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St. Cloud Hospital

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**Lifeline program provides “peace of mind” for subscriber**

*Saint Cloud Hospital’s Lifeline program celebrated its first anniversary on July 1.*

Throughout the past year, a total of 50 people subscribed to Lifeline. Currently, about 38 people are participating in the Lifeline program.

Lifeline subscribers wear a small personal “help button” on a chain around their neck or on a strap on their wrist. They can push the button when they are unable to call for help. By pushing the button the home unit, which is attached to the subscriber’s telephone, is activated. This automatically dials the Emergency Trauma Unit at Saint Cloud Hospital which is the 24-hour response center.

“I don’t know why more people who live alone don’t use it. For $16 a month, it’s worth my peace of mind.”

Irene Lindberg, Lifeline subscriber

When a Lifeline call is received, trained hospital personnel immediately try to reach the subscriber. If there is no answer, hospital personnel contact a “responder” who is a friend, relative, or neighbor who has agreed to be called in the event of an emergency. After reaching the subscriber’s home, the responder signals the hospital by resetting the Lifeline unit. The hospital then calls the responder to find out what kind of help is needed. If medical attention is needed, the responder can either take the subscriber to the hospital or have an ambulance sent to the subscriber’s home.

The Emergency Trauma Unit receives 20-25 calls a month through Lifeline. The majority of the calls are not emergencies; the subscriber may have accidentally pushed the Lifeline button or forgotten to reset the unit after a period of inactivity.

However, eight of the calls received by the Emergency Trauma Unit during the program’s first year were emergency situations. One of the calls came from Irene Lindberg of Clear Lake. A Lifeline subscriber since August 1984, Lindberg was grateful she had the unit when she took a spill in her home last fall. She was getting ready for bed and fell in the entrance of her bathroom. She was unable to stand up so she pressed her Lifeline button. Within minutes Emergency Trauma Unit personnel tried to reach Lindberg by telephone. Lindberg could not answer the phone so the hospital personnel called her neighbor who immediately went over to Lindberg’s house and tried to help her stand up.

Unable to help Lindberg stand up, the neighbor called another friend who came over and was able to help Lindberg back on her feet. The next morning Lindberg was brought to Saint Cloud Hospital by her sister and neighbor. She found out she had had a mild stroke which was the cause of her fall. She was hospitalized for eight days.

“If it had not been for Lifeline, I would have lain there all night and half the next day before someone would have found me,” Lindberg said. “The idea of lying there all that time really scares me.

“I don’t know why more people who live alone don’t use it. For $16 a month, it’s worth my peace of mind,” she added.

To be eligible for the Lifeline program, it is necessary to have a private telephone line and live within the local calling area.

**Credit Union offers many services to members**

A non-profit financial institution owned by its members. That eight-word sentence defines a credit union.

It was about 1964 when several Saint Cloud Hospital (SCH) employees joined together and decided to start a credit union at SCH. It was described as a “shoe-box operation” by the Rev. Richard Tetzloff, chaplain in SCH’s spiritual care department and member of the board at the Saint Cloud Hospital Employee’s Credit Union. “It started out as a little operation for employees to help each other without having to spend a great deal of money.” The credit union operated out of a small office in the hospital with one or two employees. It was open several afternoons a week.

Initially, the credit union grew gradually. Then, in 1969 it purchased management services from the T & L Credit Union in St. Cloud. “We’ve really benefited from their (T & L Credit Union) expertise and service,” said Clayton Skretvedt, director of social services and vice chairman of the credit union’s board. “By having two credit unions working together, we can offer many services to members.”

The Saint Cloud Hospital Employee’s Credit Union is located in the T&L Credit Union building at 1832 St. Germain.
A look back at 1984-85...

The 1984-85 fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30, can be characterized as a year of transitions at Saint Cloud Hospital.

The most significant of these transitions began with the resignation and retirement of three of the hospital's administrators and the hiring of a new chief executive officer (CEO). These major personnel changes, combined with a union vote by the registered nurses, the implementation of new medical techniques, and the accreditation, certification and commendation of various hospital programs, left few departments untouched by the transitions of the year.

JULY 1984
The year began on a very positive note with the addition of a program called Lifeline. User stories of p. 11. Lifeline now provides many subscribers with the security and confidence of knowing emergency health assistance is only a push of a button away.

AUGUST
The first administrator to retire from the hospital this year was Connie Mohr, vice president of nursing. She had been a familiar face at the hospital since 1956 and had worked as vice president of nursing since 1978.

August marked the beginning of one of two Home Care programs that were new this year. Home Care nurses began training for the Short-stay Ambulatory Option which allows new mothers to have babies at home for 24 and 48 hours after delivery. The program received its first referral in September.

SEPTEMBER
In response to consumer demand, Saint Cloud Hospital offered an extended home for children. Designed for second graders, students have an opportunity to visit the hospital's Emergency Trauma Unit and then learn about their cardiovascular, skeletal and sensory systems.

A total of 946 children and 366 adults took advantage of the new program. Almost 200 people participated in the second annual Apple Run and Chic, despite chilly, cloudy weather. The event drew young and old alike, and many adults took advantage of the one and two-mile races to run with their children.

The Saint Cloud Hospital Auxiliary donated $30,500 to the hospital's purchase equipment for the Rehabilitation Department and to help fund the Lifeline program.

OCTOBER
After several months of organizing and campaigning, the hospital's registered nurses and professionals voted this month about whether or not to join the Minnesota Nurses Association union. The union proposal was defeated by a vote of 282 to 183.

Once again responding to the changes in health care and the needs of consumers, Saint Cloud Hospital's Home Care program, in conjunction with St. Benedict's Center, developed the Ceramic Maintenance Program. The goal of the program is to help older adults maintain themselves safely and happily in their own homes.

A new cancer treatment was introduced at St. Cloud Hospital for the first time this month. Called interstitial implants, the procedure involves putting tubes filled with isotope seeds through a tumor, thereby concentrating the radiation just on the tumor, while sparing surrounding tissue. The interstitial implants, along with external radiation, can be used to treat breast cancer, head and neck tumors, uterine, head, neck and rectal tumors and others, possibly eliminating the need for surgery.

NOVEMBER
The Saint Cloud Hospital Board of Trustees decided in November that the hospital's School of Nursing would not accept students for a freshmen class in the 1985-1986 school year and that the school would close when the current freshman class graduates in May 1987. The decision was prompted by anticipated changes in health care funding which reimbursed the hospital for about one-third of the school's operating expenses.

Along with the difficult decision to close the School of Nursing came new opportunities. The hospital's Radiology Program was the first such program in Minnesota to become certified by the American College of Radiology.

The certification meant that Medicare would cover many of the needs of hospital patients during their last 6 months of life. The laboratory also received the good news in November of continued accreditation by the College of American Pathologists.

The lab has been accredited since 1972.

DECEMBER
After 17 years as executive vice president of Saint Cloud Hospital, Gene Babke resigned from the top post in December to become the hospital's general consultant. Babke over-saw four major building programs, including the construction of St. Benedict's Center, a 220-bed nursing home.

The third administrator to retire from Saint Cloud Hospital this year was Harry Knevel. Over a 30-year span he worked his way up from a purchasing agent to vice president of planning and marketing. During that time he supervised 22 departments.

Always looking to keep up with the latest in technology, SCH began leasing a YAG laser in December. The laser is used to destroy tumors in the genitourinary tract, lungs and the brain, and as a non-surgical treatment of bleeding ulcers. SCH was the third medical facility to install a YAG laser, following only the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

JANUARY 1985
A new support group was started at Saint Cloud Hospital in January. In response to the needs of patients, the Helping Hearts Support Group was formed to provide education and promote fellowship among people with heart disease, people who have had a heart attack, and their spouses.

FEBRUARY
February heralded the start of a new tradition at Saint Cloud Hospital with the announcement that a new executive vice president had been hired. John R. Fishel was named as St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho to take over the number one position at SCH.

MARCH
March came in like a lion in St. Cloud forcing many businesses to remain closed on Monday. March 4, a snow closing isn't an option at SCH, the storm forced many businesses to close. The emergency department was crowded with many of the needs of hospital patients during their last 6 months of life.

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JUNE
As part of our constant effort to provide patients with the best, most effective service, SCH transferred responsibility for poison control phone services to the Minnesota Poison Control System. SCH continues to provide poison information, prevention, and education programs, but using the Minnesota Poison Control System enhances our ability to meet patients' needs for poison information on a 24-hour basis.
Throughout the year Saint Cloud Hospital receives financial support from many people. We are grateful for your continued confidence and support of Saint Cloud Hospital as expressed by your generous contributions.

Credit Union

Employees' Credit Union offers services to its members. One of its services is the money fund account which is a savings account with a minimum balance amount. This account pays a higher rate of interest than a regular savings account. The share draft account is much like a checking account. With this account, a member receives interest but does not have to maintain a minimum balance.

Tettloff stated that members can obtain a variety of loans from the credit union including home improvement, auto, mobile home, and recreational vehicle loans. The only type of loan that is not available is a long-term loan needed to buy a home. All short-term (four years or less) loans are currently available at a 14 percent simple interest rate and are automatically insured.

Other services include free travelers' checks, routine service, automatic direct deposit, automatic teller machine window, night depository, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), and book value on cars. While the Saint Cloud Hospital Employees' Credit Union has enjoyed considerable growth over the past several years, both Shevel and Tettloff stated that it has a family-type approach to business. “It is small enough to be personal, yet you are able to offer services that employees can’t get on their own,” Shevel said.

“This credit union exists to return its profits to its members,” Tettloff added.

From the executive vice president

The Saint Cloud Hospital Board of Trustees has announced the appointments of two new members to the 15-member board for three-year terms.

Dr. Edward Engman, who has served on the hospital’s medical staff since 1975, and Robert J. Oehmichen, senior vice president for finance, are the two new members.

Dr. Engman earned his doctor of medicine degree from the University of Minnesota in 1969. He served his internship at St. Cloud in 1972 and then continued his residency training in internal medicine with a specialization in cardiology and internal medicine.

Robert J. Oehmichen attended St. John’s University in Collegeville where he earned his bachelor of arts degree in economics in 1951. In 1964 he joined Barlans Systems, Inc. as a computer operator in Bloomington, Illinois. He and his family moved to St. Cloud in 1972.

Oehmichen’s professional career included 20 years at the Minnesota Power and Light Company, first as an accountant in the Power Plant Accounting Department, and then as a supervisor in the Energy Management Department.

Today he is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants. He also is a member of the Minnesota Financial Counselor’s Association and a local chapter of the American Management Association.

New members appointed to Board of Trustees

The Saint Cloud Hospital

Once again Saint Cloud Hospital has been asked to be a participant in the United Way campaign. Last year, the hospital raised over $90,000 in contributions from employees, with 57 percent of the staff participating. This year’s campaign, using the theme Love Makes the Difference, will start on September 4. Amy Carlson, director of human resources and a registered nurse, will be the chairperson for the hospital’s United Way committee.

Two programs, United Way’s Family Fair and United Way’s Family Fun will be held on September 5.

The programs will be open to United Way families. The Family Fun program will be held at the hospital and includes a pancake breakfast, 10-mile run and bike race, and United Way’s Family Fair. Indian Falls Golf Course will be the site for the United Way’s Family Fun event.

Both programs are open to the general public. The Family Fun program will be held on Saturday, September 5 and the Family Fair will be held on Sunday, September 6.

The United Way program is a major part of the hospital’s United Way outreach. This year, the hospital is involved in the United Way’s Family Fair and United Way’s Family Fun.

The Saint Cloud Hospital Foundation

The Saint Cloud Hospital Foundation has announced the appointment of two new members to the 15-member board.

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No room-rate increase expected during '85-'86 fiscal year

Room rates at Saint Cloud Hospital are not expected to increase during the 1985-86 fiscal year, according to John Seckinger, vice president for fiscal services. The budget, which began July 1, does not call for a room-rate increase.

"Although we have experienced reduced revenues due to a continued decline in the number of patients hospitalized, and shorter lengths of stay for those patients who are admitted, the hospital has been able to compensate by significantly reducing its operating expenses," Seckinger said.

Steps taken to reduce expenses include delaying optional equipment purchases, reducing some work hours, not replacing employees who leave certain positions and reducing long term debt by over $3.6 million.

However, charges for ancillary services such as laboratory, X-ray and surgical services were increased an average of four percent July 1. This increase was made necessary because not all of the increased operating expenses could be compensated for through the cost-saving measures taken by the hospital.

"Even with the increase in charges for ancillary services, patients at Saint Cloud Hospital will still be paying substantially less for hospital care than patients at other major Minnesota, Upper Midwest and national hospitals," Seckinger said. Comparative figures for the first quarter of 1985 show that patients here pay 37.5 percent less than their counterparts in the Twin Cities Metro area for hospital care. Typical charges per patient day at Saint Cloud Hospital are $498 as compared to $685 at Twin Cities' hospitals.