

# Community Hospital Cites Cooperative Package Plan

A proposal for a cooperative effort to provide better and less costly health care to the area has been offered by Community Hospital of Santa Cruz to Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital.

The proposal was revealed Wednesday by Anthony Daigle, Community administrator, following a press conference held by the Joint Planning Task Force at Dominican to announce Dominican's willingness to build and operate a 30-bed inpatient psychiatric facility at the Soquel Drive complex.

Daigle alluded to the proposal during the press conference and expressed surprise that it had not been included in the press packet given to news reporters.

The proposal covers shared purchasing, energy savings, education, nursing, shared community services, shared internal operations and use of subsidiaries of AMI, Community Hospital's owner, for a broad range of professional services.

In a letter covering the proposal, Daigle said: "At the outset, let me take the opportunity to express how delighted I am that the Sisters of Saint Dominic/Dominican Hospital and Community Hospital of Santa Cruz have begun an important Joint Planning Task Force. The Santa Cruz area is unique in that there are only two hospitals. Working together, I believe we can truly bring better quality care at a reasonable cost to this community."

"In this spirit I have attached a proposal outlining a number of areas where I believe we can work together . . ."

Daigle made it clear that Community does and will continue to oppose addition of 47 medical-surgical beds at Dominican. He said that an analysis by the Mid-Coast Health Systems Agency and another by Friesen International, an AMI-owned hospital consulting firm, shows there is no need for additional medical-surgical beds here now or in the foreseeable future.

"At the present time, on any given day, there are approximately 100 beds available in the community for service. By 1990, there will be need for only 239 beds, far less than the 330 beds already available," Daigle wrote.

Daigle then said he hoped that his

inability to support Dominican's application for the 47 medical - surgical beds which are now licensed to the county would not preclude the two hospitals from working together for the better health care of the community in the future.

Community is willing to share the planning talents of Friesen International with Dominican, Daigle said.

On the subject of shared purchasing, he notes that inflation has raised havoc with the cost of hospital supplies, causing them to increase from 15 to 18 percent this year. Volume purchasing could gain important discounts, and he said: "shared purchasing is the natural way two hospitals can work together."

An AMI energy management program has resulted in a 27 percent reduction in energy costs at Sierra Vista Hospital in San Luis Obispo (an AMI hospital). Daigle said: "While the technology is complex, the payback of invested capital was achieved in three years. We would be working together, and energy costs can be saved."

Joint efforts to provide continuing education for doctors and nurses could be fruitful, Daigle said. On the subject of nursing, he said, "Opportunity abounds for sharing opportunities to reduce costs. For example, establishment of a nursing per diem pool by both hospitals in order to adjust staffing for increasing census, development of combined R.N. refresher courses and other advanced courses, the development of combined recruiting activities . . ."

Shared social services, home health care programs, screening clinics, ambulatory care, speech therapy, occupational therapy and others would enable better and more efficient community service, Daigle said.

The hospitals also could economize through a shared billing service, biomedical engineering services, ancillary services and security. The hospitals could even share medical secretarial functions and medical directors, Daigle said.

Daigle told The Sentinel today: "We have not received a response from Dominican officials to this proposal."

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REFERENCE