

Ambulance rerouting — 'best for patients'

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

TAKE FRIDAY, Feb. 19, as an example. Every bed and room in the emergency department at Botsford General Hospital was filled. Patients were in the halls and every moolter had an accompanying patient.

The emergency room at the Farmington Hills hospital was closed.

Other hospitals in the vicinity were listed as status B — emergency rooms open, but with restrictions. For example, the CAT scan was unavailable.

Just then, paramedics aboard ambulances carrying multiple trauma victims, listed as priority 1, life-threatening injuries, notify Botsford they are coming in.

"And we receive them (patients) based on the fact they are priority 1 patients. That transporting them to another hospital may result in a deterioration in their condition, and we do the best we can," said Dr. Ronald Lagerfeld, Botsford emergency medicine department director.

But what do you tell an injured or ill patient when they can't be taken to the closest hospital and they are not in a life-threatening situation?

"How do we explain that to a patient that's been in an auto accident or having a heart attack that they can't go to the hospital?" Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said.

FROM JULY to November, the osteopathic hospital closed its emergency room, receiving ambulances 52 times for 594 hours, according to the Oakland County Council for Emergency Medical Services.

But Botsford ranked fourth among 10 Oakland hospitals in the county EMS system. Botsford ranked behind William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, which led in hours closed. Providence Hospital of Southfield ranked second with 70 closings for 1,353

hours. William Beaumont-Troy was third with 21 closings for 798.5 hours.

"We reroute for one reason, the patient's best interest," Lagerfeld said.

Patients are categorized by the priority of their injuries, illness and condition. The designation is meant to inform ambulance drivers that those patients in a life and death situation may receive faster care at another facility.

And what if all hospitals are closed to incoming ambulance patients? Can it happen? "I think medicine is like life, there's always a possibility," he said in response to questions from the Farmington Hills City Council Feb. 22.

"Yes, there is a problem in Oakland County. And that problem surfaces on a daily basis. But the rerouting basis is really in the patient's best interest," Lagerfeld said.

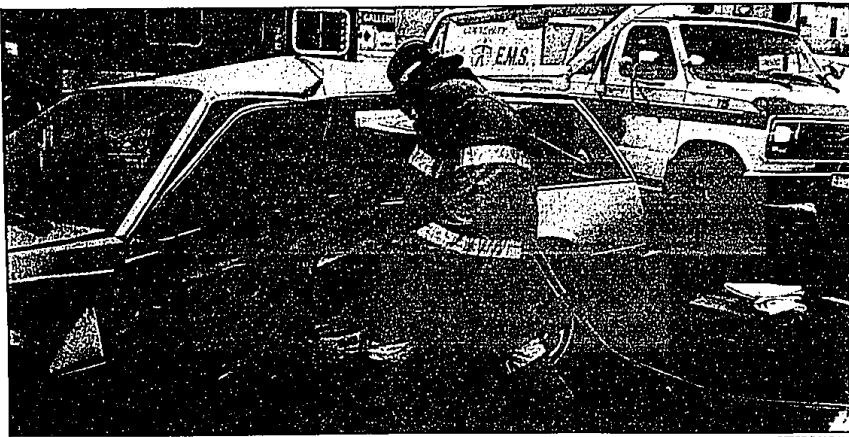
LAGERVELD and William Scheuber, Botsford's administrator of professional and support services, documented the rerouting problem and what Botsford is doing to relieve some of the problem.

No one factor can be attributed to the growing problem of ambulance rerouting. Lack of enough critical care beds, a shortage of nurses and understaffed emergency rooms play a role, Lagerfeld and Scheuber said.

"We are doing everything to address this problem," Scheuber said. Since December, when ambulances were rerouted 30 percent of the time, there's been a steady improvement, he said.

In January, ambulances were rerouted 20 percent of the time and so far in February, 6 percent. If closings could be reduced to 5-10 percent, "I don't think you'd see any problems," Scheuber continued.

When the emergency room closes to incoming ambulances, that's called status C, it's closed for one-to-two hours. Status B, open but with



PETER BALDWIN

Farmington Hills firefighter Brad Christy uses the Jaws of Life extrication tool to help remove an injured driver trapped in his car following a collision at Eight Mile and Inkster Wednesday morning.

The driver was covered with a blanket while firefighters worked to free him. Community EMS paramedics drove the man to Botsford General Hospital for emergency treatment.

restrictions, lasts longer, sometimes eight hours, Lagerfeld said.

When closed, the emergency room still is in constant communication with the rerouted ambulance. "We never relinquish medical control. A physician is always available to an EMT, advanced or basic," Lagerfeld said.

WHEN CLOSED to ambulances, the emergency room is never closed to walk-in patients. Unlike patients with paramedics in ambulances, the

walk-in patient has no one to help stabilize their condition, Lagerfeld said.

To help relieve the problem, Botsford is making greater efforts to improve wages and benefits to recruit more nurses. Fifty were recently hired but the hospital still has vacancies, Scheuber said.

Sixteen new telemetry beds were recently added to the existing 16. 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.

Hospital officials also plan to renovate the emergency department, which won't necessarily enlarge it but will make it more efficient, Scheuber said.

Botsford officials also are "tightening" the emergency room closing policy, Scheuber said. Only one person in authority, such as Scheuber, will make the final decision to close the emergency room.

Before closing, however, all at-

tempts will be made to determine whether patients in the critical care and telemetry units can be transferred to other units or discharged, Scheuber said.

Hospital officials have been working with other representatives in the Oakland County Council for Emergency Medical Services to resolve the problem that is not isolated to one hospital. When one hospital closes its emergency room, others are affected, Lagerfeld and Scheuber said.

Hills calls for health care change

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

State legislators and anyone else who has anything to do with the health care industry is going to hear from the Farmington Hills City Council.

The increasing problem with rerouting ambulances in Wayne and Oakland counties to hospitals that can accommodate critically ill and injured patients drew the Farmington Hills City Council's attention Feb. 22.

Council members intend to adopt a resolution urging changes in the

health care industry to prevent problems leading to ambulance rerouting.

Their attention to the rerouting problem was prompted by a request from the Birmingham City Commission to adopt a resolution opposing

hospital emergency room closings.

Unlike Birmingham's resolution, which specifically refers to closings at William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Farmington Hills officials are aiming for a generic resolution to address closings at all hospitals.

City staff will draft a resolution for council approval.

"I look at it as a real danger. There's a red flag flying," councilman Ben Marks said.

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'Yes, there is a problem in Oakland County. And that problem surfaces on a daily basis. But the rerouting basis is really in the patient's best interest.'

— Dr. Ronald Lagerfeld
emergency medicine director, Botsford



business briefs

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion, are planning a new venture or project or have information about other business-related happenings — and there's a Farmington-area connection — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Observer readers. Send items to: Business Briefs, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

A Farmington Hills resident is on the senior management team recently selected by LeRoy Fahle, president and chief executive officer of Mercy Hospital and Health Services of Detroit, the newly formed organization comprised of Mount Carmel Mercy Hospital and Samaritan Health Center.

Sister Anne Marie LaHale of Farmington Hills was promoted to senior vice president of Mission Effectiveness.

LATEST OFFICERS

The Farmington-based Masonry Institute of Michigan has elected Frank Soave of Borin/Boice Builders Supply, Pontiac, chairman for 1988.

He previously served as chairman from 1978 to 1982. Serving as vice chairman is Roy Seelbinder, R.A. Seelbinder Construction Co., Troy.

Other officers are secretary, John Robovitsky, Robovitsky Construction, Southfield; treasurer, Francis Costello, Monte Costello Inc., Southfield; assistant secretary, Robert Nowak, R.C. Nowak & Co., Garden City; assistant treasurer, Robert Renal, LaFarge Corporation, Great Lakes Region, Lansing.

Other election results at the Institute's annual meeting include:

- Mason Contractor Employer Trustees — Geuse Forie, G. Forie Co., Warren; Ed Lawrence, Lawrence Masonry Corp., East Lansing; John Robovitsky, Robovitsky Construction, Southfield; and James E. Fink, Fink Masonry, Farmington Hills.

- Masonry Cement Producer Trustees — John LaRue, St. Marys Peerless Cement Co., Detroit.
- Concrete Masonry Producer Trustees — Frank Soave.
- Brick Industry Adviser — Malcolm Sykes, U.S. Brick-Michigan Division, Corunna.

- Alternates — Robert Pachota, Best Block Co., Ypsilanti; Robert Renal, Masonry Cement Producer; Gerry Mayes, Face Brick Inc., Detroit.

The Masonry Institute of Michigan is a nonprofit organization dedicated to quality masonry construction in Michigan through educational, technical service and promotional efforts.

NEW VP

Frank Vandeputte of Farmington Hills was promoted to vice president of marketing for O/E Learning, a Troy-based training specialist firm that offers classes in the operation of all types of computer hardware and software.

O/E Learning also offers classes in automotive education and personal financial education.

Vandeputte was formerly director of marketing for O/E Learning training centers. His responsibilities include supervising marketing representatives for the training centers and directing all marketing support efforts. He was with IBM for 10 years as a marketing manager before joining O/E Learning in 1986.

ESSAY CONTEST

A \$1,000 essay contest for Michigan college students has been announced to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Detroit Chapter of Women in Communications Inc.

The contest is co-sponsored by the Gannett Foundation/The Detroit News/Gannett Outdoor.

The essay theme is "What will communications be like in the 21st century?" Essays should not exceed 750 words in length and will be judged on originality and creativity, in addition to grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Eligible to enter the contest are students enrolled during 1988 in a Michigan college, community college or university, with a major and/or minor study in some aspect of communications.

Entrants may be part-time or full-time undergraduate or graduate students. In addition to the \$1,000 award, the winning essay will be printed in the Professional Communicator, WICI's national magazine. The winner will also receive first-year professional dues or national student dues to WICI.

Essays must be accompanied by an entry form. Forms may be obtained by calling 499-4972 or 572-5352, or by writing to WICI Student Essay Contest, 10816 W. Warren, Dearborn 48126.

Entries must be postmarked by April 22. A VIP panel of top-rated area writers and editors will judge entries. The winner will be notified June 6 and will receive the award at WICI's Annual Matrix Dinner on June 16.

"In the 50 years since the Detroit WICI Chapter was founded, we've seen astonishing advances in the field of communications, such as television, satellite communications, laser discs, computer graphics and desktop publishing," said Sandra Burgess, WICI Detroit Chapter president.

"We thought it would be interesting to give students who will be professional communicators in the years ahead the opportunity to use their creativity and imagination to forecast what might happen in the communications field," Burgess said.

The WICI Detroit professional chapter has 300 members in all areas of communications, including media and public relations, according to Burgess. Many Michigan colleges and universities have student WICI chapters. There are 155 professional WICI chapters in the U.S.

Calendar

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				3		
	8	9	10	11		
			17			
			24			

of events

See the latest fashions for the entire family...everything you need for spring!

BIRMINGHAM

THURSDAY, MARCH 3
7 p.m.

Petite Spring Fashion Show and Seminar
in our Petite Salon.

MARCH 9 AND 10
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Fine Jewelry Appraisals in our Fine Jewelry Salon.
For your appointment, call 644-6900, ext. 249.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10
7 p.m.

Miss J/Mr. J Spring/Prom Fashion Show.
Miss J Shop

THURSDAY, MARCH 17
7 p.m.

Clairewood Spring Fashion Show and Seminar.
Clairewood Shop

7 p.m.

Children's Fashion Show for toddlers to teens.
Main Floor Childrens Store

ROCHESTER

TUESDAY, MARCH 8
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

See special occasion dresses informally modeled.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11
7 p.m.

Children's Fashion Show in the Girls' department.

THURSDAY, MARCH 17
7 p.m.

Miss J/Mr. J Spring/Prom Fashion Show.
Miss J Shop

LIVONIA

THURSDAY, MARCH 10
7 p.m.

Children's Fashion Show and Design-a-Dress
winner to be announced.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24
7 p.m.

Miss J/Mr. J 1988 Prom Show in our Miss J Shop.

Jacobson's

Shop until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday
Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday