

Dr. Fleming Fuller Discusses Rising Hospital Costs for Patients

WINSTON-SALEM - The board chairman of one of North Carolina's largest hospitals - North Carolina Baptist at Winston-Salem - says hospital costs will continue to climb for the next several years, but that the patient now is getting a more care for his money than ever before in history.

Dr. Fleming Fuller, writing in the August issue of Trustee, a magazine published by the American Hospital Association, points out that although today's patient pays more per day, he gets well quicker, goes home earlier, returns to his job sooner, and usually lives longer than did his forefathers.

Dr. Fuller analyzes results of a study on hospital costs and services made in three Winston-Salem institutions covering the decade of 1950-1960 and uses these figures to support his argument that, after all, hospital charges are relative when balanced against a patient's earnings, productivity, and loss of time from work. The hospital trustee, he says, is in the unenviable position of being constantly questioned about the rising costs of hospital care wherever he happens to be - in his office, at a public gathering, or a social affair, and, sometimes, even at church.

As trustee, he goes on, "we are expected to have all the answers. Although we may know the reasons for these increases and are certain that the hospital patient is receiving excellent value for his money, many of us find it difficult, if not impossible, to convey these facts adequately to our questioners, who simply cannot understand why their hospital bills are higher than they were a few years ago."

In the 10-year period the cost to the patient for a day of care at City Memorial hospital in Winston-Salem went from \$11.00 to \$20.85; at Baptist Hospital from \$12.10 to \$22.95. At Kate Bitting Reynolds in the area for Negroes, the daily Memorial, the only major hospital cost advanced \$7.50 a day.

Dr. Fuller points out that salaries

of the expense of specialists who work together to perform the surgery and to care for the patient before and after the operation. However, balanced against these costs are the lives saved, which would have been lost before this surgical procedure was made possible.

He also used Baptist Hospital's cobalt 60 therapy unit to point up the costs involved in providing for treatment of cancer. The unit represents an outlay of \$138,000, he said, adding:

"All advances in medical science, which have brought untold blessings to the sick, are accompanied by large cost increases. Polio has been dealt an almost deadly blow. Tuberculosis is no longer the great killer it once was. Typhoid fever, smallpox, chronic gonorrhea, and osteomyelitis have been relegated to medical history. And the appendectomy, which required a 14 to 16-day hospital stay in 1940, now requires a stay of only three to five days."

Dr. Fuller, a Kinston obstetrician and gynecologist, does not expect the length of hospital stays to be decreased much further. The average at Baptist Hospital has decreased from 9.6 days to 7.9 days in 10 years.

He uses a maternity case and an appendectomy case to illustrate the reduction. The maternity patient in 1940 remained flat in bed for 10 days after the birth of her baby and then for two days more remained up and around her room such a maternity patient is up and before being discharged. Today taking a shower the day after the baby arrives and is home three to five days later. "Such early ambulation," he says, "has done more than cut the cost of the hospital bill. It has also greatly reduced the incidence of many secondary complications."

Twenty years ago, he points out, "an appendectomy patient was likely to be in the hospital for two weeks. At Baptist Hospital he would have paid \$10 a day for a private

room, or about \$150. Today the bill for such a patient would be around \$115 for the expensive room in the hospital. "The saving results from the fewer days spent in the hospital. Not only that, but he is back on his feet in 10 days. In 1940 he would have been in former years. If he were making \$2 an hour, he could earn well over \$100 in the time he would have spent in bed 15 years ago. Another interesting example is the pneumonia patient, who 10 or 15 years ago spent in the hospital. Now, with the aid of new antibiotics, this stay has been reduced to one week or less."



CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY - Luther Winborne Self, Asheboro, confers with Miss North Carolina, tall Jeanne Swanner of Graham, about her Atlantic City presentation gown, a gift of Cone Mills. Self has created the presentation gowns for five previous state queens,

including Maria Beale Fletcher, Miss America of 1961. At right is Mrs. Luther E. Self, the designer's mother who will make the gown. In discussing his new challenge, Self states, "That much pulchritude over a six-foot-two frame is an opportunity for any designer."

the North Carolina - Virginia line. There, 3335 claims will be paid, in the amount of one and a quarter million dollars on all-risk FCIC insurance for labor and other expenses that insured crops will fail to bring on the markets. Rainfall in the parcer areas in the immediate future, would, reduce insurance indemnities, but much of the tobacco has matured to the point that moisture can give only partial relief.

Claims paid throughout North Carolina will come from premiums received from insured farmers.

Guarantees of labor and production costs are assured only through FCIC, administered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and are not available through commercial

FCIC To Pay 4,681 Claims This Year

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation expects to pay one and three-quarters million dollars in 4,681 claims this year to make up the difference between the cash value of crops sold and production costs. This prediction was arrived at by FCIC supervisors who have inspected the crops over the entire State and came to these conclusions today.

Most of the claims to be paid will be to tobacco policyholders in the drought stricken counties near

insurance channels. Many FCIC insureds also take hail and other specific risk insurance offered by private companies.

There is no other governmental source that makes direct payments to private individuals in such disasters as now threaten a large section of North Carolina. Distressed farmers in the long area reaching from Surry County in the west to Northampton and Hertford Counties in the east can only receive cash relief through their FCIC insurance.

FCIC indemnities stabilize the entire economy and are a boon to businessmen and credit agencies which depend upon farm marketings.

The present disaster, brought on principally by lack of rain, is in sharp contrast to last year when cloudbursts destroyed tobacco in coastal plain counties and resulted in nearly two million dollars paid to FCIC insureds in eastern North Carolina.

This year FCIC, restricted to guarantees in only 60 of the 100 North Carolina counties, has guaranteed 40,000 North Carolina farmers that their agricultural income cannot fall below 70 million dollars, their production costs. Over 90 percent of the protection is on tobacco, about 4 percent on cotton, 3 percent on peanuts, and the remainder on peaches, soybeans and corn.

Farmers in the drought area are heavily insured by FCIC. There are 16,834 farmers in 18 counties of the dry area that are guaranteed the

return of nearly 27 million dollars. These counties are: Alamance, Caswell, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Granville, Guilford, Halifax, Hertford, Nash, Northampton, Person, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Vance, Warren and Washington.

FCIC regrets that all farmers did not avail themselves of all-risk protection, application for which closed before planting began generally.

North Carolina residents in the N. C. State student enrollment for the 1962 Fall Semester numbered 5,416; residents of other states 900; and residents of foreign countries, 124.

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