

August 4, 2010

Two San Francisco hospitals fail to plan for dialysis treatment in both replacement projects

by Patrick Monette-Shaw
SF Examiner.com | **SF Health Examiner**

Originally published at:
<http://www.examiner.com/article/two-san-francisco-hospitals-fail-to-plan-for-dialysis-treatment-both-replacement-projects>

Two San Francisco public hospitals have failed to adequately plan for dialysis treatment in both replacement projects currently under construction.

As I wrote on [July 22, San Francisco's dialysis treatment crisis is intimately linked](#) to chronic indecisions about Laguna Honda Hospital's (LHH) replacement facility.

Now, it appears San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) purposefully omitted including a dialysis unit in its replacement hospital.

Eliminating a dialysis unit isn't the only error SFGH has made. At one point, director of public health Mitch Katz admitted during a community forum that initial floor plans for SFGH's new hospital failed to include nursing stations on each floor. How do you operate an acute-care hospital without nursing stations?

A design change eventually restored the missing nursing stations.

Coincidentally, on the same day San Francisco Examiner [staff writer Katie Worth](#) published an article on July 20 describing the lack of dialysis centers in San Francisco, San Francisco's Health Commission held a regularly-scheduled meeting.

According to minutes of the Health Commission's July 20 meeting, commissioner Dr. Edward Chow "requested information on the current status of [Department of Public Health] dialysis services so that any misconceptions due to a recent newspaper article could be clarified." Chow was referring to Worth's article published that morning.

The minutes show Sue Currin, Chief Executive Officer of SFGH, informed Chow there are 13 dialysis chairs at SFGH, and when planning for the SFGH replacement hospital began a decision was made to move dialysis services to LHH's new facilities, hoping to expand to 30 chairs.

Currin claims "the one person who has protested" the dialysis move to LHH is an employee who wants the dialysis service to stay at SFGH for his convenience getting to work.

Currin ignores, as I reported on July 22, that LHH administrators appear never to have been in favor of more than six dialysis chairs, but only for LHH's patients, not outpatients or patients from SFGH.

When LHH eventually opens, it will open without dialysis chairs. LHH is already \$183 million over budget, and breaking information reveals another \$5 million cost overrun.

Problems with LHH's \$23 million third "site work" package may lead to further reductions in LHH's project "scope." There's no money left for a dialysis unit in LHH's replacement budget.

With no dialysis chairs planned for the new SFGH, how will this affect the dialysis crisis Ms. Worth reported on July 20?

Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com.



Two replacement public hospitals continue quibbling over which one will house dialysis services.

Photo Illustration: Patrick Monette-Shaw