



STAFF PHOTO BY LYNN CARLSON
NURSING DIRECTOR CONNIE SHEA enters patient information with the touch of a finger into one of Doshier Memorial Hospital's new computer "chart carts."

Computerized Charting Expected To Save Time, Steps, Paper At Doshier Hospital

BY LYNN CARLSON

Call them state-of-the-art chart carts. Connie Shea does.

Shea, director of nursing at Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport, has been planner and trainer for a \$75,000 project to computerize medical records at the hospital, a move expected to increase accuracy and efficiency, save staff time, and streamline ordering and billing.

The computerized charting system will go on line Monday for use by all nurses and their assistants. Instead of carrying clipboards in their hands and pens around their necks, nurses will roll the computer carts into patients' rooms, plug them in and enter information with the touch of a fingertip on the computer monitor screen. The carts can oper-

ate on batteries for up to two hours.

A patient's "chart," or medical record, is printed and bound for use by the attending physician. Vital statistics are graphed by the computer. Bad handwriting is no longer an issue, nor is the traditional problem of nurses having to keep up with information until they can find a minute to stop and write it down.

"There've been times when I've actually had to write information on my scrubs until I could sit down and write charts."

The new charting system automatically leads the nurse or assistant through the steps of gathering patient data, offering prompts when more information should be entered. In addition to recording patients' medical information, the carts con-

tain locked cabinets beneath the computer monitor where medications can be stored.

"Every item is bar-coded," Shea explains. "When a patient is given a medication, the account is automatically charged and the item is deleted from inventory."

When tests are ordered via computer, the lab is notified immediately and a test tube label is printed, saving steps, paper and time.

Nurses' stations will have fixed computers where physicians can review patient data and nursing notes.

Doshier will be the only hospital in the Carolinas and Virginia to use the chart cart system, whose software was developed especially for hospitals with less than 200 beds. Shea helped adapt the computer pro-

gram to Doshier's system of documenting patient information. She also wrote what's being called "Connie's Cookbook," a training manual Doshier nurses can use on the job to practice with the computers and to study at home.

It hasn't been easy to convince some veteran nurses and assistants it's time to ride the wave of the future, Shea said. She's trying to make computerization less intimidating by offering plenty of practice.

A room has been converted into a computer learning center, with chart carts on which to enter simulated data, a printer and a table and chairs for studying training manuals.

"I think they're going to love it," Shea says confidently.

DOE SEEKING REVIEW

Federal Judge Blocks Acceptance Of Spent Fuel Bound For Port

BY SUSAN USHER

A federal judge in South Carolina extended an injunction Tuesday blocking the delivery of shipments of foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel due to arrive at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal near Southport this month.

The first 159 fuel elements were to arrive at the U.S. Army docks aboard two ships arriving the same unannounced day, each delivering two sealed casks of rods, and were to remain at the terminal no more than 24 hours before starting the journey by rail to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site storage facility near Aiken, S.C.

Jayne Brady, spokesman for the Energy Department in Washington, D.C., said Tuesday that the department will ask the Department of Justice to seek an immediate review of the injunction issued by U.S. District Court Judge Matthew Perry.

Perry issued a temporary order Friday after the state of South Carolina filed suit against the federal agency in an attempt to block the shipment, then extended the order Tuesday following a four-hour hearing held Monday.

According to Brady, the ship carrying the first two casks of fuel rods has left its Scandinavian port and is on its way to Sunny Point, but will not be allowed to dock until the issue is resolved. She would not say what DOE's plans are if the order has not been lifted by the time the

first ship arrives off the coast.

"We have several options but we're not considering that now because the ship is still on its way," she said.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, responding to Perry's decision, said the acceptance of the fuel by the U.S. is "an issue of grave importance for preventing the spread of dangerous weapons material."

DOE has acted responsibly, she said, and will continue to pursue acceptance of the fuel here.

Prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons is a fundamental foreign policy and national security objective of the United States, Assistant DOE Secretary Thomas Grumbly advised in a submission to the court Monday.

The challenge by South Carolina Gov. Carroll Campbell comes after the Energy Department agreed in negotiations earlier this month to fund security and protection measures, in excess of federal requirements, requested by both South Carolina and North Carolina.

North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt has also raised strenuous objections to entry of the fuel rods into the country through a North Carolina port and their transport across the state as an unnecessary threat to public health and safety.

The Sunny Point terminal was chosen from among a group of likely East Coast ports in part because of its relative isolation and proximity to the Aiken site.

Landlord Investment Program Implemented With Weatherization

The Brunswick County Public Housing Agency has developed a Landlord Owner Investment Program to be implemented in conjunction with the 1993-94 Weatherization Assistance Program.

The Landlord Investment Program will provide home weatherization to elderly, disabled, handicapped and low-income Brunswick Countians, according to a news release from Thurman B. Everett, county public housing director.

The U.S. Department of Energy requires that landlords invest in the cost of materials and labor. The investment can be monetary or an in-kind investment, Everett said.

"The monetary investment is 10 percent of the total cost of materials

and labor up to seven units, and 30 percent beyond seven units weatherized," he said. "The landlord can elect an in-kind investment where he or she provides the labor from his or her own crews."

Applications for the landlord program must be submitted by the landlord or owner. Applications cannot be accepted from tenants, Everett said.

Applications are being accepted at the Brunswick County Public Housing Agency, Brunswick County Government Complex, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

For more information contact Everett or Eric Smith, weatherization coordinator, at 253-4301.

Six Earn Degrees

Six Brunswick County students were among 199 granted degrees from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington at the end of summer semester 1994.

Among degree recipients were Bradley Wallace Anderson of Leland, Shelia Jean Greene of Leland, Bonner Davis Herring of Southport, Terry White Kirby of Southport, Alvin Richard Labelle Jr. of Southport, and Penny Cochran Martin of Long Beach.

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