manager T. H. Banks had previously reported that the pastors of all the participating parishes had accepted the assessments in the budget.

The 45 minute meeting marked the conclusion of the budget process, which last year took two months longer, and included the closing of a school.

Tuition charges for next year will remain the same as for the current year, \$50 for kindergarten, \$90 for one student, \$160 for two, and \$170 for more than two. An exception is the tuition for students whose families are not members of a participating parish; that charge will increase \$25 to \$600.

The Finance Committee also reported on a request from the Personnel Committee that funds be made available for a teacher for students with learning disabilities. Matt Fennell reported that the committee will attempt to find the money within the budget for the position.



'Grandparents'

Linda Mitchell shows her grandmother some "old country store" artifacts during open house at St. Mary's School, Auburn. The open house featured "Grandparents" as its theme.

SOUTHERN TIER

AUBURN-GENEVA

Newland To Speak

Corning — Mary Reed Newland, writer, television personality and mother of seven, will speak at St. Patrick's school hall at 10 a.m. Sunday, May 1. The title of her talk is Mary, Mother of Faith, and Our Lives Today. Mass will be celebrated afterward.

Mrs. Newland's books include The Family and the Bible, The Year and Our Children, and We and Our Children. She works with the Albany diocesan Office of Religious Education and has a weekly religious show for children on television.

FAMILY PLANNING

Corning — A class in Natural Family Planning is scheduled for 2 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, May 1, at St. Patrick's. Books will be available. For information or registration: Pat Beiswenger, 607-936-4019; Barbara Kennedy, 607-936-3439.

SOUTHERN TIER NEWS

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