

## Ambulances must often turn away

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tient's condition, including placement in monitored beds. In order to be reimbursed through Medicare, certain patients must be in a monitored bed 24 to 48 hours, Eckels said.

ECKELS ALSO cited a "huge increase in the indigent, uncompensated care population, primarily in Wayne County." That affects Oakland, too, because when one hospital reroutes, ambulances carry patients north.

The national nursing shortage also is having an effect. Botsford, for example, may have several open critical care beds but if there aren't enough nurses for the unit, the beds can't be used, Scheuber said.

"The nursing situation is especially acute when talking about critical care and staffing monitored beds. It's a pressure-filled environment for a nurse. Some hospitals have had to reduce the number of critical care beds because of the need for nurses," Eckels said.

When possible, patients are held in the emergency room if a critical care or telemetry bed will soon be available. As with the other nine hospitals in the county EMS system, Botsford will not turn away a patient who can't be stabilized and is in danger of dying, Scheuber said.

"We have only so much room in the ER (emergency room)," he said, adding that many patients also are transported by private car.

A HEART attack patient coming to the emergency room by car must be taken in even if it means rerouting an ambulance. The patient transported by car doesn't have the benefit of a paramedic who can stabilize the condition, Scheuber said.

Spencer Johnson, president of the Michigan Hospital Association, said last week, "You can only accept the patient if you can care for the patient."

Staff writer Alice Collins contributed to this report.

## Botsford plans more beds, larger ER

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

It won't change overnight. But Botsford General Hospital officials are taking steps to curtail rerouting of ambulances to other hospitals.

"There are times when we have to reroute because we are too busy in the emergency room to handle more patients," said William Scheuber, administrator of professional and support services at the Farmington Hills osteopathic hospital.

Hospital industry officials maintain there is no "quick fix" for increasing rerouting of ambulance emergency patients. But Botsford officials are addressing those factors they consider at least partly responsible for rerouting.

Problems leading to rerouting include lack of enough monitored beds, a nursing shortage and inadequately-sized emergency rooms.

By next week, Botsford officials expect to add another 16 beds to the existing 16-bed telemetry unit. Critical care beds are used when a patient must be watched and monitored. Telemetry beds are used when a patient is not as critical but must still be monitored.

"WE ARE going to be starting construction on expanding the emergency room," Scheuber said. It's difficult to determine how many patients can be handled at any one time in the emergency

**The steps are an attempt to curtail the rerouting of ambulances to other hospital emergency rooms.**

room. It depends on the condition of patients, he added.

Efforts are also afoot to ensure that the hospital's critical care units are "being appropriately used," Scheuber said. That means transferring patients out of critical care on a timely basis when monitoring services are not required.

When ambulances are rerouted to the next closest facility that can take critically ill or injured patients, it's the result of a "detailed decision." The emergency room director consults with the ambulance service while a patient is in route to the hospital, Scheuber said.

Many factors are taken into account, including the patient's condition, the status of other hospitals and the location of hospitals that could take in another patient, Scheuber said.

"Residents (physicians) have to consult with the physician director of critical care as well as the

nursing manager of the hospital to make sure no patients can be transferred from the critical care and telemetry units," Scheuber said.

The shortage of nurses, particularly in the specialized critical care fields, play a role in the need to reroute ambulances. Regardless of how many critical care beds are available, they can't be used to the fullest extent if there aren't enough nurses.

BOTSFORD is one of many hospitals that has experienced a nursing shortage. "We're working real hard to increase wages and benefits for nurses so we have the nurses to staff," Scheuber said.

Members of the Southeast Michigan Hospital Council of the Michigan Hospital Association, which includes Botsford and the nine other hospitals in the Oakland County EMS network, have been meeting to develop solutions to rerouting.

"When you look at the causes, you know there is no quick fix. We can put band-aids on it, but you can see there's no easy solution," said Jane Eckels, council vice president.

The hospital council also has been working closely with Oakland County Council for Emergency Medical Services, the umbrella for EMS network, to develop standard guidelines to be used by hospitals in making rerouting decisions.

Staff writer Alice Collins contributed to this report.

## Farmington Schools millage renewal up for vote Tuesday

By Casey Hens  
staff writer

An election to renew 5.75 operating mills for Farmington Public Schools will be held Tuesday.

About 58,000 registered voters will be asked to approve the renewal, which would give the district authority to continue operating with 31.75 mills as approved by trustees in the 1987-88 budget.

It does not ask for new millage. One mill is worth \$1.5 million to the district.

For the owner of a house valued at \$150,000 and assessed at \$75,000, 5.75 mills represents \$431 in property taxes before applicable deductions. The millage represents \$259 before deductions for the owner of a house valued at \$90,000 and assessed at \$45,000.

The millage renewal represents about \$8

million, or 12 percent, of the district's \$68 million operating budget. School superintendent Graham Lewis said a defeat would "affect everything. It is a large piece of our income."

Educating 10,700 students, the district is one of the state's largest and covers most of the city of Farmington Hills, all of Farmington, and a portion of West Bloomfield Township.

IF TUESDAY'S turnout follows past school election trends, it will be meager. Last year, the district won a 4-mill renewal with little more than 1 percent, or less than 1,000 of the district's 57,979 registered voters casting ballots. Despite the sometimes low turnout, the Farmington district has never lost a millage renewal effort, according to deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan.

The ballot proposal has a clause asking that the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment not be applied to the 5.75 mills for the first year only — the renewal proposal is for a total of 10 years. The Headlee rules would apply to the following nine years, Flanagan said.

THE 5.75 mills represents a combination of 4 mills approved by voters in 1978 and 1.75 mills approved in 1979. Both millages expire this year.

Because employee wages and benefit packages make up 75-80 percent of the district's costs, a millage defeat would have the most effect in the personnel areas, Lewis and Flanagan said.

There are four precincts for Farmington school elections. All will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

They include:

- Precinct One — Farmington Training Center, 32000 Thomas Street, downtown Farmington north of Grand River.

• Precinct Two — O.E. Dunckel Middle School, 32800 12 Mile Road, between Farmington and Orchard Lake roads in Farmington Hills.

• Precinct Three — Warner Middle School, 30303 14 Mile, between Northwestern Highway and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

• Precinct Four — East Middle School, 25000 Middlebelt Road north of 10 Mile in Farmington Hills.

Voters who were registered as of Jan. 11 can cast ballots Tuesday.

ABSENTEE VOTER ballots are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the school board offices, 32500 Shawwassee, in Farmington. They are due by Monday at 4 p.m. The board office will also be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. this Saturday to receive absentee applications.

As a district that is out-of-formula — no longer eligible for operational state school aid — Farmington schools relies on local property taxes for 84 percent of its revenues. The remainder comes from state and federal reimbursements for special education, vocational education and transportation programs.

## Home buying remains a smart investment

"People used to look at a home simply as a place to live. That is not the case any more," says Gerald Kosmensch, president of Southern Michigan Home Owners Warranty Corp., Farmington Hills.

Today, with rising housing prices, a house is no longer just a home. It is an investment. And as past history and new tax laws seem to indicate, it is one of the smartest investments you can make.

"During the 1970s, hardly any investment, not stocks, not bonds, appreciated as rapidly as single-family homes," according to Michael Sumichrast and Ronald G. Shafer in "The Complete Book of Home Buying."

"The realized capital gains on the sales of owner-occupied, single-family homes rose to more than \$100 billion in 1981 from \$32 billion in 1976. It is clear that regardless of fluctuations in the stock market, a home remains a low risk, relatively high profit investment. As Sumichrast and Shafer say, "In terms of historical perspective, the record is clear. Even in the Great Depression of the

1930s, home prices have held their own or moved upward during economic times."

"A well-constructed home built by a builder who stands by his work is an investment that, over time, pays off in a variety of ways," Kosmensch said. "It gives the buyer the equity to borrow money and acts as a hedge against inflation."

AS THE capital tax rate has increased, the advantage of a home investment have become even greater:

- If you sell your home, the tax

on any profit will be deferred if you buy another home of the same or higher purchase price within 24 months.

## Seniors draw discounts

Farmington and Farmington Hills seniors can take advantage of discounts ranging from 4 to 40 percent.

Pictures to be laminated into plastic identification cards will be taken from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19, at Farmington Hills Senior Center at Mercy Center, 28600 11 Mile.

The ID cards allow seniors at

least 60 years old to take advantage of discounts offered by merchants, both local and throughout the United States. Discounts are offered on items such as automobile parts, rustproofing, hair care, prescription drugs and eyeglasses.

The Oakland Living Human Service Agency sponsors the Oakland Center Senior Discount Program.

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**ATTENTION DOG OWNERS**  
City of Farmington Hills

1988 Dog Licenses are available through February 29, 1988 at the Farmington Hills City Hall at 31555 W. 15 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48018.

Oakland County fees are:  
\$5.00 for Unsexed Adult License  
\$7.50 for Male or Female  
\$15.00 for Delinquent Licenses, as of March 1, 1988

Rabies and unsexed animal certificates, signed by an accredited veterinarian must be presented when applying for a license. The certificate must show vaccine as being effective through the date of application. A copy of a receipt from the veterinarian is NOT acceptable.

**CHARLES D. ROSCII,**  
Finance Director

Published February 4, 1988

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