

Preparing for death at HDH

Huronia District Hospital recognizes that not every person who is admitted will go home. A program addressing the needs



Newman

of the terminally-ill patient and the patient's family started officially at the end of May.

A separate unit for the dying — a palliative care unit — and extension of care for the dying and their families into the community, are long-term goals.

The hospital still is feeling its way in this new area. Accepting that a patient will die is a reversal of the usual role of a hospital, nursing project co-ordinator Helen Newman says.

A Montreal hospital pioneered palliative care in Canada about eight years ago. Many of the larger

Canadian hospitals have a palliative care program combined with an oncology program. People with respiratory diseases and multiple sclerosis will benefit from palliative care as well as people dying of cancer.

Three years ago some of the Auxiliary to Huronia District Hospital volunteers offered to visit dying patients. More volunteers came forward to spend time with dying patients and with their families. These volunteers were taught some of the aspects of palliative care.

In the fall of 1987 planning of a formal education

program for palliative volunteers began.

"Death in our society is very difficult to talk about," Newman said. Conflicts in the family might be a problem; help might be needed in practical matters such as planning the funeral and writing a will. Palliative care includes caring for emotional and spiritual needs as well as making the remainder of the dying person's life as comfortable as possible.

The patient is the most important person. "We try to direct our help wherever their need is," Newman said.

All departments of the hospital are involved in the palliative care program. If a patient doesn't like the food, the dietary department will do what it can. A multidisciplinary approach, in which the patient's doctor remains the central figure, is being applied, Newman said.

In the fall a formal education program for palliative volunteers will begin. Groups including the Cancer Society, Red Cross and the Ministerial Association will be invited.

Doctors, nurses and volunteers are the three sides of the palliative care team triangle. Volunteers who give "quiet support" are important. The presence of another, caring person who visits for

several hours a day, perhaps doing no more than sitting by the bed, is appreciated by the dying patient.

Newman's hope is that the palliative care program will expand so that people who want to die at home, or stay at home as long as

possible, can do so with the help of a palliative care network. In that scenario the hospital's role would be symptom control.

'Funding crunch' means hospitals must share more

The Midland and Penetanguishene hospitals share equipment. Now the details of sharing equipment and programs through the next 10 years are being formalized in long range plans required by the Ministry of Health.

The Huronia District Hospital board has approved



Key

ed a long range plan covering from two to 10 years. That plan includes joint plans with Penetanguishene General Hospital, which has its

own long range plan.

Because of the "funding crunch," the two hospitals are being careful about not duplicating services, Gord Key, HDH's administrator, said.

(The provincial government has told Ontario hospitals to balance their budgets this year, a departure from previous years when deficits were the norm rather than the exception.)

Ultrasound equipment is an example of something the hospitals already share. The equipment is at one hospital for half of the week, and at the other for the rest of the week. One hospital's technician replaces the other hospital's technician when holidays are taken.

The two hospitals also share stress test equipment, as well as pharmacy, laundry and laboratory services, Key said.

The HDH long range plan will be passed by the Simcoe County District

Health Council to the Ministry of Health. The hospital has to have a long range plan to qualify for provincial grants. A master program is next. The master program will lead to a master plan.

The David S. Coulson company was hired to write the long range plan. It will write the master program too.

Huronia District Hospital will be inspected on Sept. 12 and 13. Canadian hospitals are inspected and rated once every two or three years. Hospitals with the highest accreditation, such as HDH, are inspected every three years.

Meanwhile, pledges to the high profile HDH capital campaign stand at \$2,263,260. Donations expected from the Midland Rotary Club and several other donors will put the total over the \$2.3 million mark, Key expects. The campaign target was \$2 million.

Diabetes rampant on Christian Island

Christian Island residents composed half of all of the diabetes patients seen at Huronia District Hospital through the past eight months.

The hospital wants to open a diabetes clinic on the island. A survey in 1975 suggested that eight per cent of the island's residents were diabetics.

Intermarriage is a likely reason for the higher incidence of diabetes in the island's population. Members of the Beausoleil Band generally marry other Band members.

Application has been made by HDH for funding of \$14,000 to the Ministry of Health, through the Sim-

coe County District Health Council.

Proposed is a clinic on the island open one morning a week for 16 weeks. Visits to the island would drop to twice a month thereafter.

"Diabetes looks like a simple disease but underneath it's real sneaky," Helen Newman, HDH's nursing project co-ordinator, said.

Christian Island residents coming to HDH either ride in a health vehicle which makes trips four days a week, or hire a taxi, she said. Visiting the hospital because of diabetes means more than one trip.

If funding for the clinic is approved, residents will be tested; the risk of having diabetes will be explained; measures to take to prevent and to control diabetes will be explained.

The pregnancy of a woman with diabetes is much more complicated than for a woman without diabetes, Newman said.

The opportunity would be taken to discuss society-wide health problems including AIDS and smoking.

A program of education about diabetes started at HDH last November. The large percentage of referrals who are from Christian Island was noted.



Third place

Lori White is carrying the number four but she took third place in a bikini contest held Saturday afternoon in the Huronia Mall. The show's prizes were donated by the Phoenix Jewelry Co. (\$100 gift cer-

tificate), Coach and The Athlete (\$50 gift certificate) and Dial-a-Movie (a year's membership). First place went to Meredith Leitch.