

The Honorable Sean Elsbernd
Supervisor, District 7
City Hall
San Francisco, CA 94102

November 28, 2004

Subject: Laguna Honda Hospital Services for Chinese Patients

Dear Supervisor Elsbernd,

Thank you for taking the time to attend LHH resident Al Ward's meeting on November 24, at Laguna Honda Hospital. We appreciate your ongoing interest in the problems we are working to resolve collaboratively.

At the meeting, you heard testimony from LHH Social Workers who voiced their concerns about the impact of Health Director Dr. Mitchell Katz's unauthorized change of the LHH Admission Policy on San Francisco's Chinese Community. Basically, this change limits access to LHH for patients in communities outside the area served by SFGH. One result reported (Letter Attached) is that the census of Chinese patients at LHH has been cut in half.

We are writing in support of our Social Work colleagues' concerns about equal access to long-term care services at LHH – based on a review of our own data.

BACKGROUND:

On March 1, 2004, when the DPH Patient Flow Project was implemented, Dr. Katz ordered that LHH referrals from home and other hospitals should be set aside in favor of actual or potential SFGH referrals.

METHODS:

After our meeting, we conducted a hand-count of all Chinese patients on Ward M-5 from 2002 to date. Ward M-5 is the major LHH Admission Ward that places **long-term care** patients throughout our 1,000-bed hospital. The three smaller specialty shorter-term admitting units (the Hospice, the AIDS unit, and the Rehabilitation Unit) were not included.

We reviewed all Chinese-identified admissions to Ward M-5 for 24 months before the Flow Project, and in the 9 months after the Flow Project. Since we (MR and TS) personally admitted all these patients, we were able to exclude non-Chinese Asians (e.g., Southeast Asian, Filipino, Korean, Japanese) to focus on the distinct cultural group in question.

DATA:

	Before Flow Project (March 1, 2002 to February 27, 2004)		After Flow Project (March 1, 2004 to November 28, 2004)	
	Admissions (%)	Patients/Month	Admissions (%)	Patients/Month
Chinese	118 (15.4%)	4.9	26 (8.0%)	2.9
SFGH Chinese	34 (4.4%)	1.4	13 (4.0%)	1.4
Other Chinese	84 (11.0%)	3.5	13 (4.0%)	1.4
Total	764 (100.0%)	31.8	323 (100.0%)	35.8

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CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) Since the Flow Project was implemented in March, the number of Chinese patients admitted to Ward M-5 at LHH has dropped from 15.4% down to 8%.
- 2) Despite a **large** increase in patients admitted from SFGH, the flow of Chinese patients from SFGH has remained constant at 1.4 per month, or 4% of our admissions.
- 3) The flow of Chinese patients from home and all hospitals other than SFGH dropped from 11% down to 4% of M-5 admissions. Even when comparing the 9 months before with the 9 months after the change in the LHH Admissions Policy, a 50% decline in Chinese admissions from home and other hospitals is noted.

SUMMARY:

The DPH Flow Project should be re-examined in view of the apparent impact on Chinese San Franciscans requiring **long-term care**, who do not use SFGH.

The drive to move patients for fiscal reasons should be in keeping with the DPH Mission to **“ensure equal access to all.”**

We request that the DPH commission a **collaboratively planned audit** to review our findings. The audit should be ongoing to ensure that **de facto** restriction of LHH services does not occur after reinstating the LHH Admissions Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Maria Rivero, M.D.
Attending Physicians, M5 Admissions Unit

[Signature]
Timothy Skovrinski, M.D.

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Derek Kerr, M.D.
Hospice Attending Physician

cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Mayor
Edward Chow, M.D., President, Health Commission
Mitchell Katz, M.D., Director of Public Health
Anne Kronenberg, Deputy Health Director and Chair of Flow Committee
Sharon Kwong, LCSW, SFGH Acting Director of Social Services
Valerie Ng, M.D., PhD, SFGH Chief of Staff
Paul Isakson, M.D., LHH Medical Director
Monica Banchemo-Hasson, M.D., LHH Chief of Staff
Justice Harry Low, Laguna Honda Foundation
Adrienne Tong, LHH Deputy City Attorney
John Kanaley, LHH CEO

Attachment [November 24 Letter to Supervisor Elsbernd Signed by Six LHH Social Workers]