

# A DOCTOR'S VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL

My association with the Colby Community consisted of 25 years as a consulting physician. Besides me, Drs. Victor Hildyard and La Donna Regier were instrumental in encouraging other medical consultants to Colby. This provides patients with care of specialists without having to travel great distances. There are now 32 medical specialty physicians available to the community. This did require a great amount of time, energy and money on the part of Drs. Hildyard and Regier to initiate these physicians to come to Colby on a consulting basis.

Eventually, in good faith to aid the hospital and provide access to other community physicians who were reluctant to send patients to Colby Medical & Surgical Center (CMSC), Drs. Hildyard and Regier agreed to move their consultant's services to the hospital. There were three other physicians that were recruited and brought to the Colby community by Drs. Hildyard and Regier without any assistance from the hospital administration. One of these physicians was Dr. Mohammed Fercha, an excellent surgeon. Another of these recruited physicians is Dr. Raymond Ketting. He is Colby's first and only pediatrician, who remains active in practice in Colby and in outlying communities. Though the hospital administration did not help recruit Dr. Ketting and Dr. Fercha, they certainly benefit from their services and excellent patient care. The third physician was a Colby native, Dr. Jeff Jennings, whose tragic death in December 2001, devastated and denied the community of a young, amiable, dedicated and well-trained physician. Many of you may be unaware that the current hospital administration did not officially introduce themselves to Dr. Jennings or even attend his welcoming reception. As disturbing as this is - it tells a story!

In another attempt to cooperate with the hospital, the Colby Medical & Surgical Center merged laboratory, x-ray and ultrasound equipment to share services, expenses and profits with the hospital, the Clinic moved all their equipment to the hospital for patient utilization. In a manner I do not understand, the hospital ended up owning all the equipment and all the profits.

Citizens Medical Center (CMC) had an ultrasound technician well trained, and credentialed. She had the respect and confidence of local physicians and consulting radiologists. She enjoyed her job and was doing it well, however she was placed on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by the administration. She resigned. In order to remain in Colby, she decided to work for the Colby Medical & Surgical Center. The technician's competent abilities was replaced at the hospital by 2 nurses who have completed two weeks of training at a Texas institution. If competency and expertise of a technician with a degree, nationally-recognized credentials and 6 years of experience is replaced by two individuals with two week's training, should this not cause concern? Imagine the responsibility placed on the two nurses. Are these changes in the radiology department at CMC the reason ultrasound services are losing a portion Medicare and Medicaid status, which ultimately affects reimbursement? Another credentialed and competent ultrasound technician was hired this past spring and she resigned a little after one month.

Mammography services were also lost this year when the hospital lost their FDA certification as a result of personnel being unable to meet standards. Did you know an outside contractor now provides this service?

Several years ago a clinic was built by the hospital and they brought in physicians that were subsidized through guaranteed salaries. These physicians did not invest in a building nor were they responsible for overhead or employee's salaries. In retrospect, was the hospital trying to undermine the practice and reputations of Drs. Hildyard and Regier by starting their own clinic? One of the physicians affiliated with the practice in the hospital made it known he was recruited to run Drs. Hildyard and Regier out of town. Did he succeed? Was his mission a failure and is that why he left the community? Dr. Hildyard and Dr. Regier do not have any objections to other doctors practicing medicine in Colby. They are not in a competitive business. Their mission is to treat their patients and provide the best medical care possible. They want courteousness, communication and respect from the hospital administration to all physicians in the community.

Hardworking, dedicated physicians are welcome in any community. Most good physicians, I know, are willing to work long hours, sacrifice personal time, educate themselves and others, know their abilities and to refer when they feel it necessary for the good of the patient. They are first and foremost concerned about the health and care of the patient. These are the attributes I see in Drs. Hildyard and Regier. Unfortunately, individuals who find fault with Colby Medical & Surgical Center prefer to offer excuses for their shortcomings and lack of success as someone else's responsibility. These are the same individuals who consistently placed their own needs above the well being of the hospital and the patient population. Remember the situation regarding the hospital wanting to bring in outside physicians to cover the local Emergency Room? It would cost the hospital more money compared to the current coverage arrangement with local physicians. Why would anyone consider this as an option?

Perhaps many of you are unaware of the continual harassment aimed at the Colby Medical & Surgical Center by the hospital administration. For instance, when making public speaking appearances at civic organizations, negative remarks were made regarding providers and services. This is less than professional conduct for anyone in hospital administration.

Considering the latest action waged personally against Dr. Hildyard by the hospital administration is incomprehensible. Usually, in order to investigate the allegations, the accuser discusses the situation with the accused in the presence of witnesses. However in this case a sudden and unexpected Restraining Order was served, banning Dr. Hildyard from the hospital where he had patients, and also where he had loyally served for 27 years. The Kansas State Board of Healing Arts, which provides the physicians' license, was notified and the Board then came to monitor all patients' charts for any discrepancy. The information was provided to all news services, which in turn was aired on evening news programs. Then to compound the situation, since there were conflicting facts, the hospital board hired a law firm from Topeka to investigate the allegations. What was the financial cost of this action?

After serving in your community for 25 years, I have many dear friends and much affection for the Colby community. My hope is that you can have excellent health care resources, this includes physicians, ancillary providers and a hospital that respects the concern of the patient and not the vendettas that may arise between administrators and physicians on a personal level.

Please do not allow your community to be served medically by locum tenum physicians. If you ask anyone who is forced to use a HMO, you will understand the quality of care by not being seen by the same physician consistently.

Again I ask this question! Why would Drs. Regier and Hildyard want to run any physician out of town and why does the hospital administration try to run Drs. Hildyard and Regier out of town? Does Citizens Medical Center really serve the Citizens of the Colby community or are the "powers that be" self-serving?

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