



Stat

White Memorial
Medical Center
— Adventist
Health

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Changes in Medicare Documentation

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed a new payment system for Medicare patients, to better align payment levels with patient acuity and severity of illness. There are 745 new Medicare-Severity DRGs (MS-DRG) which replace the current 538 DRGs. Additionally, Medicare has created three tiers of payment, based on documentation of qualifying complications or co-morbidities. Medicare has also lowered payment for conditions not present on admission, and it will no longer pay for preventable conditions, such as hospital-acquired catheter infections, falls with injuries, and decubitus ulcers.

Without accurate, specific and detailed physician documentation that takes into consideration these changes, the hospital stands to lose a significant amount in Medicare reimbursement. The same changes will apply to physician office practices starting in 2009.

A multi-disciplinary team, spearheaded by **Mara Bryant**, director of Organizational Performance and strongly championed by **Azmy Ghaly, MD**, has met over the course of several months and developed tools to aid the hospital in retaining this potentially lost revenue. The hospital has already saved \$60,000 in Medicare reimbursement by using these new tools.

The tools include new progress notes forms to aid physicians in proper documentation. The new

TOP STORY

Cleft Palate Program Honors Supporters

Elected officials, WMMC physicians, local donors and dozens of happy, lively children celebrated the growth of the White Memorial Cleft Palate program at a colorful donor appreciation luncheon June 12.

The event was held to honor those who have provided support for the hospital and the cleft palate program. Speakers included

Los Angeles County Supervisor **Gloria Molina**; Los Angeles City Councilman **Jose Huizar**; Mexican Consul General **Juan Marcos Gutierrez-Gonzalez**; **Allan Perry, Jr. MD**, medical director

of the cleft palate program; **Dick Sanders**, chair of the White Memorial Charitable Foundation Board of Directors; and **Neomia Hancock**, mother of cleft palate patient Alexander, whose heartwarming story was told in the May 30 issue of STAT.



Dr. Allan Perry, Jr. and a cleft palate patient.

The Charitable Foundation is embarking upon a campaign to raise funds to further support the cleft palate program.

The County of Los Angeles was one of the original donors of the Rainbow Children's Center building project, with a \$200,000 contribution several years ago, secured by Supervisor Molina. The city of Los

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Fifth Class Of TELACU Nurses Graduate



The fifth class of nurses to graduate from Rio Hondo College since White Memorial Medical Center and TELACU developed a scholarship program in 2003 celebrated their accomplishment at the end of May. The scholarships are provided to 10

students each year from the East Los Angeles community who are pursuing an R.N. degree. The scholarship monies help the students with books, tuition, living expenses, computer equipment and other needs so they can concentrate on their schooling at Rio Hondo. Each recipient met financial need and other criteria, and was selected after a thorough application and interviewing process. Four of the nurses who graduated have now entered the WMMC RN Residency Program, which begins its next session on July 7.

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Patient Complaints Spur Improvements

In response to patient requests, the hospital is installing remote controlled lighting in patient rooms, beginning on 4North/Med-Surg. Rooms will have small remote controls tethered to the wall by each bed, which the patient can use to turn on and off the room light and their individual reading light.

“The patients’ reading lights are behind the bed on the wall, and many patients – especially those who have just had surgery – can’t reach them,” said Albert Deininger, vice president of Construction and Facilities. “The patient has to call the nurse and then wait for her to come in and turn on or off the light.”

The system will begin installation on 4North in about two weeks. If the system works well, it will then be installed one unit at a time throughout the rest of the hospital, in all units except ICU, PICU, Behavioral Medicine and Pediatrics.

Fireworks Safety

As part of the hospital’s ongoing outreach to the community, WMMC helped educate local families about the dangers of fireworks at a safety event held June 9 at the Hollenbeck Youth Center. Emergency Room physician **Scott Jacobs, MD** spoke to more than 30 parents and children about the dangers of using fireworks, and gave tips on how to avoid being burned by illegal fireworks. The consequences of not being safe were graphically displayed on a poster prepared by Community Outreach Coordinator **Italia Carmona**, who helped organize the event with Community Relations Officer **Joe Coria**. The Los Angeles Fire Department and Police Department also attended, reminding families that fireworks are illegal in Los Angeles county. L.A. Police Chief **William Bratton** presented a new bike to one lucky child who participated in the gift drawing. There were goody bags for the rest of the children and ice pops for everyone at the event.

White Memorial Orthopedists Are Top Docs

Kevin Pelton, MD, and **Kathleen Savage, MD**, orthopedic surgeons at White Memorial Medical Center, were listed in this year’s Top Docs issue of Pasadena Magazine.

“We’re honored by this recognition,” said Dr. Savage, “Our goal has always been to bring together the best technology and expertise available to help our patients get back to their preferred lifestyles quickly.”

Pasadena Magazine surveyed about 3,000 medical professionals in Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley to name the best doctors in the area. These professionals voted via online survey for their most esteemed physicians in more than 40 specialties. The survey resulted in a roster of key doctors named by their peers as the best of the best in their respective fields. Drs. Pelton and Savage were

named among the best orthopedic surgeons.

Drs. Pelton and Savage have practiced at the Centers for Orthopedic Care at White Memorial for more than five years collectively. They specialize in general orthopedic surgery, joint replacements, sports medicine and trauma surgery.

“We thank the doctors who voted for us for their support,” said Dr. Pelton. “We know that doctors who

refer to us put their reputation on the line, and we work hard to make sure their patients have the best experience possible.”

Dr. Pelton graduated from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and Dr. Savage graduated from the USC Keck School of Medicine. Each of these doctors completed a residency in orthopedic surgery at LAC-USC Medical Center.



Kevin Pelton, MD, and **Kathleen Savage, MD**.

Second Symposium A Success

More than 40 White Memorial nurses attended the second “Care of the Surgical Patient” symposium, held June 2-3 at the California Endowment Center. Ten physicians gave of their time to participate in the two-day event; speakers included **Faisal Khan, MD**; **Leroy Reese, MD**; **Robert Pereyra, MD**; **Kathleen Savage, MD**; **On Wang, MD**; **Josif Borovic, MD**; **Chasity Jennings-Nunez, MD**; **Chris Hiomura, MD**;

Laurence Spencer-Smith, MD; and **Gary Brown, MD**. The physicians spoke on a wide range of topics, including “National Surgical Care Improvement Initiatives,” pain management, ethics, and much more.



First Health: Our Partner In Cost-Effective Medical Care

No one wants to think about coping with a life-threatening illness or an accident requiring hospitalization and surgery. It's reassuring to know that Adventist Health major medical benefits are in place protecting families from financial catastrophe and affording some peace of mind.

Nevertheless, mainstream health coverage jargon includes unfamiliar phrases like:

- Medical necessity
- Utilization review
- Cost containment

Do those phrases confuse you? Does it concern you to think that a third party may have a say-so about the necessity of your surgery? What if a hospital stay is not authorized? These important questions deserve answers.

Managed Care Is Important

When unnecessary health care services are not detected and eliminated costs go sky-high. But smart health care consumers know that even necessary costs must be managed, too. Clearly, it's important to sort through available alternatives and choose the most cost-effective route to quality health care.

We Have A Partner

This is where a good managed-care partner can help. Adventist Health has a contract with First Health, whose parent company is Coventry, to provide us with their preferred provider organization (PPO), case management and utilization review. On the back of your health plan ID card you will see that pre-certification is necessary before receiving some health care services. Your card states that you are responsible to have your

First Health... continued on page 4

Cleft Palate... continued from front page

Angeles, with Councilmember Huizar representing Boyle Heights, gave two grants for a total of \$375,000 to complete the second floor of the Rainbow Children's Center, which is now the

home of the Cleft Palate program. The William H. Tilley Family Foundation and Shakey's Restaurants made a very generous donation of \$5,000, with

Shakey's providing the pizzas for lunch and gift bags for the children. The Tilley family has used White Memorial for three generations, receiving exceptional and life-saving care. The family was featured in a hospital ad campaign last year.



Supervisor Molina speaks at the event

Dr. Perry is one of the most important reasons for the cleft palate program's success. He has served as medical director of the program for many years, giving of his time and

expertise in reconstructive surgery to help these tiny patients who have no where else to turn.

"Without the support provided by our physicians, our elected leaders, our

community and our donors, the cleft palate program would not exist as it does today," said President & CEO **Beth Zachary**. "This program is so important to children and families with cleft palate, who would otherwise suffer life-long handicaps."

Campus Construction Progressing on Schedule

Employees, physicians and visitors alike are marveling at the new look of our campus, now that the Main and West buildings have been demolished.

In fact, the demolition is still underway. Crews are busy demolishing the basement walls of old Main building and disposing



of the debris. The West building has been demolished to the first floor level. When the utilities now running through the West building to the North building have been re-routed, the West building will continue demolition to the basement floor. When that's completed, crews will punch holes in the concrete flooring to allow water drainage, but the basement floors will not be taken out. After that, the next step is to backfill the large holes where both building once stood.

All this will take several more months. Once the backfilled holes have been smoothed and prepared for construction, crews will dig foundations for the hospital's new lobby, chapel and front entryway. The actual construction of these structures will follow. Construction is currently estimated for final completion at the end of 2009.

Another recent development is the addition of signage to the outside walls of the specialty care tower. Signage has been added to the South, West and East faces of the building, and is now going up on the North face. The signs will be lit at night, and visible from downtown, the freeway, and various parts of our community.



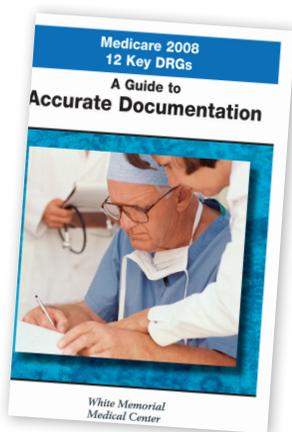
progress notes will be available in wall racks on all adult med-surg units, and in the ED, beginning in early July. Please familiarize yourself with the location of these progress notes, to help physicians who are trying to locate them. All physicians should now be using these new progress notes forms.

A new pocket booklet has also been prepared and distributed to physicians. The booklet reflects what the progress notes forms look like. Booklets are available from **Chariya Slogoski**, care manager, or **Hana Norris**, PPS coordinator.

Training and education of physicians is also underway. In addition, both Chariya and medical coder **Lorraine Vasquez** will be on the units to assist physicians in

utilizing the new booklets and progress notes.

Recognition and thanks go to the team that has developed the tools and approach to this critical initiative. In addition to Mara, Dr. Ghaly (who never missed a meeting), Lorraine, Chariya, and Hana, participants were **Betty Ariga**, coordinator, Medical Coding; and **Nadia Kostrikin**, APC coordinator, Patient Financial Services.



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health care provider call First Health before the following services are performed:

Any hospitalization; outpatient surgery; complex radiology services, such as MRI or CT Scan; or for a serious health condition (an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition requiring inpatient care and/or continuing treatment by a health care provider). This includes prenatal care. Upon review, First Health may determine that pre-certification is not necessary.

The following services do not require pre-certification:

Office visits; physical therapy and rehabilitation services; outpatient mental/nervous visits; vision therapy; chiropractic care; lab work; basic x-rays; simple surgeries, such as ingrown toenails, wart/mole removal, laceration repair. Also not requiring pre-certification are preventative screenings, such as mammograms, PSAs, yearly exams, screening colonoscopies.

First Health has intake managers, RNs, physicians and specialists who evaluate hospitalizations, surgeries, and non-routine outpatient services in order to help identify unnecessary medical procedures based on national standards such as the Interqual criteria. They may also negotiate reasonable fees and point out alternative treatment methods. First Health assists you in making informed decisions about your medical care. They detect and eliminate wasteful excessive charges. They save money—for your medical plan and for you.

This savings is important and necessary, because the cost of the health plan continues to rise annually and is currently about \$10 M. For employees and dependents, the most recent annual cost was about \$9M. As you can see, partners such as First Health are very valuable to us as we try to control the cost of the plan.

If you have questions about First Health or our health plan, please contact the Benefits Specialist at extension 1685.

Our Mission

As a Seventh-day Adventist medical center, we are a family of caring professionals serving our community with:

- A passion for excellence
- A spirit of Christian service
- A commitment to medical education

Our Guiding Principles

As a White Memorial employee, I pledge to uphold the hospital's values as a Christian organization, by living these six Guiding Principles as I do my job every day:

- I will reach for the highest standards in my work
- I will provide services that my customers say are excellent
- I will treat others with the same compassion and respect I would want my family to experience
- I will take personal responsibility to ensure the safety of patients, co-workers and all others I come into contact with while at work.
- I will use all resources responsibly and efficiently
- I will be honest in all things

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White Memorial Medical Center is a member of Adventist Health. Write us at: 1720 Cesar E. Chavez Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90033; or call (323) 268-5000.

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