

# In emergency, they provide patient service

By Sherry Kahan  
staff writer

**E**MOTIONS ARE strong and close to the surface in hospital emergency rooms. Administrators of Botsford Hospital know this. They have taken steps to make sure that in their emergency room there is always someone to talk to, someone trained to listen and help. Someone like Kathy Morgan of Dearborn Township.

"We try to give emotional support to the patient and the family," said Mor-

gan, who has a bachelor's degree in social work from Michigan State University. "People seem to want to talk. I think they're glad to have a social worker there to listen to them and be with them."

Michele Dombrowski of Dearborn Heights also is assigned to emergency services as a social worker.

"Listening is sometimes the most important thing we can do," she said. "We are supportive, we talk about what might take place next, and try to give them a perspective on what is happening. We're trained to assess people's

needs on an individual basis."

The Farmington Hills osteopathic hospital has made a commitment to those who use its emergency facility by providing the 24-hour services of a social worker. According to its director of social services, Barbara Lang, it is the only area hospital which has made the emergency room the main assignment of for some of its social workers. She added that it is the only hospital whose social workers provide 24-hour emergency room service.

"THE ADMINISTRATION and myself as well felt that family members and patients in the emergency room need the services of a social worker," said Lang. "She can act as a liaison between them and the physician. She can keep the family abreast of the patient's medical condition. She can inform them if he is in the lab or X-ray. She also can help the family and patient deal with emotions."

Six social workers are on the staff, three full-time and three part-time.

Since January 1981, when the program started, Morgan has worked part-time in the emergency room. Like Dombrowski she is on the midnight shift. Along with the other social workers, she constantly confronts such difficult issues as death, child abuse, domestic violence, attempted suicide, rape and a variety of psychological problems.

"If we assess the situation and decide there has been child abuse, we consult with the physician," said Morgan. "It is the responsibility of the social worker or any other professional to call it to the attention of Child Protective Services of the county Department of Social Services."

Dombrowski pointed out that in the case of a death in the family, the social workers do grief counseling.

"Sometimes a person gets hysterical, cries, screams or faints," she said. "Sometimes they are calm. Crying is a good sign. We let them cry and sit with them."

She noted that the social workers set up a support system for the patient if he stays in the hospital, perhaps offering referrals to agencies that might help him when he is discharged.

"THIS PROGRAM is an asset," stated Dr. Ronald Lagerfeld, director of Botsford's emergency services. "It certainly offers services to many patients that we couldn't otherwise provide. These would be referrals, but also sitting down and talking to patients."

"They find out things that are related



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Working from an office close to Botsford Hospital's emergency room, Kathy Morgan (left) a resident of Farmington, and Michele Dombrowski of Dearborn Heights, are ready when needed.

to why we are seeing him, but also other problems that force him to come to the emergency room rather than see his family doctor."

He indicated that the social workers are useful in directing patients to services, such as drug counseling, that he couldn't get in the hospital.

"Communication is a big part of it too," he continued. "Many times the social workers spend time with the patient and his family explaining the diagnosis, what the follow-up should be

and why it should be done in a particular manner."

They also go to bat for elderly patients, he indicated.

"They can make arrangements for a visiting nurse, transportation, or for care items they need at home," he said. "These could be a hospital bed, a walker, oxygen or a bedside commode. The family doesn't always know where to get them. The social worker can give the names of agencies to call and make

arrangements."

It is comments like these that cheer social workers like Kathy Morgan and Michele Dombrowski and remind them that their work is needed.

"Once in a while a case can be depressing," commented Morgan. "But you have to keep a perspective and help the patient and the family. We have to be flexible and handle a variety of situations. We take it as it comes. It's a challenge."

## Faith provides 'Fun and Fitness'

Women of Faith Covenant Church invite others to join them for a morning of Fun and Fitness.

The program meets 9:30-11 a.m. every Thursday in Faith Covenant Church.

The program was developed by several members of the congregation two years ago to serve as a morning break for women of all ages. It began with a half-hour exercise session instructed by a few women with the help of fitness instructors.

The exercise session grew to include speakers and some craft projects.

"This is not a part of the church membership recruitment," said Sandy Buchanan. "It is a part of the church's

community outreach program. Its original purpose was to provide a morning out for mothers of small children, get them away from the home to fellowship with other adults."

Interest last year came from women of all ages so the program opened this fall for mothers, wives and single women of all ages.

"For a small registration fee, with baby sitting provided at a nominal charge, the women are not only becoming fit, but making new friends, learning new ideas and creating beautiful decorations for their homes," Buchanan said.

Faith Covenant Church is located at 35415 14 Mile Road.

## Area women to lecture at Writer's Conference

Three area women will be among the featured speakers at the 21st annual Writer's Conference, co-sponsored by Detroit Women Writers and the division of Continuing Education at Oakland University.

Judith McCombs of Farmington and Marianne Willman and Doris Scharfberg, both of Farmington Hills, will lecture and lead workshops during the two-day event, Oct. 22-23.

McCombs' workshop is called "Contra-Ceptual Word Art: Slides from the Disintegration Series, Mirror Image Prints."

Willman's workshop is called "Writing and Selling the Romance Novel."

Scharfberg's session is called "Travel Writing: Expressways and Detours."

The three are among writers who come to the university from across the nation to join the conference. The professionals tell of their particular expertise, along with others who talk about word processing, the business and publishing aspects of the author, or those who wish to become authors.

The conference offers 33 workshops this year. Registration information is available by calling the university's Continuing Education office, 377-3120, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays.

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