

BRIEF FROM THE CHIEF

September 15, 2008

By Gary Boyd

CEO of Mammoth Hospital

As we approach the fall season there are many happenings to report on and much work to do as we move towards the winter season. Here are just a few of them:

Mammoth Hospital 30 year Anniversary

On September 13, we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of Mammoth Hospital by hosting a celebration and community Health Fair. 40 years ago the Southern Mono Hospital District was formed with the goal of building a hospital in Mammoth Lakes. Shortly thereafter the Southern Mono Hospital Auxiliary was organized and began raising money for the project. 10 years later, on February 10, 1978 Mammoth Hospital opened its doors. Due to heavy snowfall hospital staff was unable to host a grand opening until April. We heard from a number of interesting speakers on that Saturday who talked about the history of Mammoth Hospital, which began as one of the smallest, if not the smallest, acute care hospital in California and has grown into the facility it is today with not only a hospital but 14 clinics from Bridgeport to Bishop. I had the honor of MC'ing the event and would like to thank the speakers for taking the time to share some stories and information with us. They were:

Susan Batchelder: She helped open the doors on February 10, 1978 and was the Assistant Director of Nurses at the time. She was later promoted to Director of Nurses and is currently the Director of Nurses at Northern Inyo Hospital. She had some wonderful memories to share with us including how she crashed into the front doors while cross country skiing to work one morning and how a local community leader covered payroll when the hospital did not have funds to do so.

Nurses Natalie Sanders and Jeri Dostie: They started working here in 1978 along with X-ray Technologist Melinda Foster. In addition to their nursing duties came the responsibility for putting the turkey in the oven on Thanksgiving Day. It was fun just listening to the two reminisce about their 30 year careers here.

Jeanne Standley: Jeanne is one of the founders of the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary and was at the first meeting held to discuss the possibility of building a hospital in our town. The Auxiliary's goal was to open a hospital for their community, so they raised funds for 10 years. To this day Jeanne is always at the SMHD Board meetings giving updates and providing input.

Gary Myers: Gary is a long-time community member and previous CEO for 13 years. Prior to being the hospital's CEO, he was a member of the SMHD Board of Directors. Gary stayed focused on the vision of the hospital and listened to the needs of the community. During his tenure, he over saw the opening of 12 out-

patient clinics, two satellite clinics, the new Family Medicine Clinic, the new SPORT Center, in addition to opening the hospital's 40,000 sq ft. addition in 2007.

Don Sage M.D.: Dr Sage is a retired Neurosurgeon from Southern California and has been on the SMHD Board since 1997. He has been the Chair of the Board for the past 10 years and has overseen much of the growth of Mammoth Hospital, including its expansion and the addition of many fine physicians to the Medical Staff. Dr. Sage gave us some insight on what it was like to oversee the growth over the past 11 years.

Jennie Walker M.D.: Dr. Walker is our Chief of Staff and does an outstanding job. Even though Mammoth Hospital is small, she still has all of the duties that the Chief of Staff at a large hospital has to perform. Dr. Walker reflected on her work here as part on behalf of the Medical Staff.

The Health Fair was very successful with many people from the community coming out to walk through the booths and take advantage of some of the health screenings. We offered discounted lab tests, blood pressure checks, blood sugar tests, and 20 informational booths that allowed participants to test their oxygen levels, obtain information on self preparedness for a disaster, check on the safety of medications, and enjoy many interesting medical presentations that included bike fit, stress management, colon health, and nutrition. In addition we offered many raffle prizes including a chance to win a bone density screening and a mammogram.

Thank you very much to all the staff, physicians, volunteers, and community members who made this all possible. A special thanks to Lori Ciccarelli, Mammoth Hospital Community Relations Director, and her staff for organizing the event. Mammoth Hospital's growth over the past 30 years demonstrates that it is fulfilling its mission, which is to deliver excellent, compassionate health care services for our residents and visitors. Here is to the next 30 years!!

Cafeteria Expansion

The long awaited cafeteria expansion and remodel is being completed the week of September 15. The remodel contains a number of enhancements, including expanding the seating capacity from 17 to 33 and the addition of a salad bar. We cut the ribbon on Monday, September 15 and unveiled its new name, CARES Café. Congratulations to Buddy Strickland, Perioperative Materials Manager, for submitting the name and winning the naming contest. We liked the link between our CARES program here at Mammoth Hospital and our new café. Many thanks to everyone who participated, there were many great suggestions.

Emergency Preparedness Drill August 23

In conjunction with Mono County agencies SMHD participated in the Mountain Defender 2008 Full Scale Disaster Exercise. The scenario was a devastating

earthquake in Mono County, and all agencies were taxed to their limits. We activated the Incident Command Center, simulated evacuation of the medical/surgical unit, received about 20 patients, and then had to evacuate the whole hospital. Though it was only a drill, within a few minutes all of us in the ICC were behaving as though the disaster was a real event. About 40 volunteers signed up to be mass casualty victims. We received some very valuable feedback from the exercise. Overall, it was a positive learning experience that will help provide the framework for further education. Thank you to everyone who participated, but hats off especially to Jaymee Thies, Brad Allan, and Kathy Romagnino for coordinating our preparation efforts and continuing to provide leadership for our Emergency Preparedness efforts.

State Surveys

The status of our state surveys is as follows:

- To date, we have not received a response to our action plans from our May state visits; the Life Safety Survey and the Critical Access Hospital Recertification. We continue to make changes, implement new policies and procedures, and monitor our various activities.
- On August 18th we received the results of our Licensure Survey, which was conducted in conjunction with the other State surveys in May. Many of the areas identified were previously identified on the recertification surveys and have previously been addressed. A plan of correction was sent to the State on August 28th.

Auxiliary Capital Purchases

Once again I would like to thank the Auxiliary for approving the purchase of capital equipment. At their August Board meeting they voted to buy two pieces of equipment for the laboratory, which are the Tissue Processor and Microtome Slicer. Both are used in Histology, which is the study of tissues, and specifically are used to slice and process specimens from surgical patients. Currently specimens are sent offsite, and testing while the patient is still in the operating room will improve care. We very much thank the Auxiliary for their support.

California State Budget

As I write this, California has gone 75+ days without an approved state budget. The impact this is having on all health care providers and Mammoth Hospital is, beginning about August 1, we have not been paid for providing services to our MediCal patients. We are receiving IOU's. When the budget is finally approved we will be paid in full, but it is impacting our cash flow. While we are managing at this time, many providers in the state are having to take out loans against their IOU's to pay their bills and some hospitals are struggling to make their payroll. I urge you to contact our State Senator Dave Cox and our Assemblyman Tom Berryhill via voice message, email, letter, or fax. Their contact information can be found at the Legislative's Counsel's website at

www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html. Thank you for your efforts on this important issue.

Staff Recognition

At the August Management Meeting, we recognized Gail Everhart, Revenue Cycle Director, for her work that led to the first Leadership Institute. Earlier this year Gail took the initiative to purchase and distribute copies of the book, Hardwiring Excellence. She took the initiative to get us to the next step by advocating for an offsite meeting, which culminated in our July Leadership Institute. We thank Gail for her persistence in getting this initiative started, which will reap rewards for all staff.

Financials

For the month of July, SMHD experienced a loss compared to an operating gain budgeted. While revenue was at budget, expenses were over budget due to increase benefit utilization, contract services being over budget, and supplies being over budget. We are reviewing all departments' performance to find ways to improve our financial performance as we go into "shoulder" season.

A main focus will be to improve our Revenue Cycle performance. We have made great progress over the past 12-14 months, but our Accounts Receivable has been holding the past 3 months at about 80 – 85 days, compared to our goal of 66 days. Every additional day we can collect puts revenue into our savings account. There are a number of initiatives that have been implemented and it is critical to SMHD's success that we meet and exceed our goal. This will be a major focus of mine in the coming weeks and I will report more on this issue in upcoming briefs.

Thank you for your time and attention, if you have any comments or questions please contact me.

Gary Boyd