

Arrives For Duty

Senior Airman Cheryl L. Free, daughter of retired Air Force Tech. Sgt. and Mrs. Virgil L. Free of Tyner, has arrived for duty at RAF Upper Heyford, England.

Free, a chapel management specialist with the 20th Combat Support Group, was previously assigned at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

She is a 1977 graduate of West Montgomery Senior High School in Mount Gilead.

Medicaid Program

The N.C. Hospital Association has proposed a unique prospective plan for government reimbursement to North Carolina hospitals under the Medicaid program. The association's proposal, which has been submitted to the N.C. Division of Medical Assistance, provides that a prospectively - set limit be placed on days of government - sponsored patient care, rather than the current dollar limits for each day of care provided.

Under the NCHA plan, the Division of Medical Assistance would negotiate a number of "target" Medicaid patient days for the highest - costing one third of community hospitals in North Carolina. The division would reimburse these hospitals the full daily rate for all "target" days. Any days of care provided beyond this target number would not be reimbursed by the Medicaid program. The remaining two thirds of the state's community hospitals would be paid their full daily cost for as many Medicaid days of care as provided.

"This plan is unique because it provides incentives for treatment of patients at the lowest cost center appropriate for their care," stated Steve Morrisette, NCHA vice president. "This should have no adverse impact on the quality of health care for Medicaid recipients," he added, "and assuming that higher cost institutions can meet the target days established by our formula, they will have the opportunity to control their own fate."

Morrisette explained that the NCHA plan will require the cooperation of hospitals medical staffs in managing the Medicaid patient days if the plan is to accomplish its goal of cost reduction. He further noted that the success of hospitals and physicians in meeting the target goals established by the plan will reduce greatly the current problem of shifting costs to private paying patients.

"In accordance with the new Medicaid formula, physicians and hospitals would be prepared to transfer patients from high cost referral hospitals to lower cost community institutions when the appropriate stage of recovery is reached," Morrisette stated, "enabling the higher cost hospitals to meet the target days established by the formula."

An NCHA task force, consisting of a group of North Carolina hospital administrators who experience large volumes of Medicaid patients, developed the prospective plan during six months of planning sessions. A group of area university professors and hospital officers served as advisors in development of the reimbursement formula.

The association's prospective plan also includes suggestions for cost containment measures to be built into employee insurance policies and hospital operations, as well as physician practices, to curb excessive utilization.



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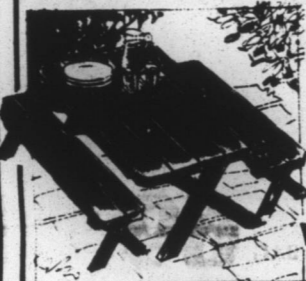
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