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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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November 16, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, MD
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF KING/DREW MEDICAL CENTER TRAUMA UNIT

As part of the Department of Health Services' (DHS) evaluation of the trauma services at King/Drew Medical Center, the Department asked the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency to commission an outside quality review of the hospital's trauma program. EMS commissioned two outsider reviewers from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) to conduct this survey. Robert Coscia, MD, is an ACS fellow and the chairman of the ACS Verification Review Committee. Gil Cryer, MD, also an ACS fellow and surveyor, is the director of the trauma program at the UCLA Medical Center. Attached is the summary findings provided by the two outside reviewers.

The Department has sought to confirm the statements made about the quality and excellence of the King/Drew Medical Center trauma unit. Review of previous ACS reports showed that continued verification of the trauma center was denied on two occasions, and the detail of those reports raised specific, significant issues about the quality care in this unit. I felt that the Department and your Board needed to know whether those issues had been corrected or still existed. Based on the findings contained in this correspondence, it is clear these problems continue to exist and that the quality of care in the trauma unit is affected by the surrounding problems at the hospital.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

TLG:ak

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

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November 15, 2004

Thomas L. Garthwaite, MD
Director and Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health Services
313 North Figueroa
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Dr. Garthwaite:

In October 2004, the Department of Health Services requested a trauma surgeon consultation to conduct a review of the performance of the trauma service and necessary associated hospital support services that are provided at the Martin Luther King, Jr./Charles R. Drew Medical Center (MLK). On November 10, our analysis consisted of a review of approximately twenty selected 2004 trauma patient medical records and a discussion with medical personnel from the trauma hospital service at the facility.

It became apparent that the multitude of adverse factors affecting the medical center as a whole, have also impacted the trauma service. The ongoing issues plaguing this facility, i.e., lack of nurses and ancillary personnel, closure of physician residency programs, and other cited accreditation deficiencies, have resulted in poor to marginal trauma care overall. The following points were specifically identified as weaknesses:

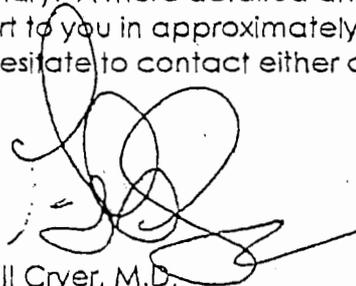
- Delays in time to operating room
- Inadequate patient monitoring due to nursing shortage and inadequate performance skills
- Inadequate medical documentation
- Lack of ICU/telemetry beds causing lengthy, unacceptable ER boarding
- Inadequate Quality/Performance Improvement program
- Delays in radiology procedures; specifically CAT Scan
- Delays in patient diagnosis attributed to all impacting factors
- Lack of coordination and accountability between administration and medical professionals and between physicians and nursing
- Delays in response of on-call back-up (second) surgeon

This will only serve as a brief executive summary. A more detailed analysis of these findings will be provided in a thorough report to you in approximately two weeks. Should you require additional information, do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Sincerely,



Robert Coscia, M.D.
Trauma Surgeon



Gill Cryer, M.D.
Trauma Surgeon