Dr. Saunders Speaks For Community Health Council

The Community Health Council of Maryland with Dr. Oakley Saunders as chairman, has made recommendations to the Black Caucus of the Maryland General Assembly on Provident Hospital matters.

The Council has been vitally interested in the future of Provident Hospital, the receivership, reorganization and readjustment of what they term "the black community's most cherished and valuable resource."

DEMANDS

A special release outlines the Council's position on Provident in a section called, "Certain Specific Recommendations:

First — any legislation concerning Provident Hospital must originate from the Black Caucus since it is our community's representative,

Second — there should be a concerted effort to obtain annual appropriations from the state of Maryland for Provident because it has for too-long shouldered a greater burden of caring for patients who had no funds.

Third — there should be a permanent health committee within the Caucus to which Provident and other community health organizations can relate.

Fourth — the Caucus should take any steps necessary to assure that no transfers of real property or authority from Provident to the state occur.

We wish to reaffirm the earlier goals of the hospital: community hospital .

1) To maintain a general community hospital.

2) To operate training programs for physicians, dentists and nurses.

3) To develop relevant health programs for our community.

To achieve these goals we divide our recommendations in three areas:

GOVERNANCE

The Trustee Board should be reorganized to include 40 members of varying backgrounds for terms of three years on a rotating basis:

One-half should be from organizations in the area primarily served that have demonstrated an interest in the hospital.

2) One-fourth may be from the previous Trustee Board.

3) One-fourth should be selected without regard to geographic boundaries. Elected officers of the Boards of outreach programs, the Student National Medical Association, Executive Director of Hospital and President of the Medical Staff are automatically members of the Board.

4) An executive committee of 12 persons and chairmen should be elected after preliminary organization

5) The new Board should attend a workshop for hospital trustees prior to election.

6) There should be a clear delineation of duties, continuing education programs and mechanisms for removal of nonperformance via a formal evaluation system.

7) There should be no possibility of conflict of interest through business activity or family ties.

8) There should be public annual reports on the condition of the hospital.

9) One of the highest priorities of the new Board should be a broad based planning group to recommend short term and long term goals so as to anticipate the community health needs of the future.

ADMINISTRATION

1) The first priority should be improvement of public relations, i.e the attitude of the hospital personnel at all levels towards patients.

2) That a fiscal plan be developed to assure continued operation after the receivership has ended.

3) That explanation of charge and bill collecting system be made in simple language at the time of admission.

4) That the Health Departments of Baltimore City and the State of Maryland be approached to subcontract additional programs to the Hospital.

5) That there be a widening of the volunteer pool to serve the patients at Provident.

MEDICAL

1) There should be more health education programs for the community from the medical staff.

2) There should be streamlining of procedures to assure prompt clinics and emergency rooms, also consideration of night time clinics.

3) It is imperative that our community obtain health professionals who are trained to administer to our particular needs. Therefore, a teaching program with full-time physicians and dentists whose sole responsibility is supervising care and teaching doctors is a must.

4) There should be a recruitment program for additional family care type physicians.

5) Affirmative steps should be taken by the medical staff to insure maximum utilization of the hospital's facilities and services by the practicing health professionals in the community.

REVIEW

The Council reviewed its activities thus:

On April 27, 1973 the black community was shocked by the announcement that Provident Hospital had been placed in receivership.

This announcement was followed by firings, resignations, recriminations, charges and countercharges. There were few satisfactory answers forthcoming concerning the crisis affecting the hospital and the community.

The Community Health Council of Maryland assumed the role of coordinating and crystalizing general concerns:

Given the history and importance of Provident to the

(Continued on page 25)

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