

## Supt's Corner



By Charles H. Frenzel

This issue of Intercom carries a pictorial and statistical story of Duke University Medical Center—1958. I believe a brief analysis of the factors influencing our costs might be timely.

The cost per patient day of care—\$26.66 is up from \$24.16 in 1957, or a 10.3% increase; the cost per out patient visit—\$7.60 is up from \$6.23 in 1957, or a 22% increase.

Part of this increase can be attributed to the opening of the new wing in the latter half of 1957 without an attending increase in patient's days of care and out patient visits.

Hospital costs in the United States are increasing at the annual rate of approximately 5%. Personnel costs represent the greater part of this increase as hospitals attempt to keep pace with the rising cost of living and compete with each other for the short supply of professional employees and with other industries for the better clerical and auxiliary personnel. The cost of supplies and materials is also steadily climbing.

Several other factors are important in the cost picture at Duke Hospital. As a Medical Center Hospital we must be the first to test out and use the new and expensive drugs; we must take the lead in developing and utilizing technological advances in medicine. As they become available new diagnostic and treatment services must be added for our patients.

Another major cost factor is probably the most significant. This is the long-time trend of Duke Hospital toward becoming a referral center for the difficult and costly diagnostic, operative, and treatment cases.

It is evident that our costs will continue to rise as there is no indication

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## Mrs. Lessie Patterson Outstanding Employee of the Month

Mrs. Lessie Patterson, ward helper on Howland Ward has been selected as the first Outstanding Employee of the Month.

Mrs. Patterson's selection launches the new Employee Recognition Program aimed at singling out those employees who excel in such areas as job performance; relationships with patients, visitors, and other employees; and over-all attitude. When announcing Mrs. Patterson's selection a spokesman for the Selection Committee quoted those who recommended her: "warm, sincere approach. . . loved by the patients, parents, and



Mrs. Lessie Patterson

staff"; "does about 4 times as much work as most workers"; "shows initiative and a deep sense of responsibility"; "It has been one of my chief pleasures at Duke to have the opportunity to know and work with Mrs. Pat."

Born in Chatham County in 1905, Mrs. Pat lived there until she was eleven years old. She has spent her life since 1916 in Durham County. She was educated in the Chatham County schools and at Lowes Grove.

Except for two years in a munitions plant in Chapel Hill, Mrs. Pat has been employed at Duke Hospital since 1944. Mrs. Patterson and her husband have no children.

The Committee spokesman stated that the members of the Committee were highly gratified with the response by employees to the Employee Recognition Program. All nominations will be carried forward each time. Thus it is unnecessary to nominate a candidate a second time. However, everyone in the Medical Center is encouraged to submit a nomination for the person of his choice. Forms are available in the Personnel Office as well as in each department in the Medical Center. During 1959 a total of five persons will be selected as "Outstanding Employee of the Month." At the end of the year the qualifications of these five employees will be reviewed and the "Outstanding Employee of the Year" will be selected and announced.

Nominate your candidate and watch this space for the April winner.

## What People Are Saying

From Charlotte, N. C.

It could have been circumstance; it probably was training. At any rate may I commend Duke Hospital's telephone manners. On a recent difficult call your people not only persisted until the person called was located, they were all exceedingly polite in the process.

From a Member of the Duke  
Medical Center Staff:

I want somehow to let you know how grateful I am to you and your fine (nursing) staff for the help and care which I received at Duke Hospital this last week, following our auto accident.

The true meaning of humane consideration and action was apparent in everyone's eyes and hands. Such thoughtful kindness and efficiency render me ever thankful.