

ST. JOSEPH'S GENERAL HOSPITAL

Committee: Joint Conference Committee

Co-Chair: Al Astles
Dr. Dennis Hartman

Committee Members: Dr. Laura Bell
Dr. Justin Chau
Heather Dalziel
Cynthia Davies
Dr. D. Fockler
Fabian Forgeron
Eric Macdonald
Greg Osborne
Michael Pontus
Barbara Price
Dr. Trace Thomas
Dr. Louise Young

At the request of the President of the Medical Staff, Dr. Dennis Hartman, a Joint Conference was convened on June 6, 2006 with members of St. Joseph's Hospital Board and the Medical Advisory Committee in attendance.

Each of the Medical Staff related issues and concerns in their respective departments that include inadequate staffing and funding levels, nurse manager supervision and overcrowding primarily due to the high number (24 - 28) of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) patients awaiting placement in long term care facilities who are occupying acute care beds. The overcrowding situation is a critical concern as it creates pressures on staff throughout the hospital who often must respond to the needs of up to 17 patients crowded in the Emergency Room hallways. While additional staff is provided in such situations, it causes a shortfall of trained and experienced personnel to maintain other critical services such as monitoring ventilator patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and cancellation of scheduled surgeries.

While Dr. Hartman is stepping down as President of the Medical Staff, he is commended for his diligence and professionalism to keep the hospital Board apprised of medical staff concerns during his tenure. His initiative to promote the

Joint Conference Committee forum was very well received by the Board and there was a general consensus by staff and the Board that a closer working relationship should be established in light of the ongoing discussions concerning the delivery of health care to the north island communities currently under review by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA). To continue this spirit of cooperation, it was recommended that the Joint Conference Committee meet semi-annually to focus our efforts in the same direction with the aim to improve the quality of patient care and morale within the hospital. In this vein, it was agreed that employee's who perform extraordinarily well under stressful conditions should receive suitable recognition from the Board in writing based on recommendations from the medical staff and senior management of the hospital when deemed appropriate.

In summary, thanks to the efforts of the President and CEO, Michael Pontus, and the senior management of the hospital, significant progress has been made over the past few years to improve the quality and range of medical services provided by St. Joseph's General Hospital. It should be noted the addition of a Nuclear Medicine Department and the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit this year are but two examples of this progress. As well, we are fortunate to have a devoted medical and nursing staff that consistently shows the highest standard of care and concern for their patients. However, the current shortage of long term care facilities in the Comox Valley remains problematic and is seriously impacting on the in-patient capability of the hospital. It is believed the Joint Committee forum will strive to develop a coordinated strategy to address these concerns both internally and through consultation with VIHA and other agencies when additional resources are required.

July 17, 2006

Al Astles
Vice-Chairman