

ST. JOSEPH'S GENERAL HOSPITAL

This past year St. Joseph's experienced another busy year in its continuing development. Despite significant challenges, there were many important achievements.

New well qualified medical specialists were attracted to fill retirements and growth needs. With them came new techniques, repatriated services and new opportunities to serve.

Emergency Room physicians migrated toward fully dedicated ER specialists and achieved a trial contract with substantial financial support from Vancouver Island Health Authority and St. Joseph's. We experienced the benefit of increased expertise in coverage and hope for a successful resolution in the fall of 2006.

Well trained family practitioners, although we could use several more, have come to practice in the Valley. Experienced managers were recruited for Plant Maintenance, and Materiels Management/Housekeeping Services to fill retirements and have initiated many items, the fruits of which will be even more evident in 2006/07. There were trial reorganizations in Nursing leadership and those are under review.

Vancouver Island Health Authority's graduate nurse program provided eleven new grads to St. Joseph's for which we are very grateful. In addition, the undergraduate program also proved to be quite beneficial and will, in the long term, provide nurses coming out of training at North Island College with significantly more hospital experience in their resume.

Despite these programs, we experienced many nursing shortages and staffing challenges due to illness, increasing capacity requirements and patient acuity.

Re-introduction of the nursing workload tool supporting increased staffing levels will lead to a more balanced approach to staffing in 2006/07; which we hope that the Vancouver Island Health Authority will fully support.

Funding for additional joints was again sustained this past year improving the level of service to the Valley while activity in other areas such as cataract surgery, urology and general surgery all increased.

Several program improvements for infection control, surgical services, rehab services, diagnostic imaging and psychiatry were introduced. Work is underway in several other areas where we feel attention due to growth and changing standards are required.

Information technology proceeded to gain ground with the focus on support for the primary care physician and transfer of essential information electronically. To that end, physician access to Pharmanet has been produced by us through the Concierge portal currently used to electronically provide access to the laboratory, diagnostic imaging, and all matters that flow through our transcription services. Minor setbacks in time and cost were a result of British Columbia's legislative response to the *US Patriot Act* requiring us to repatriate systems that we have been running remotely in the United States.

In 2006/07 we look forward to increasing our installation of new information systems in OR Booking and admission/discharges that the Vancouver Island Health Authority is beginning to roll out across the Island and which will benefit not only ourselves but all patients and providers who have a relationship with St. Joseph's.

Work proceeded on several (32) in-house continuous improvement projects ranging from steam generation to an assessment suite in Rehabilitation, a Snoezelen Room in ECU, to the completion of the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit. These are necessary to keep our facility current to be capable of supporting the level of care we are providing.

Several capital equipment purchases were made over the year enabling our physicians and staff to better utilize their expertise as well as to replace equipment that has been extended to its maximum life span by a diligent Biomedical Department. We look forward to installation this fall of our new state of the art LED operating theatre lights on back order from last February.

Much work was done in preparation for 2006/07 on a number of fronts. With resources approved for patient flow areas in 2006/07, there will be a number of

changes evident by late fall beginning with a new Nuclear Medicine Unit and the relocation of Chemotherapy.

Overshadowing all, however, was the impact of the ALC's on acute capacity from Emergency Room to Operating Room to Surgical Day Care, to wards and the Intensive Care Unit. We are heartened that the Vancouver Island Health Authority has rightly made plans to address this and look forward to developments on both community services as well as the facility development side. However, from all evidence we will likely experience two more years of extreme difficulty.

Our contribution to the planning of regional health services as a provider and advocate has been to advise the Vancouver Island Health Authority on the potential and infrastructure capability of our site along with our thoughts on how the community would respond. In return, they have provided ample opportunity for input for our Board, Administration, physicians, staff and volunteers. This has been appreciated.

2006/07 holds great promise if we can address our Alternative Level of Care numbers, the staffing levels and funding issues all of which we are hopeful we can work through with VIHA. We anticipate activity increases in all diagnostic treatment and rehabilitation departments. Mental health, psychiatry outpatients and telemental health are poised for activity growth while residential care continues to receive ever more complex residents with good will.

I would like to extend my appreciation at this time to Bishop Gagnon and the Diocese of Victoria for their continued support of the Church's Health Care Ministry through St. Joseph's. To the Board of Directors and in particular Ron Philip as Chair for continued support, wise direction and sensitive interpretation of community needs. To our administrative team of Eric Macdonald, Sheila Cruikshank, Sandy Woiden, Don Tait, Dr. Don Blacklock, Dr. Don Fockler, Gordon Carter and our administrative assistants of Wendy Ostapovich, Corrie Marles, Cheryl McMahon, Toni Kay, Tami Dow, Bev Anderson and Janice Wagemann my deepest appreciation for hard work and continued dedication to the mission and values of St. Joseph's. We regret that Sheila Cruikshank resigned this spring and we will miss her energy and commitment. She put in long hours of work and we wish her well.

I would like to extend my appreciation as well to Dr. Hartman and the medical staff for continued attempts to improve the quality of the medical staff's practice. It is not

an easy thing to self-regulate independent medical staff and challenge colleagues who you work with on a daily basis yet have no direct control over. Dr. Hartman has done this with great skill.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Foundation, the Hospital Auxiliary, and our over 700 volunteers who provide tremendous community support to St. Joseph's. We would be a much poorer organization without your contribution.

As this is being presented after the end of the year, I would also like to extend my appreciation to Heather Dalziel for filling in as Vice President of Patient Care and Quality Management until such time as a replacement is recruited.

In closing, I also wish to extend our thanks to the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Their consultants have been most helpful, and the senior management encouraging. Dr. Lowther, Mr. Mike Conroy and the President and CEO, Howard Waldner, have been receptive to our suggestions, respectful of our role, status and requirements. We believe they are genuinely interested in advancing health care services for the Comox Valley in concert with the whole of Vancouver Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Pontus
President & CEO