

COASTLINES

The Southcoast Health System Employee Newsletter

January 2009



SOUTHCOAST PLANS SATELLITE ONCOLOGY LOCATION IN FALL RIVER

Cancer center at Charlton will offer radiation and medical oncology in response to growing community need and will tie to services and specialists at new Fairhaven site.

Southcoast recently announced plans to open a satellite oncology location at Charlton Memorial Hospital to help meet the region's growing need for cancer care services.

Radiation therapy services will be added at the Charlton campus and the existing medical oncology services currently centered at Charlton's Jarabek Center will be expanded and upgraded.

"The decision to offer cancer services in Fall River was based upon the region's high cancer rate and need for comprehensive cancer services," said John B. Day, President & CEO of Southcoast Health System. "As a regional provider of health care services, it is important that Southcoast further address the growing need for state-of-the-art cancer services throughout Southeastern Massachusetts."

Charlton's oncology program will operate as an extension of Southcoast's new cancer center in Fairhaven that was announced earlier in 2008. It will open before the Fairhaven site is completed due to the longer construction schedule for Fairhaven.

"The expanded services at the Charlton site will complement Southcoast's well-established oncology services, including inpatient and surgical services, and provide a continuum of care that is essential for our patients and their families," said Keith A. Hovan, President & CEO of Southcoast Hospitals Group.

The oncology satellite will be located in the Mitchell Therapy Building on Charlton's main campus. The entrance will be accessible off Prospect Street in the back of the hospital and will have designated parking with valet parking available. Rehabilitation Services currently provided out of this location will move to another location.

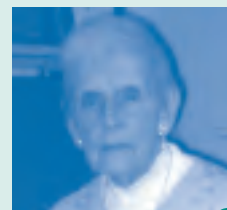
The difference between the Fall River and Fairhaven sites, Hovan said, is primarily the scale and scope of services offered.

"To effectively coordinate the treatment of complex cancers and blood disorders it is important for our specialists to be based in one location where a collaborative approach to patient care and a multi-disciplinary team can work together on the best course of treatment," Hovan said. "The satellite location will have full access to specialists and a seamless link to all Southcoast facilities at the main center, but is more conveniently located for patients of the greater Fall River region."

Addressing the need

Southcoast announced plans to construct a new comprehensive cancer center in Fairhaven off routes I-195 and 240 in April 2008. The new center will ensure coordinated, high-quality, streamlined

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Satellite oncology location planned for Fall River

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care for cancer patients and their families. The addition of state-of-the-art radiation therapy, easily accessible for patients from the greater New Bedford and greater Wareham regions, will improve cancer care for the surrounding communities and help address the substantial need for radiation therapy units in the region.

The decision to open the new satellite center in Fall River was based on the fact that the South Coast region has a significantly higher cancer incidence rate (582 new cancer cases annually per 100,000 people) as compared to the state average (515 new cases).

Additional projections performed by Thomson Healthcare show that 1,270 new cancer cases will be diagnosed per year in Fall River by 2012, and 3,514 new cancer cases per year will be diagnosed throughout the entire South Coast region. The National Cancer Institute finds that about half of all people with cancer will receive radiation therapy, either alone or in combination with other types of cancer treatment.

"Southcoast already diagnoses the highest amount of cancer cases in the region and it is our obligation to meet community need and respond to this disease with the full spectrum of services while providing the continuity of care that patients expect," Hovan said. "We have to take steps now because current access to comprehensive cancer care is insufficient."

Based on Massachusetts Department of Public Health information, the South Coast region is projected to need six radiation therapy units by 2011 to meet the demand for such services for the expected cancer patient volume.

"It is Southcoast's goal to help meet this demand by operating two of the units — one in Fairhaven and one at the satellite location in Fall River," Hovan said. The additional four units will be operated by non-Southcoast-affiliated groups.

A well-coordinated patient experience and increased patient safety

Currently Southcoast physicians must send their patients outside of Southcoast Hospitals Group for radiation therapy services, interrupting their continuity of care.

"The inpatients at Charlton will greatly benefit from the expansion of oncology services, especially radiation therapy patients who will no longer need to be transferred by ambulance to another facility for this service," said Herbert Hansen, MD, an oncologist at Southcoast. "There is a growing need everywhere for more specialized radiation therapy. As cancer diagnosis and treatments become more sophisticated, the treatment also becomes more complicated. Patients diagnosed with cancer need to have a consistent team of professionals identifying and providing all aspects of their care within a comprehensive system."

When a patient receives oncology services through Southcoast, the patient's records, lab tests and scans are easily shared between providers offering a well-coordinated patient experience and increased patient safety. When a patient leaves the system because the necessary treatment is not being offered at a Southcoast facility, records cannot be readily accessed and diagnostic tests may need to be duplicated by the new provider further adding to the increase in overall health care costs.

"Since our three hospitals function as an integrated delivery system the commitment to providing quality care to all of our patients throughout the region is essential," said Warren Wood, MD, President of Southcoast Physician Services, and a long-standing Internal Medicine physician who practices in Fall River. "The expansion of oncology services from Fall River to Wareham offers patients the full continuum of cancer care and, most importantly, meets a substantial unmet community need." ■

New DPH regulations bar ambulance diversion

Hospitals are no longer able to close their emergency departments temporarily to ambulances, except under special circumstances.

The mandate, which came from the Massachusetts Department of Health and went into effect January 1, is not a major concern to Southcoast where ED expansions and new plans for managing patient flow have led to the steady decrease in diversions over the past several years.

"The new policy will not be a difficult change for Southcoast because we started phasing out diversions a few years ago," said Marcia Liggin, RN, Senior Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer for Southcoast.

Liggin served on the DPH's Boarding & Diversion Task Force, which advised DPH before it made its decision on diversions. The only allowable exceptions would be internal emergencies, such as a fire, flood or chemical contamination. Liggin cited the flooding incident at St. Luke's last August 11 as an example of when a hospital could temporarily close its ED.

"The ED at St. Luke's went on diversion at that time because we didn't know the extent to which the flooding would impact patients," Liggin said.

The key to avoiding the need for diversion is managing patient flow, Liggin said. EDs often become backed up when admitted patients are delayed there due to lack of available inpatient beds.

When volume is especially high, a multidisciplinary team meets throughout the day to streamline patient flow. Southcoast's developing hospitalist program also helps by making timely treatment and discharge of patients possible. ■

'Give a pint, Get a pound' at all Southcoast Blood Bank locations

During January, you will receive a certificate for a free pound of Dunkin' Donuts® coffee when you donate blood at the Southcoast Blood Bank at St. Luke's Hospital or any Southcoast blood drive.

"We are in great need of blood donations at this time a year, so we are especially pleased that Dunkin' Donuts has partnered with us for the fifth year in a row," said Nancy Chadbourne,

Team Leader of the Southcoast Blood Bank. "The Dunkin' Donuts 'Give a Pint ~ Get a Pound' partnership with Southcoast Hospitals supports our local community hospitals and keeping the local blood supply strong."

All blood collected stays local and is used at Southcoast Hospitals.

Coupons are redeemable at participating Dunkin' Donuts while supplies last.

Where to donate

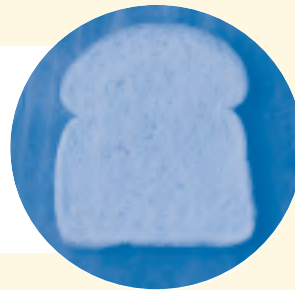
The Southcoast Blood Bank: The Southcoast Blood Bank is located at St. Luke's Hospital. Walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesdays 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 to 2:30 p.m. For more information call **508-961-5320** or log on to www.southcoast.org/bloodbank/.

Community Blood Drives: Southcoast hosts blood drives throughout the region on the Southcoast Health Van and at local businesses. The schedule can be found online at www.southcoast.org/van or by calling **508-961-5320**.



Little things count when improving wellness

Resolving to lose 30 pounds or walk three miles a day may not help you look better in your summer wardrobe — but cutting out that extra slice of bread at dinner might.



“People often get overwhelmed by the idea of trying to improve their health,” said Kris Aimone, Wellness Coordinator for Southcoast. “They feel like it’s such a big job and they don’t start or they start too big and fail.”

The truth is, Aimone said, small steps add up to progress.

“Anyone can begin with cutting just 100 calories a day from their diets or walking 10 or 15 minutes at lunch time and that’s an improvement. Every little bit helps.”

Health Risk Assessments begin again in January

“Completing a Health Risk Assessment is a great way to target specific health needs,” Aimone said. “An HRA gives us information about our current health status and identifies risk factors in our lives. Then we can begin working on issues a little at a time.”

Employees can complete an HRA online through a link on the HealthQuest intranet page or can call Aimone for a paper copy. HRAs are processed by an outside vendor, the Wellness Council of America. Individual results are completely confidential.

“HealthQuest receives a report of overall results for Southcoast and a list of people who completed HRAs,” Aimone said. “Individual results are only given to the employees who complete an HRA.”

The HealthQuest Committee uses the overall results to help determine which types of programs to offer to help guide employees through their journeys to better health.

HRAs will be available beginning the first full week of January until May 31. Employees who complete the HRA will receive a \$15 gift card from a variety of vendors as well as a one-month fitness membership to either Healthtrax or the YMCA Southcoast. Beginning in January, incentives can be chosen either during the biometric screening or online via the HealthQuest page. Employees will receive their incentives approximately one month after the completion of their HRA.

In 2008, 1,133 employees completed the HRA, up from 768 in 2007. Aimone hopes that number will continue to grow this year.

“We encourage employees to complete an HRA every year to keep track of their wellness and risk factors,” Aimone said.

Biometric screening will also be offered in departments and in open screenings. The screening includes a non-fasting cholesterol and glucose and blood pressure check. Both the HRA and the biometric screening is again being offered free of charge.

Watch your step

Recently, Aimone teamed up with other members of the Occupational and Employee Health Department to bring attention to employee slips, trips and falls.

“There has been an increase in the number of falls leading to employee injuries,” Aimone said. “Most employee falls are due to wet floors but many are due to our fast pace. We need to take care, watch our step and look out for obstacles no matter how much of a hurry we are in”

To combat the trend, Aimone has held a series of Fall Prevention programs focused on fall prevention awareness, balance and core strength. But, she says, nothing succeeds like prevention.

“Wearing shoes appropriate for your work environment and addressing spills immediately will help”, she said. “Maintaining your core strength and balance plays an important role also.”



Keeping the cost of health care down

The rising cost of medical services and health insurance is a topic that has been gaining a lot of attention over the past few years. Southcoast is self-insured, which gives the organization and its employees more control over health costs than many other organizations.

“Being self-insured means we pay Blue Cross/Blue Shield the actual cost of our health care claims plus a service fee for processing the claims,” said Beth Barker, Director of Compensation & Benefits. “This is different from paying premiums that Blue Cross/Blue Shield establishes for us. Making fewer claims helps us control the cost of our health insurance.”

“Adopting a healthier lifestyle and reducing our risk factors can lessen our need for health care services and for prescription drugs,” Aimone said.

HealthQuest in the Smoke-Free Zone

In support of creating Smoke-Free Zones at Southcoast Hospitals, HealthQuest has increased its offering of Freshstart classes and invited the public to join them.

Freshstart is the American Cancer Society’s quit smoking program. It addresses the reasons people smoke — physical addiction, habit and psychological dependency — and the two major obstacles for many ex-smokers — weight gain and stress management. The program is four weeks long with a one-hour session each week.

“Each session is conducted as a work session with participants interacting with the leader and each other” Aimone said. “Participants also receive tips and strategies to use for smoking cessation.”

Southcoast has scheduled multiple classes almost every month at every hospital site so help is readily available once a person decides to quit.

For more information on HealthQuest programs, log on to the HealthQuest page on Southcoast’s intranet.

100 calories =

Want to eliminate 100 calories from your daily diet? Try cutting out some of these. Each of the items listed below provides between **80 and 120 calories**.

- 3 slices of bacon
- 1/3 a Dunkin’ Donuts plain bagel
- 1/2 a Dunkin’ Donuts chocolate-frosted doughnut
- 1 five-inch pancake
- 1/2 a tall White Chocolate Mocha Frappuccino® Blended Coffee (no whipped cream)
- 1/2 a package of McDonald’s creamy ranch sauce
- 1/4 a Quizno’s small Oven Roasted Turkey and Cheddar Sub
- 1/3 of a regular size Snickers Bar
- 1/2 a Taco Bell regular soft, beef taco with cheese
- 1/2 of a 1.69 oz. bag of M&Ms

By the numbers

Statistics show an increase in participation in HealthQuest programs and a decrease in health risk levels.

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of Southcoast Employees | 5,500 | 5,935 | 6,194 |
| Health Risk Assessments Completed | 415 | 768 | 1,133 |
| Biometric Screenings | 680 | 824 | 835 |
| Employees with Low Health Risk Levels | 22% | 29% | 33% |
| Employees with Moderate Health Risk Levels | 66% | 63% | 59% |
| Employees with High Health Risk Levels | 12% | 8% | 8% |

News Briefs

Carol Conley, RN, has been named Vice President of Patient Care Services at Charlton. Conley joins Southcoast from Caritas Norwood Hospital where she served as Vice President for Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Officer for three years. She previously held the positions of Assistant Vice President at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Boston, Director of Parent & Child Services at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, and Director of Women & Newborn Health at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. Conley earned a Masters of Science in Management from Emmanuel College in Boston and a Bachelor of Science and Associates Degree in Nursing from the State University of New York in Albany, N.Y. She is a graduate of the Licensed Nursing Practitioner Program at Pondville Hospital in Walpole.

Louise P. Lecomte was named Medical Staff Coordinator for St. Luke's and Tobey hospitals, replacing Mary D. Jones, who retired October 31. LeComte has worked for Southcoast for 32 years, most recently serving as the Medical Staff Credentialing Specialist for St. Luke's and Tobey.

Changes in the Finance Department: Mike Ryan accepted the position as Director of Finance. Ryan has been with Southcoast for 17 months and previously served as Finance Project Manager. **Larry Domenici** has become the Treasury Director. He has been with Southcoast for more than 15 years beginning as an Internal Auditor and most recently serving as Corporate Controller.

What's wrong with this picture?

This photograph, showing a blocked doorway, is an example of disturbing trend in the incorrect storage of equipment.



"Although we have made good progress this past year in our environmental safety program, the hazard surveillance team has recently noted a marked increase of equipment being stored in areas that block safe egress from the building and in areas clearly designated as 'no storage,'" said H. Ray Price, Director of Safety & Security.

"Blocking safe egress — including patient care corridors — or fire safety equipment such as extinguishers, pull stations and sprinkler systems, violates Joint Commission standards and the local fire codes," Price said. "We can get cited for these safety breaches."

Improper storage of equipment also increases the risk to patients and staff by unnecessarily delaying response efforts in the time of an emergency.

"If anyone sees a safety violation, they should bring it to the attention of the department head or submit an unsafe condition report," Price said.

"With a little bit of team effort and proper coordination we can get back on track to ensure our patients and staff remain safe and our fire systems remain compliant." ■

Southcoast says farewell to Dr. Goodspeed



Southcoast employees had an opportunity to wish Ronald B. Goodspeed, MD, MPH, a happy retirement at teas held at each hospital site in October. Joined by his wife, Karen, John B. Day, President & CEO of Southcoast Health System, and Keith A. Hovan, President & CEO of Southcoast Hospitals Group, Dr. Goodspeed greeted employees and shared memories of his more than 18 years at Southcoast and Charlton.



2009 Southcoast Employee Appeal:

More departments on board, more employee participation and greater returns than ever before — all to help our patients and each other!

With just the first full month of returns available at the writing of this article, the 2009 Employee Appeal is already breaking records.

November 2008 showed a 37 percent increase in the number of donors and a 40 percent increase in total dollars pledged compared to November 2007. Considering these are difficult economic times for everyone, your gifts mean more than ever to our hospitals and patients. You really have shown how much you care for your patients and your colleagues. Your gifts also encourage our external community — patients, families, friends and businesses — to give, too.

If you have not yet made a pledge or gift, there is still time to make a donation of any size. Participation is what really counts and lets us tell our potential donors that our employees support our patients and each other through the Employee Appeal. It helps them to understand that they too should consider supporting their own community hospital.

Gift forms can be obtained from the External Affairs Department at 65-5353 or you can make your gift via the Southcoast intranet — just look for the "donate now" button. Gifts can also be made through Southcoast's website at www.southcoast.org/give/.

If you have any questions, please contact Donna Roy, External Affairs at St. Luke's (ext. 65-5359 or at royd@southcoast.org).

Thank you for your gifts through the Employee Appeal. ■

Rapid Response for patients

On January 1, Southcoast will implement a new way for families to call for a rapid response team if they feel their hospitalized loved one is declining rapidly and needs intervention by a specialized team of clinicians.

The new program, called Code A for “Code Assist,” provides a phone extension for families, which immediately connects to the operator who pages the team.

The Joint Commission required all hospitals to implement a mechanism for families to call a rapid response team after recognizing that family members are often in the best position to know when something is not quite right.

“It is important for patients and families to be partners in the delivery of care,” said Sue Ventura, RN, Director of Critical Care Nursing at St. Luke’s and leader of the Code A team. “There are times when families become concerned that there is a serious change in a patient’s condition that may be a medical emergency and Code A helps to address our patients’ needs and concerns in these cases.”

Upon entering a Southcoast hospital, patients are given educational materials to share with their families on how and when to call a Code A.

Friends and family are instructed to call a Code A when they notice a serious medical change in the patient that the health care team is not aware of, such as difficulty breathing, seizure, confusion or change in mental condition or when something is just not right.

To call a Code A, the family member or friend will dial 4357 (HELP) from any hospital telephone. The caller will be asked the room number, patient name, patient concern and their name and a Rapid Response Team will be dispatched immediately.

Rapid Response Teams are multi-disciplinary teams of critical care specialists that gather at a patient’s bedside to assess that patient’s condition and advise on the best way to proceed with the patient’s care. ■



St. Luke’s Hospital unveils historical paintings in main lobby

St. Luke’s Hospital recently unveiled three historical oil paintings on loan from The New Bedford Free Public Library. The oil paintings are hanging in the hospital’s main lobby.



“We are grateful to the New Bedford Free Public Library and its trustees for sharing these esteemed paintings with our patients and staff. Like our hospitals, our region’s culture and history are a vital part of the community,” said John B. Day, President & CEO of Southcoast Health System, at the November 2008 unveiling.

“We hope these particular works of art, which reflect the culture, atmosphere and environment that make New Bedford so treasured, will give our patients and their families’ great comfort.”

The New Bedford Free Public Library’s Director, Stephen Fulchino, said that because the St. Luke’s “Art of Healing” initiative offers a tangible demonstration of the emotional power art can have, it seemed a natural fit for the library.

“The art collection of the New Bedford Free Public Library is the public art collection of the City of New Bedford,” Fulchino said. “I cannot think of a better place to display some of its pieces than St. Luke’s Hospital.”

The three paintings on loan to the hospital are reflective of European influence on the region and New Bedford’s rich maritime

heritage. Included are replicas of English painter J.M.W. Turner’s famous *St. Benedetto looking towards Fusina*, painted by Louisa Ricketson, the granddaughter of New Bedford’s first historian, Daniel Ricketson, and *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, a 19th century painting by an unknown artist and donated to the library by Florence Waite.

Whaleship and Whale is an original oil painting by New Bedford’s own Humberto da Silva Fernandes. Fernandes was a Portuguese-American who came to New Bedford from the Azores in 1956.

“Displayed in a hospital setting, art transforms often sterile surroundings into a familiar, more comforting place that improves recuperation and inspires staff morale,” said Barbara H. Mulville, CFRE, Senior Vice President of External Affairs for Southcoast, who spearheaded the “Art of Healing” project during the \$33 million construction of the new St. Luke’s in 2006. “Art, similar to Southcoast Hospitals, contributes to the well being of all who live in our region.”

More information about the “Art of Healing” project can be found at www.southcoast.org/stlukes/art/. ■





Quality & Safety

Keith A. Hovan
President & CEO, Southcoast Hospitals Group



As I've mentioned in previous columns, we are beginning to introduce new tools in our continuing work to improve quality, efficiency and overall patient care. These new tools will come from a philosophy that focuses on the improvement of workflow called Lean and an improvement methodology driven by statistical analysis called Six Sigma.

The Lean philosophy focuses on improving workflow by eliminating waste of all kinds — time, materials, steps and errors. Six Sigma involves the statistical analysis of data to identify the causes of unwanted variations and errors. Six Sigma organizations perform at 99.9997 percent efficiency or, more simply stated, having less than 3.4 errors per 1 million events or opportunities.

Lean advocates a culture of driving out waste while Six Sigma drives the concept of continuous improvement. When used together they are powerful tools that improve results and outcomes while also increasing the satisfaction of staff, internal customers, physicians, patients and their families.

Lean management principles have been used successfully for decades in manufacturing companies. Health care organizations have successfully adopted these principles during the past several years.

As a clinician and executive, I have personally seen how these principles can assist in providing high-quality care to patients as you perform multiple, complex processes in providing care.

Waste of any kind — rework, time or supplies — decreases value. Lean thinking helps drive out waste so that all work adds value and serves the patient's needs. Waste is driven out by deciding which steps in every process add value and which do not — and then eliminating the latter.

In the simplest terms, Lean means finding a way to get a better result with less work, effort or waste. Exceptional quality is our goal. Higher quality brings lower costs and/or higher revenue. Both are keys to success, especially in a tough economy.

Lean is a way of doing our work, not a project. What can we expect from adopting Lean principles?

- Together we will learn how to anticipate issues better and take action in advance to (at worst) prepare for and (at best) avoid significant swings in performance.
- Through Lean we will place emphasis on the connections between processes and departments to better improve the delivery of care and services.
- We will increase our use of collaborative teams and break down barriers to getting our work accomplished, identifying system problems and prioritizing the work to be done.
- With a focus on improving quality, we will need rigorous measurement of our performance against those in our industry who are recognized as being the best in what they do.

- We will develop “early warning indicators” of our critical processes by measuring frequently and appropriately responding to significant variations and being sure improvements become “hardwired” into standard operating procedures.

You will be hearing us use the term “hardwired” a lot. It means that the improved process becomes the easy way to get the job done — it's automatic. We need to fix our processes so that it's easy to do things the right, easy and improved way, and difficult to go astray. In order for Lean ideals to take root, an organization must first work to create a culture that is receptive to Lean thinking. Southcoast has been doing that over the past several years.

All of the fine work you have done to create Southcoast's organizational culture is directly aligned with Lean thinking.

The way the vast majority of you have incorporated our cultural elements — quality and caring, integrity, trust and openness, and adaptability and flexibility — into your actions every day shows your dedication to doing what's right for our patients, our organization and each other. These qualities will be of great value as we look at the ways we do things with an eye toward increasing quality and efficiency and decreasing waste. Achieving these goals, in turn, will help us improve patient care.

Our service priorities — safety, compassion, efficiency, and above and beyond — will be more important than ever, serving as a checklist as we examine our processes. We will not abandon these all-important qualities.

Our patients will remain the focal point of all we do. As we look at each process and step we will first think about what is in the best interest of the patient. We will ask ourselves how everything we do improves their experience.

Soon employees from throughout the organization will begin training in Lean and Six Sigma principles. They will share what they learn with all of you and lead teams of you and your peers in examining processes to improve efficiency and patient care.

You are a very important part of this effort. As those who know the processes best, our success depends upon your insight, experience and participation.

While adopting these new tools will be challenging — forcing us to replace some older, comfortable ways of doing things with new, unfamiliar ones — the process and the outcomes should be rewarding for all of us and make us a stronger, more respected organization.

Next month: Six Sigma. 📊



the Interview

Barbara Pietraszek
Denial Team, Revenue Data Center

Just one year shy of her 50th anniversary as a Southcoast employee, Barbara Pietraszek is a sort of unofficial historian for the Charlton site. She helped open the city's first Intensive Care Unit in the Stevens Building. She witnessed the merger of Union and Truesdale Hospitals that eventually formed Charlton Memorial Hospital and the merger of Charlton, St. Luke's and Tobey to form Southcoast. Pietraszek recently talked to Coastlines about her impressions of the hospital over the years and what makes her want to stay.



What do you do here?

I am a member of the Denial Team. When a health insurance company denies a request for payment, we try to get that denial reversed. We work with the attending physician to get the information we need to write a letter to the insurer called an appeal. If we are successful, Southcoast is reimbursed for the services provided.

How long have you been working at Southcoast?

I have been working in the denial program since 1970 when we were called the Quality Assessment Department. However I started here in 1959 as a head nurse on a newly constructed, 28-bed unit, medical/surgical unit in the Borden building. Later, I became the first head nurse of the new ICU. It had seven beds and all the latest equipment. It was the most challenging but most rewarding experience of my nursing career.

Where did you get your nurse's training?

I graduated from the Truesdale Hospital School of Nursing and worked there for two years as a head nurse. After that I worked at the Fall River General Hospital until it closed in 1959, when I began working at Union Hospital.

Is there one enduring memory?

One of my most memorable experiences was a case where a 47-year-old man — John* — had terminal cancer whose physician was not addressing the issue. John had a wife and two teenaged children. I had

attended a seminar on death and dying and encouraged the physician to enroll in the same course for physicians. On the day the physician returned from the course, we both talked to John about his thoughts and wishes. It became evident, as we talked, that he understood his situation but needed some help. After we talked it was easier for him to discuss the situation with his wife and children. John was able to make decisions about his last days that were best for him. We were always there to assist him. He died 10 days later with his family present.

It must be hard for a person who dedicates their life to making people well to accept that patients die.

It is hard to face when it happens but it is our responsibility as caregivers to help our patients to the end. On my unit, if no family was present, I tried very hard to be there with them at the end.

You've seen Southcoast and its legacy organizations go through some dramatic changes. What are some of your impressions of what is happening now?

I think the merger was an outstanding move. Dr. Goodspeed was my boss when he first arrived at Charlton and he became a good friend. I will miss him. I think Keith Hovan was a very good choice to replace him. He seems very dedicated and hard working.

What keeps you here?

My work has always been an important part of my life. I think I have touched many people in a positive way and I respect the team I am now working with. I intend to work as long as I am capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of my job. 🙏

* The patient's name has been changed to protect confidentiality.

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