

FOCUS

Route to:

The Quarterly Newsletter for Physician Office Staff

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New On-Line Process Now Available to Order Patient Forms

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Beginning with this issue, the editorial staff is pleased to introduce a new look for *FOCUS*, the quarterly newsletter for physician office staff, now in its 12th year.

In November, 2002, in collaboration with Consolidated Graphic Communications, Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH) launched its first on-line ordering system. Through this on-line ordering system, hospital employees who are responsible for ordering forms, envelopes and letterhead can place their orders on-line.

Due to the success of this system and in pursuit of a more innovative process, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Consolidated Graphic Communications have developed a procedure whereby physicians' offices will now be able to order LVH patient forms (e.g., doctors orders, consent forms, etc.) using this same process.

Physicians' offices will have the capability to place their orders "on-line" using the Consolidated Graphic Communications website. This website can be accessed by a link on the LVH Intranet Main Home Page or by any

other Internet connection by using Consolidated Graphic Communications website address (www.cgc1.com).

Some of the benefits of using this on-line method are: a faster turnaround time to receive your orders, no postage costs, a visual sample of forms available to view before placing your order, and the availability to order LVH patient Print Shop forms.

In order to use this on-line method, a LVH Visa Purchasing card will be assigned to you. This card will act as an ordering number and will **only** be valid for ordering LVH patient forms. Please note that the offices will **NOT** be charged directly, the billing process will remain the same (charging to Medical Staff Services).

If your office does not have the ability to access Consolidated Graphic Communications website, you can continue to fill out the Con-

solidated Pic-Pac form and include your LVH Visa Purchasing card number. Send your completed Pic-Pac form(s) to 17th & Chew, 6th floor, Attention CGC. Print Shop forms can also be ordered using the Pic-Pac form by indicating the Print Shop form name and/or Print Shop form number on the Pic-Pac form.

Prior to ordering on-line, a Visa application and a user profile form must be completed. These forms will gather the necessary information needed to set up your Consolidated Graphic Communications user login and profile.

If you are interested in pursuing this new innovative process, please contact Jessica Zambrana, LVH Visa Program Administrator, at (610) 402-9422 to receive the necessary forms. To set up on-line training sessions, please contact Craig Lafreniere, LVH's Consolidated Graphic Communications Representative, at (610) 402-9448.

Changes in Medical Staff Services



On March 31, Brenda E. Lehr began her new position as Director of Medical Staff Services.

Brenda has been a part of the larger LVHHN family for the past 24 years. In 1979, she began her career as practice manager for Cardiovascular Associates (now The Heart Care Group). For the past five years, Brenda has been with LVPG, first as practice manager for Oncology Specialists, and most recently as operation manager for nine specialty practices located on the Cedar Crest & I-78 campus.

Brenda received her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration-Management from Bloomsburg University. She is active in the Medical Group Management Asso-

ciation, PMGMA, and other professional organizations.

In her new position, Brenda will be responsible for overseeing the credentialing and privileging of over 1,100 physicians, dentists, and podiatrists on the Medical Staff and over 350 members of the Allied Health Staff. In addition, Brenda will provide support to the Medical Staff leadership and oversee the administrative support for various Medical Staff functions and committees, including Bylaws, General Medical Staff, and Medical Executive Committee.

Brenda is located in the Medical Staff Services office on the first floor of Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78. She may be reached by e-mail at brenda.lehr@lvh.com or by phone at (610) 402-8975.



Pat Skrovanek, who has served in the role of Director for the past nine months, has returned to her first love as a Physician Liaison in the

Physician Network Development Department under the direction of Edward Dougherty. She has joined Andrea Parry and Kathleen Leto who also serve as Physician Liaisons.

Pat is located in Physician Network Development on the first floor of 1770 Bathgate on the LVH-Muhlenberg campus. She is available by e-mail at patricia.skrovanek@lvh.com, by phone at (484) 884-9293, or by page at (610) 402-5100 3089. Her fax number is (484) 884-4913. The main number for Physician Network Development is (484) 884-2020.

LVH-Muhlenberg Campus Revitalization

With the start of the revitalization project, be assured that everything possible is being done to make access to LVH-Muhlenberg and its services as easy as possible for you and your patients. Site work began this month to prepare for construction of the new seven-story building at LVH-Muhlenberg. Groundbreaking is scheduled for May with completion expected in 2005.

To assist you and your patients, later this month you will receive a mailing informing you about the

new traffic patterns, parking and entrance changes. One significant change begins **May 1** when the new main entrance to the hospital will be located at the Blue Canopy facing east toward Schoenersville Road. **This will be the main entrance during the entire construction project.** It will be clearly marked **MAIN ENTRANCE**, and orange signs throughout the campus will serve as a guide.

If you do not receive this mailing by the end of April, please call Physi-



cian Network Development at (484) 884-2020. Maps with the latest changes also will be available through the physician liaisons, the hospital website (www.lvh.org), or by calling (610) 402-CARE.

Perioperative Services Performance Improvement Team Identifies Key Step to Improving First Case

For the last eight months, a dedicated team consisting of staff in the operating room, surgical staging unit, PACU, anesthesia, and surgery have focused performance improvements on reducing the turnaround time between cases and improving the number of first cases that go to the operating room on time. Up until now, this effort has been focused on the Cedar Crest & I-78 operating room, understanding that lessons learned will be easily translated to the other sites.

The team concentrated initially on first case time starts, mapped out the process, identified barriers to efficiency, and developed nearly 100 potential solutions. The potential solutions were evaluated based on five criteria, the most important

of which was the effectiveness of the solution.

As it turns out, one of the major causes for delay in starting first cases on time is incomplete pre-operative paperwork including: history and physical, surgical and anesthesia consent forms, and incomplete or inadequate pre-operative testing. Ultimately, one strong recommendation of the Perioperative Services Performance Improve Team is to schedule patients for a pre-admission testing (PAT) appointment at Lehigh Valley Hospital **even if, in the physician's opinion, no actual testing is necessary.** The purpose of this appointment is to begin the necessary nursing assessment process and for the patient to meet with a member of the Department of Anesthesiology.

This appointment will avoid last minute "scrambling" that can occur as the patient is prepared for the operating room.

Please also note that the operating room regulations state that cases that do not have all complete paperwork cannot be scheduled as the first case in the room. The Central Document Processing department (CDP) contacts physician offices 48 and 24 hours in advance to collect any paperwork that is missing or incomplete.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Mark Holtz, Vice President of Operations, at (484) 884-4710, or Herbert C. Hoover, Jr., MD, Chair, Department of Surgery, at (610) 402-8338.

Medicare to Adjust Fees after July 1

by Bonnie Miller, CMM, CCS-P, Lehigh Valley Physicians' Business Services

By now, everyone is aware that instead of a reduction in the 2003 Medicare fee schedule, rates were increased 1.6% on March 1, 2003.

While this is welcome news, it will create some headaches this summer for practices that submitted claims after March 1 for services performed January 1 to February

28, 2003. You will be temporarily overpaid for those services, which means that the secondary payers will also overpay. Peggy Blue, HGSAdministrators' Provider Education Specialist, spoke at a meeting held by the Pennsylvania Medical Society at Lehigh Valley Hospital on March 12. She told the audience that services performed in

January and February 2003, but processed after March 1, 2003, will be automatically adjusted after July 1 to pay at the 2002 fee schedule rates. Practice managers and billing coordinators need to be aware that they will probably see offsets in their EOB's beginning in July.

Smallpox Vaccination: An Element of Disaster Response

In mid-December, President Bush announced a program to provide the smallpox vaccine to military personnel and to allow states to vaccinate response teams. Though no imminent threat of a smallpox outbreak has been identified, pre-event planning (before an actual case of smallpox is detected) strengthens disaster response by vaccinating those who would be investigating or treating possible cases of smallpox. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) developed a smallpox vaccination plan that addresses both pre- and post-event (after a case of smallpox is detected) activities. The approved plan identifies three key phases in the pre-event plan:

- vaccination of public health and key hospital staff to create a cadre of people to respond in the event of an outbreak;

- vaccination of additional health care personnel and first responders, including law enforcement, who may have greater exposure than the general public; and
- the potential for making the vaccine available to the general public sometime in 2004

As a community resource, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network leadership believes it is vital for the institution to be prepared to respond to whatever community emergency might arise. LVHNN is currently informing staff about the vaccination program and accepting volunteers for the vaccine to compose a response team. The state DOH will provide vaccine clinics across the state; however, no definite dates have been scheduled for this area. If your staff requires ad-

ditional information on smallpox or the vaccine, would like to volunteer for the vaccine, or would like a more detailed training program, please contact Debra Geiger in the Smallpox Vaccination Program Office at (610) 402-4589.

Presently, there is no action required on the part of individuals throughout the community. The medical community is receiving information they need to care for individuals who might present with a suspected case of smallpox or with a problem resulting from vaccination. Should a suspected case of smallpox be identified in the community, vaccinated personnel from LVHNN, other area medical facilities, and the local and state health departments will be called upon quickly in an effort to maintain the health and safety of the community.

OIG 2003 Work Plan

by Bonnie Miller, CMM, CCS-P, Lehigh Valley Physicians' Business Services

Each year, the Office of Inspector General Work Plan addresses various projects in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This fiscal year, they will be specifically focused on several areas pertinent to physician billing, including:

- Consultations
- Coding of Evaluation and Management Services (E/M)
- Services and Supplies Incident to Physicians' Services

- Medicare Payment to Non-physician Practitioners
- Bone Density Screening
- Billing for Chiropractic Care

To review the complete publication and details of all 2003 Work Plan reviews of CMS, go to their website at www.oig.hhs.gov, Click on "Publications", then scroll down the page to the 2003 CMS link.

HIPAA Update - Privacy Rule Takes Effect April 14, 2003

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act's Final Privacy Rule goes into effect on April 14, 2003. The rule establishes guidelines on how a covered entity uses and discloses protected health information (PHI), and creates patient rights related to accessing health information. Below is a checklist to assist you in your compliance efforts based on requirements specified in the Privacy Rule.

- Designate a Privacy Officer
- Develop a Notice of Privacy Practices
 - It must be posted in the Practice
 - It must be provided to patients upon first service delivery date on or after April 14, 2003. It only needs to be given to the patient once, not at every encounter.
- Ensure Authorization form for Release of Information meets HIPAA requirements (the general requirements include an identification of class of persons making the disclosure, class of persons to whom the disclosure may be made, infor-

mation to be disclosed, expiration date or expiration event, purpose, statement of the individual's right to revoke the authorization in writing, the exceptions to the right to revoke, a re-disclosure statement, and a statement describing the ability or inability to condition treatment, payment, enrollment, or eligibility for benefits on signing an authorization form)

- Provide Education to your staff on Privacy Policies and Practices
- Define a process for allowing patients to Access and Amend their records when requested
- Define a method for Tracking Disclosures other than those related to treatment, payment or health care operations. The disclosures that need to be tracked are generally those required by law (i.e., reporting patients with communicable diseases to the local health bureau)
- Implement Reasonable Physical and Technical Safeguards to ensure minimum disclosures of PHI (i.e., password protect personal digital assis-

tants (PDAs) notebooks and other devices containing PHI, place patient charts in a box outside an exam room facing the wall rather than having PHI about the patient visible to anyone who walks by, etc.)

- Amend Business Associate Agreements (If an agreement is in existence as of October 15, 2002, you have until April 2004 or when the agreement is renewed, whichever date is sooner, to include the business associate language)

As a side note, HIPAA's final Security regulations were published in the Federal Register on February 20, 2003. The Security Rule applies only to electronic protected health information in storage and transmission. To view the final rule, go to www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a030220c.html under HHS. Health care providers have until April 20, 2005 to be in compliance with this Rule.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Mary Ann La Rock, Corporate Compliance Officer, at (610) 402-9100.

Who's New

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From the Editor:

Please help us keep our records accurate. If your office manager has changed, please call Janet Seifert in Medical Staff Services at (610) 402-8590.

FOCUS is published quarterly for the office staffs of physicians on the Medical Staff of Lehigh Valley Hospital. Articles for the next issue should be submitted by June 6, 2003, to Janet M. Seifert, Medical Staff Services, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78, P.O. Box 689, Allentown, PA 18105-1556 or emailed to janet.seifert@lvh.com. For more information, please call Janet at (610) 402-8590.

Lehigh Valley Hospital Honored with Top Award for Quality

Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network (LVHHN) is this year's only recipient of the prestigious National Quality Health Care Award. The award is presented annually by the National Committee for Quality Health Care (NCQHC) in partnership with **Modern Healthcare** magazine.

This award is presented to a health care provider that "embodies a vision for quality that embraces innovation and forward thinking, and establishes ways to measure and evaluate those processes to benefit the community," according to the National Committee for Quality Health Care guidelines.

"This honor is especially gratifying

because it was earned by our entire hospital team doing what they do everyday to care for our community," said Elliot J. Sussman, MD, LVHHN's President and CEO. Dr. Sussman accepted the award at NCQHC's 25th Anniversary Annual Conference on March 25 in Washington, D.C.

In its tenth year, the award recognizes LVHHN for "demonstrating excellence in health care delivery through innovative leadership, patient satisfaction, performance assessments to measure improvement, employee input and involvement and recognition of achievements, sound financial manage-

ment focused on meeting the needs of the entire community, and an integrated and cost-effective information system."

"The judges agreed that Lehigh Valley Hospital demonstrates strong patient-centered practices and a strong program to attract and maintain a workforce committed to delivering quality health-care," said Catherine E. McDermott, NCQHC's president and CEO.

The National Quality Health Care Award is the latest of several national honors bestowed on LVHHN, its physicians, nurses and staff over the past 14 months.