

Hospitals

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emergency rooms for conditions that don't require emergency care. Such use of emergency rooms costs hospitals and the state "literally" millions and millions" in Medicaid payments, and in bad debts that must be paid by hospitals, he said.

These hefty medical costs — coupled with budgetary cutbacks in state and federal funding — have kept the public healthy an expensive business, observers noted. Their commitment to serving the poor gives Catholic hospitals extra reason to promote preventative health care, since many of their patients have low incomes and neither health insurance nor private physicians.

"We see more and more people without insurance," Bartell commented, noting that such patients often wind up visiting hospital emergency rooms for problems that could be solved at lower cost in a doctor's office. "For a lot of people, all they need is somebody to help them decide what their problem is," she said.

St. James often does just that by offering the services of hospital social workers to advise patients about resources they can use to solve their health problems. One of the goals of Health Focus will be to act as a clearinghouse for information on the various services and programs available to patients in the Hornell community and through the hospital, Bartell said.

For example, Health Focus will offer to conduct workshops on stress management at the offices of area businesses and community groups. Stressful living can lead to such physical ailments as heart disease and cancer, according to Nancy Fleet, a psychiatric social worker at St. James.

Fleet noted that the human body is continually trying to achieve "equilibrium," a sense of balance and stability. But reaching equilibrium is difficult for people experiencing the constant stress produced by poor diet, work overload or lack of exercise, she said.

Health Focus programmers want to schedule stress-management programs in work places so they can teach workers to better manage their time, money and health, Fleet said. Through better management of such aspects of their lives, workshop participants may be able to reduce the stress that could land them in the hospital.

Reaching potential patients at the work place also is the goal of Jane Wells, breast-cancer-screening education coordinator at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira.

The Self-Referral Mammography Program is designed to "educate local women and perhaps hopefully decrease the death rate of women in the Southern Tier," said Wells, a radiologic technologist who developed the program while working toward dual bachelor degrees in human services and psychology this spring at Elmira College.

Since the 1960s, St. Joseph's has offered mammography, an X-ray technique that detects breast tumors before they can be seen or felt. The American Cancer Society now recommends annual or biannual mammograms for all women over the age of 35, said Wells, noting that one in every nine U.S. women will experience breast cancer in her lifetime.

Strong Hospital needs volunteers for PACT program

Strong Memorial Hospital's Parent and Child Training Program (PACT) is seeking volunteers to help pregnant women in need.

A training and orientation session for new PACT volunteers will take place in September at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Each volunteer will assist a family in their home, planning for household needs and preparing for birth.

According to Mary Anne Rowan, assistant coordinator, each volunteer works with one parent or family and commits be-



Ila Shah, a medical technologist at St. Mary's Hospital, checks the blood cholesterol of James Gilbert, a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester, during a July 10 health fair at Rochester's No. 4 School.

Yet until St. Joseph's established the Self-Referral Mammography program, the hospital scheduled women for mammograms only upon referral from their private physicians. In terms of state law, getting an X-ray is akin to buying a prescriptive drug, Wells said, noting that the possible ill effects of radiation exposure compelled the government to regulate the use of X-rays.

Due to a shortage of physicians in the Southern Tier, however, it's difficult for many area women to obtain referral for the procedure, Wells said. Hence, St. Joseph's applied for state approval of a self-referral mammography program. The state has approved similar programs New York City, where many low-income women have no private doctors, she explained.

Last May, the New York State Health Department gave its approval for St. Joseph's to perform mammograms on women over 35 without doctors' referrals. Women now may arrange for the procedure by calling the hospital directly.

Since the program's implementation, Wells has begun traveling to local businesses and community organizations to present a 45-minute slide presentation that explains the importance of mammography in early detection of breast cancer, and encourages women to refer themselves for mammograms.

Just as Wells attempts to arm women with knowledge about breast cancer, Marta Bermudez endeavors to inform low-income clients about their need to avail themselves of health education and preventative care. As director of community health services at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Bermudez began the hospital's community screening and treatment program in June of 1989, with funding from the Rochester Primary Health Care Network.

Bermudez has conducted public sessions

— on an almost weekly basis — to screen, monitor and test cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma and vision and dental problems in nearly 12,000 people since the program began.

Bermudez's department has conducted its programs at churches, schools, businesses, neighboring health agencies and centers. Those the program identifies as needing follow-up services — such as referrals to area doctors or counseling services — are directed to St. Mary's own network of physicians in satellite clinics owned by the hospital, or to other primary-care doctors in the client's area.

Expanding such efforts was the impetus for New York state's recent \$1.47 million grant to St. Mary's. The funds will be used to establish a primary-care development program at the hospital.

In Bermudez's department, state funds will go toward the hiring of four full-time health educators this year and four full-time social workers next year.

Bermudez noted that she looked forward

to using the additional funds available to increase the size of her audience.

"Now we have the means to hire staff and do more outreach," she said, noting that the funds will enable her to expand efforts with elderly clients, who often need information on controlling blood pressure and combating heart disease.

EDITORS' NOTE: For information on the educational and screening efforts of diocesan Catholic hospitals, readers may call the following individuals or message services:

St. Mary's, Rochester — 716/464-3640 for current screening times or regularly mailed announcements. To plan a screening program, call Marta Bermudez at 716/464-3328.

St. James Mercy, Hornell — Nancy Bartell at 607/324-3900, ext. 228, or a 24-hour answering service at 1-800-443-0245.

St. Joseph's, Elmira — Dave Sullivan at 607/737-7810.

Obituary

Sister Mary Inez Livingston, RSM, at 92; longtime teacher enjoyed crafts for sales

Sister Mary Inez Livingston, a member of the Sisters of Mercy for 75 years, died Friday, July 5, 1991, at Lourdes Hall, the infirmary at the Mercy Motherhouse. Her death came at the age of 92, following a long illness.

A native of Homer, N.Y., Sister Inez moved to Rochester when she was a young girl. She converted to Catholicism in her youth, and entered the Sisters of Mercy congregation on June 30, 1916. She professed her perpetual vows on July 6, 1922.

Sister Inez received a teaching certificate from Nazareth Normal School in 1939. She began a 53-year teaching career at Rochester's Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in 1916.

She taught at St. Mary, Rochester; Holy Family, Auburn; St. Charles Borromeo, in Greece, where she was appointed to the opening faculty in 1926; St. Patrick, Elmira; St. James, Rochester, where she was appointed to the opening faculty in 1950; and St. Vincent DePaul, Corning. In her



last teaching position before her 1976 retirement, she served as a teacher and tutor at St. Thomas the Apostle School in Rochester.

"I loved teaching," she said in a 1987 interview with Sister Elaine Kolesnik, RSM, marking her Star Sapphire (70th) jubilee as a Sister of Mercy. "The children ... kept me young."

Only about 4 feet 11 inches tall, Sister Inez wrote in a 1981 reflection on her ministry, "Because I was small in stature, it was easy to come down to the little tots."

In addition to her regular teaching duties, Sister Inez taught summer-school religious education, and often made visitations to the sick and elderly of the parishes. According to Sister Kolesnik, she also enjoyed helping out with the Sisters of Mercy's annual sales — especially dressing dolls in dollar bills. She also liked to read, crochet and make potholders.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Inez was celebrated at the motherhouse chapel on July 8. Interment was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Sister Inez is survived by three nephews, Joseph Bringley, Gerard Bringley and Michael Donlon; and niece, Barbara Mason.