

Suburban Life

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Seeking a remedy

Medical society president targets care for the poor

By Richard Lech
staff writer

IT'S A QUICK trip by car from the suburbs to the inner city of Detroit.

But it's comparable to passing into another country as far as medical care is concerned, according to Dr. Richard Horsch of St. Mary Hospital in Livonia.

As the new president of the Wayne County Medical Society, Horsch is keenly aware of the state of medical care in the poorest sections of the county's largest city.

"As I get in my car and drive to inner Detroit where the society headquarters is, the infant mortality rate in that 15 miles goes up by a factor of five," the Farmington Hills resident said.

"The average lifespan of the citizens drops by 10 years in that 15 miles."

ONE OF his main goals as the society's president is to work to change the sorry state of inner-city medical care.

"I don't think this is something our society can accept."

The problem, Horsch said, is a shortage of family doctors and other primary-care physicians in the poorest areas. In Livonia, there is one primary-care physician for every 300-500 residents, he said. In the inner city, there is one for every 5,000-10,000 residents.

It just doesn't pay for a doctor to practice in the inner city, where malpractice insurance premiums are extremely high and up to 80 percent of the patients are on Medicaid, Horsch said. Since Medicaid payments do not fully cover costs, doctors find they cannot make ends meet on such a caseload, he said. Giving a patient a shot, for instance, will cost a doctor \$8, but Medicaid will only reimburse the doctor for \$7 of that cost.

THE SOCIETY is working on a study that will document the costs of individual doctors working in the inner city, Horsch said. Also involved in the study are representatives of the Department of Social Services, Medicaid and the Detroit Medical Society, an organization of black doctors.

When the study is completed next spring, Horsch and other society members plan to take their findings to the state Legislature. They will lobby for a selective increase in Medicaid payments for doctors working in poverty areas.

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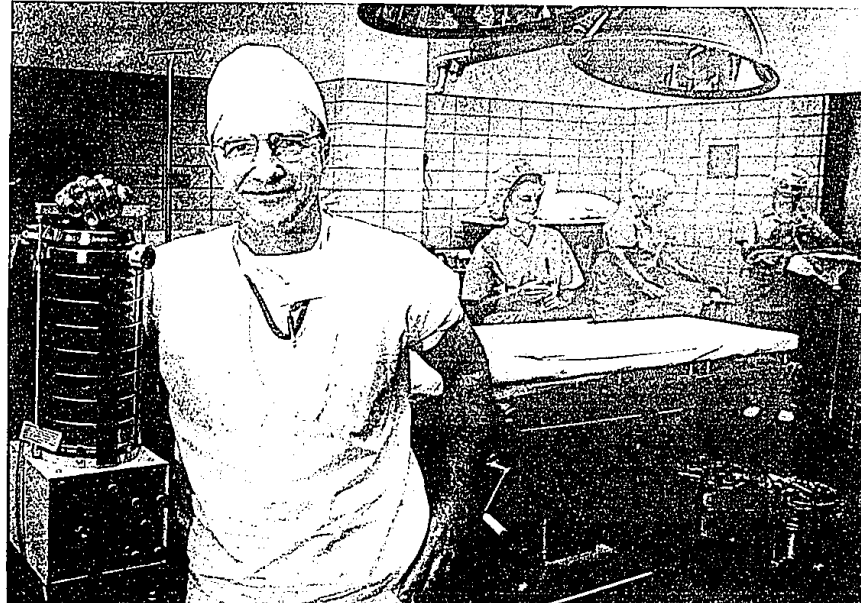
— Dr. Randy Horsch
Wayne County Medical
Society president

"The reason I am pushing this is because I have very few Medicaid patients myself," Horsch said. "This doesn't affect me at all. A person who is not affected would be the ideal person to champion it before the Legislature."

Horsch maintained that raising the payments would save the state money in the long run. Family doctors could provide more early treatment for patients, instead of waiting until the condition has become more serious and more expensive to treat. Improving inner-city medical care is one of two main goals Horsch has set as the medical society's 1986-87 president. He was elected in balloting by the organization's 3,500 members and was installed in June.

HORSCH'S OTHER major goal might seem paradoxical considering his first. While Detroit's inner-city care ranks among the worst in the nation, the Detroit area ranks very high nationally in overall health care, Horsch said. His other goal is to make the public more aware of just how good the health care system in southeastern Michigan is, which seems to be a well-kept secret.

Because of this, many Detroit-area patients requiring special referral care — such as open-heart surgery — will seek treatment elsewhere, Horsch said. They end up going to places such as the Cleveland Clinic or the Mayo Clinic, and not local specialty hospitals such as Ford and Sinai. Horsch estimates the Detroit area loses \$200 million a year and 3,000-4,000 jobs because of the flight of special referral patients.



STEVE FECHT/staff photographer

Dr. Richard Horsch, chairman of the anesthesiology department at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia, is the new president of the Wayne County Medical Society. Setting up the operating room

behind are three nurses with whom he works closely (from left): Barb Handley, Mary Lou Houlihan and Grace Donovan.

Yet a recent Rand-McNally survey that rated 380 cities on such things as "livability," housing, and schools rated Detroit's medical care system quite high, Horsch said. Detroit rated seventh among the surveyed cities.

"Detroit did very poorly until it came to the health care delivery system," he said.

SO WHY don't more patients stay in the area for the more specialized care? Horsch said it appears to be more a case of bad public relations than anything else.

Detroit, with its inner-city poverty and crime rates, has something of a

negative image to begin with. But specialist hospitals in other states also have done a better job of dealing with the referring doctors — the family physicians who recommend to their patients the hospital they should go to. They are very good about keeping the referring doctors informed about what is being done for their patients.

Detroit-area hospitals "take very good care of the patients but don't take near as good care of the physicians referring the patients," Horsch said.

The society is taking two steps to improve Detroit's reputation. One is a public relations campaign scheduled to start this fall and designed to

point out what the Detroit system has to offer. The society has tapped public relations professionals and groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and New Detroit for the campaign.

The second step is to set up programs in the hospitals to work on improving communication with the referring doctors, Horsch said.

He has been a member of the Wayne County Medical Society since 1969 and has served on many of the group's committees. A 1961 graduate of the Wayne State University Medical School, Horsch joined St. Mary Hospital in 1965 after serving his internship at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac and his residen-

cy at St. Joseph and at Providence Hospital in Southfield.

The chairman of the St. Mary anesthesiology department, Horsch said he originally set out to be an internist. But part of his internist study was to spend a month in the anesthesiology department. He found that he liked that area of medicine so well he switched majors.

"You are much more involved in the initial care of the patient and there's much less routine care. You're right in the middle of the action all the time."

He and his wife, Carol, have four children: Brian, 21, Mark and Steven, 20, and Linda, 18, who recently graduated from Mercy High School.

The Friend Family marks 10 years as an association

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

The Friend Family Association, a group incorporated to collect information on people in this country who bear the surname Friend, will celebrate its 10th anniversary with a genealogical seminar open to those interested in learning about the Friend Family and allied family lines.

The event is scheduled for the weekend of Aug. 15-17 in Airport Hilton Inn, in Romulus, and chaired by Barbara Friend Kull and Bob Kull of Farmington Hills.

Most members of the association can trace their roots to Nicholas Friend, a sea captain who arrived in the U.S. about 1650. Most of his children settled along the Youghiogheny River in Maryland.

Historical accounts show that many of the Friends assisted George Washington, assisted in western expansion, in Indian skirmishes, and later in agreements with the Indians. At least one Friend traveled with

Daniel Boone and another was the model for the Indian-head penny.

The Friend line produced an exceptional number of educators. One prominent one today is Dr. Theodore Friend, president of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Barbara Friend Kull is a media coordinator for the Farmington School District.

The Kulls interest in the Friend Family Association began at a mid-states picnic sponsored by the fledgling group nine years ago and they have both been active members since.

NATIONAL headquarters for the group is in Friendsville, Md., where members formally dedicated a National Heritage Museum last summer. A national seminar is scheduled every two years to bring the membership together for reports and updated research, a business meeting and socializing.

The Kulls have arranged for speakers in the national seminar this year to date old photographs, take oral histories and head up genealogi-

cal workshops.

They will also have a library available to the participants that contains information on related family lines.

The seminar is open to any non-member interested in any facet of the three-day event.

The seminar opens Friday afternoon with an introduction of officers, information about the Friend Family Genealogical Library, a show-and-tell period and Friend line presentations. Friday evening's program will be on the history and development of Friendsville, Md.

Saturday's agenda lists reports on Friend family lines, the Friend Family National Museum, research information and the association's biennial business meeting. There will be handouts to accompany a presentation called "Migration Paths of Our Ancestors."

The Saturday night banquet is followed by guest speaker Weldon Petz, a nationally recognized authority on Abraham Lincoln and retired principal of Flanders Elementary School

in Farmington. Petz will talk on life at the time Friend family members were neighbors of Lincoln.

FOLLOWING THE Sunday morning breakfast and a multi-denominational service, a panel of Friend researchers will answer questions from the seminar participants.

The seminar will close at noon. Those who wish can opt for a tour of Greenfield Village Sunday afternoon.

The Kulls encourage people to attend the seminar with the following surnames: Abrams, Armstrong, Ashcraft, Cessna, Cox, Dern, Drake, Drenning, Floyd, Geiger, Hansel, Hendryx, Hinch, Hendrickson, Huff, Hullick, Hyatt, Johnson, Kirkpatrick, Long, Osgood, Phillips, Poling, Rose, Walters, Ward and Wilson.

"We welcome any who have been touched by association with a Friend through the years," Barbara Kull said.

Bob or Barbara Kull will answer questions or make reservations for the seminar at 471-4928.

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Preparations made for Fash Bash

Wednesday morning about 400 items, packaged and ready for the Fash Bash auction block, will be moved from a Farmington Hills home to the RenCen.

Sue Singer Kaufman and Alan

Kaufman are the chairpersons for the silent and live auction that is a part of the annual extravaganza staged to benefit Detroit Institute of Arts Wednesday evening.

"We came on the board of the Jun-

ior Council (of the DIA) about a year ago and they put us to work immediately," Sue Kaufman said. "Our house has been the central clearing house for the items that have come in, for cataloging, packaging them

together."

The couple were in charge of both acquiring the items, then setting up the auction items of merchandise, as well as certificates for gifts and services.