



IACH Informer

Issue 5

October—December 2005

Irwin Army Community Hospital Opens Women's Health Center



One of our new labor, delivery, postpartum and transition rooms.

With the Army's Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley and Great Plains Regional Medical Command Commanding General, Brig. Gen. James B. Gilman on hand, Col. Marilyn H. Brooks, Hospital Commander, Irwin Army Community Hospital (IACH), cut the ribbon and officially opened its Women Health Center on October 13.

Also participating in the ribbon cutting were Maj. Mark Ochoa, Chief, Department of OB/GYN, Maj. Susanna Itara, Head Nurse, Birthing Unit, Sgt. 1st Class Annette Stewart, NCOIC, Mrs. Ingrid Alers, and Mrs. Diane Hardy, wife of the Fort Riley Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy. Following the ceremony was an open house for staff, visitors, and patients of the hospital.

The opening of the new OB/GYN clinic, along with the Labor, Delivery, Recovery and Postpartum (LDRP) unit, transitional nursery and operating room for cesarean sections is the culmination

of the planning and development that began several years ago with the actual construction phase beginning in May 2004.

The center, occupying IACH's entire third floor is furnished with all new equipment, to include ultrasounds, colposcopes and heated examination tables. To our patient's advantage are the centrally located clinic, labor, delivery and operating room, assuring streamlined care. One walk through the "Pods" – A, B, and C – is all one needs to know that the families will feel right at home in this warm, comfortable setting; almost like being home. Gilman attests to this, stating, "I thought the facility absolutely beautiful and I am

happy that the warriors at Fort Riley will have such a wonderful place to bring new members of the Army family into the world."

With the projected 66% increase of births at Fort Riley due to base realignment and modularity, this new center will, along with the increase in staff, be fully capable of handling the additional needs of our patients. The eight LDRP rooms and six antepartum/postpartum beds will ensure family centered care for our patients.

Comments during the open house ranged from "It's gorgeous! It is nice to have everything consolidated, allowing for better care and patient flow", to "the artwork is wonderful", "it's great to have the operating room in the back of the labor, delivery, recovery area." And from Karen Brough, CPAC, "What was really something to see was the looks on the young mom's faces as they walked around; the look of "wow". That is really what it is all about."

The OB/GYN Clinic began seeing patients on October 25th, with the Mother Baby Suite opening in November. One expectant mother, almost 9 months pregnant, wondered aloud "...if I'll be able to hold off my delivery until then."



Our new nursery.

No Shows—No Go

By Christopher Lowery
Chief, Customer Service Division

I have heard it said that if you No-Show, or miss your medical appointment at Irwin Army Community Hospital it's no big deal. Well, I have to tell you that even though you may not be charged a fee for missing your appointment you do pay for it in the end. Your Customer Service Division at Irwin has tracked and verified that historically the greatest concern from our patients is that of *Access to Care*, or the ability to make an appointment.

Very little is as frustrating as to need an appointment and to be told that there are none available. Did you know that on average ***one thousand appointments*** are missed every month? At twenty minutes per appointment we're talking 13.8 days of lost appointments; and those are 24 hour days! Doesn't that make you angry? Your access to care is lessened because of these no shows. So what can you do to help? It's really easy. If you can't make your appointment just call 239-DOCS or 239-7000 and let one of the clerks know. Not only will you be keeping yourself from being a No-Show, but you'll be helping your fellow patients with attending appointments they genuinely need.

On another note, in speaking with Capt. Jerry Silvers, DENTAC Executive Officer, he reports "an average of 167 dental appointments missed each month. That's nearly 21 days with one of our dentists sitting around twiddling his thumbs while those who need an appointment can't get one. Should you be unable to make your appointment please call the following numbers as they apply: Dental Clinic #1, 239-7955; Dental Clinic #3, 239-239-4261; and Dental Clinic #4, 239-4174."

Contraception Appointments

Is your husband scheduled to return from Iraq soon and contraception a concern? If so, the staff of the OB/GYN Clinic wants to help. Every Wednesday in November, the clinic has appointments available for those spouses whose husbands are returning and wish contraception advice or prescriptions.

The time to begin contraception is NOW! Forms are available for: birth control pills, intrauterine device, Ortho Evra Patch, the Nuva Ring, Depo Provera injections, diaphragms and condoms.

For those planning a pregnancy, folic acid before conceiving is necessary. The nurses in the OB/GYN Clinic will talk with you about how to plan a healthy pregnancy and schedule you for a pre-conception counseling appointment. Prenatal vitamins may also be ordered for you.

By calling 239-7419 or 239-7489 you can schedule a contraception appointment, receive information or fill a prescription.

Please note: These appointments are not for routine Well Woman exams. These appointments are geared towards patients who meet the above criteria. If you need a Well Woman exam, please call the appointment line at 239-DOCS (3627).

"Real joy comes not from ease or riches or from the praise of others, but from doing something worthwhile."

- Wilfred Grenfell

Safe Medicine Patch Disposal

By Anita Frye

Advertisements are everywhere about using patches which are placed on your body for administration of various medications.

A few common ones are to help you quit smoking, administer hormones and provide pain control.

New and used patches can be dangerous for your children and your pets. New patches contain lots of medicine and used patches can still contain medicine after you replace them with new ones.

For your own safety, do not apply heat to areas where you have placed patches. This may cause too much release of medications into your system.

Store patches safely. Children may think that they are Band-aids or stickers. Keep new patches far away from the reach or discovery of children. A high locked cabinet would be best.

Do not let children see you apply patches or call them "stickers"

To dispose of the patches fold the sticky sides together and place them in a sturdy container, preferably with a child-resistant cap. Be sure the opening is big enough for a folded patch to go in but small enough that a child's hand cannot. You might consider using a "sharps containers" that diabetics use for their insulin needles or ask your pharmacist for a large empty bottle or prescription vial with a child-resistant cap.

Whatever container you use, dispose of them frequently. The more used patches available to someone, the more seriously they can be harmed.

Flu Vaccinations

By Maj. Carol Hunter
Chief, Preventive Medicine

The annual Influenza (flu) Vaccination program for 2005-2006 has begun. In accordance with the Army Surgeon General's Policy for Influenza Vaccination, the first priorities for flu shots are deploying Soldiers, followed by high-risk beneficiaries and those in contact with high risk patients.

High-risk beneficiaries include:

- Children 6-23 months
- People aged 65 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People aged 2-64 years with high-risk medical conditions (asthma, chronic lung diseases, diabetes, cancer, HIV, chronic steroid therapy)
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers and individuals who have close contact with infants under six years old
- Healthy people aged 50-64

The next priorities for flu shots include trainee populations, all other military personnel, all other mission-essential Do D and contract workers, and all other healthy people aged 2-49. Anyone who feels they are high risk should call 239-DOCS (3627) for a consult.

Flu shots will be available to all beneficiaries in the Preventive Medicine Clinic, hospital basement, on a walk-in basis, from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday, November 21 and 22; Monday, November 28; and Wednesday, November 30. Those high risk patients, 24 months and younger, should still call for an appointment. ID cards are required.

Unit leaders will be able to schedule immunizations for their units at the CTMC once vaccine is available by calling 239-4411. The flu shot is mandatory for all AD personnel.

Our *Physical Therapy Clinic Patient Education Webpage* at <http://iach.amedd.army.mil/departments/phyTherapy.asp> offers education on the following: common musculoskeletal conditions; foot/ankle; low back; elbow; hand and wrist; hip; knee; leg; neck; shoulder; and miscellaneous such as: bursitis; contusion; diabetes and exercise; exercise and weight loss; muscle strain; pregnancy and exercise; and a walk-top-jog progression program. "It is our hope that both health care providers and patients alike will benefit tremendously from the information that we've put together on this webpage."

GOLD CARD INFORMATION

By Michelle Barrer

We want to thank you, our patients, for your continued support of the Third Party Collection Program and our Gold Card Program. With your help, we have collected over one million dollars in FY05! These funds are used to enhance your care here at Irwin Army Community Hospital. We have identified over 410 new health insurance accounts since the Gold Card Program began in October 2004.

When you come to the hospital, please be sure to bring the Gold Card that was mailed to you. When you bring in your Gold Card, you will not have to complete another DD Form 2569—Third Party Collection Program—Record of Other Health Insurance form, unless there is a change in your insurance coverage. By law, each patient must fill out this form and have it filed in their medical record, whether or not they have other health insurance coverage. If you do have other health insurance, please update your information with your insurance carrier annually. Additionally, the annual questionnaire sent to you by your insurance carrier must be completed and returned to them as soon as possible. Failure to complete and return information requested by your insurance carrier not only delays payment to IACH but to your outside providers as well.

Current gold "GOLD CARDS" expired on 30 September 2005. On your next visit to IACH you will be required to complete a new DD Form 2569. Once completed, we will mail you a new orange "GOLD CARD". Please be sure to fill out the form as accurately as possible, including address, signature and date. Forms without a signature are invalid and therefore discarded. For those patients who filled out new insurance forms after June of this year, we are issuing the new orange card. All orange cards are effective until 31 December 2006.

If you have any questions, our staff is located on the second floor of the hospital, in the Uniform Business Office, around the corner from the hospital chapel. We can be reached by phone at 239-7031, 7431, 7725, or 7636.

For appointments call (785) 239-DOCS (3627) or 1-888-239-DOCS (3627)

Visit TRICAREonline.com for patient information/Ft Riley website/Services/Medical, Health for IACH Intranet Information

Retiree Appreciation Day A Huge Success!



Capt. Nicholas Pefkaros, IACH Ophthalmologist discusses eye care with attendees.

The Retiree Appreciation Day, held on October 14 was jammed-packed from start to finish.

IACH's support of the event was an on-site Health Fair. Below are some of the many sections/services that were provided:

- Blood pressure screening
- Nutrition counseling/information
- Cataract screening
- General Health Advice—Preventive Service Guidelines
- Women's Health
- Environmental Health
- TRICARE Information
- Medical information & Pharmacy services
- Exercising safely
- Proper shoe wear/foot exams
- Stress reduction
- Chaplain
- Customer Service
- DENTAC

“Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It is what you do for others.”

- Danny Thomas

The Great Smoke-out and Tobacco Cessation

By Lt. Col. Frances West
Community Health Nurse

On November 17 the American Cancer Society will hold The Great American Smoke-out. This day is set aside for smokers to quit cigarettes for at least one day. The hope is that the challenge of not smoking for one day will lead to smokers deciding to completely give up the habit. Tobacco use, such as chewing tobacco is also discouraged.

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general. Quitting smoking has immediate health benefits by reducing the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease, larynx (voice box) cancer, throat cancer, cervical cancer, dental lesions and other conditions. Family and friends also benefit by not inhaling second hand smoke.

Reasons to stop smoking include:
Smokers have twice the risk of heart disease.
Smokers have six times the risk of emphysema.
Smokers have ten times the risk of lung cancer.
Smokers have a five to eight year shorter life span.
Smokers have more facial wrinkles.
Smokers have more gum disease.

The potential benefits of smoking are great:
Save money.
Improve health.
Reduce facial wrinkles.
Improve sense of smell and taste.
Perform better in physical activities.
Have healthier babies and children.
Enjoy retirement and grandchildren.

Tobacco Cessation classes are offered monthly at the Community Health Nursing Service, Preventive Medicine, Irwin Army Community Hospital. Smokers attend four, one hour sessions. You may be referred by your provider or self refer. The classes are open to all active duty, reservists, National Guard, dependents, retirees, and DOD civilians. Call 785-239-7323 for appointments.

Community Efforts . . .

- Happy/Adventure Meals/etc.: We need your help! We are collecting the little toys in the fast food chains' kid meals. They are being passed on to the local Crisis Center. We have found that often children are forced to abandon their homes and are unable to take along any of their own toys. These kid meal toys are perfect—small enough for a child to put in his/her pocket, and giving that child something again of their own. This small contribution costs us nothing and could mean so much. Won't you join us in this campaign? (Call Jan Clark, Public Affairs Officer, 239-7250).

- Pull for the House Pop Tab Recycling Program. Here again is an opportunity to extend a helping hand to others less fortunate. Turn saved pop tabs in to Jan Clark, PAO, 1st floor, room 1-N-7.

- Any other ideas for community support, just call 239-7250. Thanks in advance for your support!

CHCS II is Coming Soon!

Staff training is scheduled for January—March 2006, with proficiency expected by mid-May. This is a great program once up and running. Access to care will face some limitations, and your patience is appreciated during this transition. More information will follow in The Post and local papers.

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