

Chicago hospital faces dilemma

# Health care plan in progress

United Press International  
CHICAGO—In the late Paddy Chayefsky's satirical film, "The Hospital," a harried clerk is seen trying around an emergency room seeking billing information from impoverished sick people. "You can't be treated unless I have your insurance number," she

"There was a philosophy that Cook County Hospital was a free hospital," said William Doyle, chief administrative officer for the county. "It isn't a free hospital. It can't be. The taxpayers can't afford it. There are people being treated there who can well afford to pay,

**The issue is politically sensitive. The concept of forcing the poor and elderly to pay more than half their income for hospital care is an albatross no elected official wants around his neck.**

and they are going to have to pay." The issue is politically sensitive. The concept of forcing the poor and elderly to pay more than half their income for hospital care is an albatross no elected official wants around his neck.

A coalition of civic and activist groups has expressed outrage that patients who rely on County Hospital — most of whom are black or elderly — will be harassed into paying bills they cannot afford.

"It is like squeezing blood from a turnip," said Dr. Quentin Young, former chief of the hospital's Department of Medicine. "We can't destroy 100 years of tradition under this guise."

Young sees the problem spreading to other major urban care facilities faced with a similar dilemma.

"The Hyatt people, coming from California, ought to know better — that they are having a possibility of destroying the medical care system," Young added. "What they are proposing is unconscionable."

In Los Angeles, a similar program was adopted two years ago. Critics charge that it brought in only 10 cents of every dollar, a figure further diminished by the taxpayers' cost to support collection agencies.

"It is ludicrous to pay \$6 million, or nearly 10,000 days of hospital care, to a consultant firm over three years to have them propose that a family of four in the city of Chicago with an income of \$15,000 per year pay 100 percent of their hospital care," said state Sen. Richard Newhouse, D-Chicago.

However, Liston A. Witherill, president and project director for Hyatt, defended the proposal. He said \$900,000 was spent last year

in Cook County to recover \$5 million — a figure he said would increase if the ability-to-pay plan is adopted along with increased efforts to get patients to pay their bills.

Witherill calls the "patient economic obligation schedule" developed by Hyatt the most "fair and equitable way" to bill patients — and prevent Cook County Hospital from having to close.

"Under our amended plan, persons with gross annual incomes of less than \$7,000 would have zero percent obligation. The scale and responsibility increases depending upon the size of the family and the amount of money earned," he said.

Critics, like Susan McDermott, a registered nurse and president of the local unit of the Illinois Nurses Association, said the scale is unrealistic in today's inflationary economy.

"An average hospital stay is nine days. At \$630 per day that's \$5,670. How can you expect a family of four earning just over \$15,000 a year to pay \$150 a month for 36 months?" McDermott asked. "Consider the fact that we see many of the same patients return several times in a

if they have no insurance. It is this scenario that mirrors Chayefsky's movie, and has doctors worried.

"The determination of who needs emergency versus nonemergency care can only be made by a doctor, not by an administrator," said Dr. Kathleen Fagan of CCH. "And it can only be made after the doctor sees the patient. We object to any proposal that would have our patients seeing a financial interviewer before they see a doctor."

The plan is being studied by a committee which will make a recommendation to the full board before it can be adopted.

John Stroger Jr., committee chairman, said despite the criticism, the concept is a "humane" attempt to collect money from those who can afford to pay for medical care.

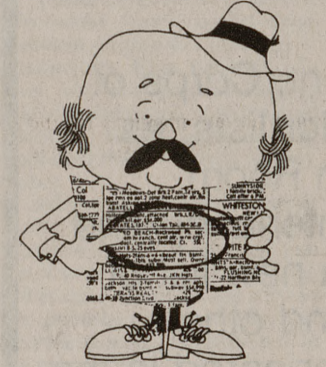
"The original concept of Cook County Hospital, to treat everyone that walks through the door, will be maintained," Stroger said.

One unresolved question is how much money will be generated by the ability to pay plan.

"We're not going to get rich by it," Witherill said.

**"It isn't a free hospital. It can't be. The taxpayers can't afford it. There are people being treated there who can well afford to pay, and they are going to have to pay." — William Doyle, chief administrative officer for Cook County.**

three-year period. Their bills would never stop." Hyatt's proposal will require patients to provide adequate identification and proof of income



BATTALION CLASSIFIEDS  
CALL 845-2611

# Machine allows surgery for religious group

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Doctors are using a laboratory machine that separates blood into its component parts to help Jehovah's Witnesses through cancer surgery they once might have refused.

Members of the Jehovah's Witness faith believe as part of their religious training that their blood should remain in constant contact with their bodies. In the past, that could not be accomplished during operations and many people of that faith have refused necessary surgery and died.

Two staff members at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer and Tumor Institute came up with the idea of using the blood separator machine in the operating room to help Jehovah's Witnesses circumvent their concerns.

Dr. Benjamin Lichtiger, director of the blood bank at M.D. Anderson, noted that the machines remove blood from the body at one rate and simultaneously return it at a different rate. Because of the time lapse in returning the blood into the body, the separator can build up a reservoir outside the patient's body during surgery and reinfuse it as needed.

By utilizing the machine, the blood remains in constant contact with the body, a factor vital to its use in treating Jehovah's Witnesses, doctors said.

The machine was first used several weeks ago in an operation performed by gynecologist Dr. Jan Seski on a 21-year-old patient who needed to have a tumor removed from her pelvis.

"Because she was a Jehovah's Witness, he was concerned about the potential loss of blood

during the operation," said Dr. Jaques Dupuis, the anesthesiologist.

Dupuis said he wanted to set up a closed loop recirculating system on the patient to pump the patient's blood into multiple anti-coagulant bags, dilute it and then reinfuse the blood back into the patient.

But, instead Lichtiger suggested the blood separator, which could do what Dupuis wanted, plus had the added ability to store separately the platelets and plasma, which can be infused after surgery when most needed.

Although there is some risk in using the separator during the operation, Dupuis said it is far less than having the surgery performed if blood transfusions cannot be administered.

"The risks are related directly to the amount of blood lost during surgery," he said.

Lichtiger said the potential use of the blood cell separator is widespread, because 70 percent of the blood banks in the United States have the type of machine in their laboratories.

Doctors at M.D. Anderson have tried the separator in five different operations in recent months. Although the results vary because each patient was at a different phase of cancer treatment, doctors were able to preserve precious blood during the operations.

And the surgical benefits of cell separators are not limited to Jehovah's Witnesses, doctors said. Patients with rare blood types, for whom blood might not be readily available, could use them along with patients who run risks of contracting post-transfusion hepatitis.

## THE COWBOY

- Firewater
- Dancing
- Country Music
- People Watching
- Billiards (By the Hour)
- Electronic Games

**HOURS:** Mon.-Fri. 5-12 p.m.  
Sat. 5 p.m.-1 a.m.

**COWBOY HAPPY HOUR!**  
Monday-Saturday 5 p.m. 'til 7 p.m.  
**ALL DRINKS 1/2 PRICE!**

**2820 Finfeather in Bryan • 775-0494**  
(Where Bryan and College Station Come Together)

**"THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE TONIGHT!"**

**WELCOME BACK AGS**

For all the party kegs you want this fall...

**J.J.'S Wholesale Warehouse**  
**822-1042**  
**779-1042**

**20 TYPES OF BEER IN PARTY KEGS OR RETURNABLE BOTTLES LIQUOR BY THE CASE**

**1219 NORTH TEXAS**

**HAVING A PARTY?... LET J. J. SUPPLY YOU!!**

Joe Johnny Ruffino  
Class of '73

**8** Saturday August 1981

8:00	
8:30	
9:00	
9:30	
10:00	
10:30	
11:00	
11:30	
12:00	
1:00	
1:30	
2:00	
2:30	
3:00	
3:30	
4:00	
4:30	
5:00	

220 Saturday, August 8 145

**More lanes. Less waiting. Now open Saturdays.**

Now Brazos Savings' drive-thru lanes are open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. to serve our customers. Weekday hours at the motor bank have been adjusted to 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Now it's even more convenient to make a deposit, cash a check, withdraw savings or make payments from your car.

We have 8 lanes in the middle of town (2800 Texas Avenue) and 4 lanes in College Station (Texas Avenue at Southwest Parkway) and 1 in downtown Bryan (114 S. Bryan Street) — more than any other financial institution in the area. All are open on Saturday (except downtown Bryan).

For fast, convenient banking from your car, come to Brazos Savings. We have more lanes and less waiting. And now we're open on Saturdays.

**BRAZOS Savings**

Home Office Bryan, TX