

Physician takes reins at Dominican



MICKIEWICZ

Hospitals-Dominican Hospital Appointment first of its kind for hospital

By **JONDI GUMZ**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Dr. Nanette Mickiewicz, who has spent the past seven months as interim president of Dominican Hospital, can take the “interim” off her title.

Hospital officials announced Thursday that Mickiewicz was the unanimous choice of the search committee, which looked nationwide for a successor when Sister Julie Hyer stepped down after 21 years. Mickiewicz's salary wasn't disclosed.

One of three finalists, Mickiewicz had been overseeing the 379-bed hospital, its 1,700 employees, 500 physicians and 500 volunteers since December. She is the first physician to lead the 65-year-old hospital.

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“I'm very proud of the work that we've done as an institution over the past seven months, and I'm very excited thinking about what we can accomplish as we go forward,” she said.

Mickiewicz, 45, took the interim post after spending 13 years as a member of the hospital's medical staff and serving as the chief medical officer. Her specialty is infectious diseases and internal medicine.

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Among her accomplishments since December:

- Improvement in patient satisfaction scores, from 89 percent in December to 93 percent in March.

“We want 100 percent,” Mickiewicz said. “We're going to get there.”

- Establishing a new collaboration involving Western Medical Associates, Santa Cruz Medical Foundation, the county and Dominican for doctors to provide medical care for hospital patients who lack insurance or a primary care physician.

- Meeting targets for quality metrics in treating heart failure, pneumonia, and heart attack patients.

“We are above 90 percent,” Mickiewicz said.

The key to improvement is “focus and accountability,” she said, explaining how hospital staff now review patient charts “in real time so we can intervene.”

Her next project, she said, will involve creating a new foundation to recruit and retain primary care physicians. Fewer doctors are available to provide that care, and turnover is high among family practitioners, pediatricians and internists.

“Finances, quality of life and type of practice available play into keeping people in the community,” Mickiewicz said.

It's not unusual for a search to result in an insider pick, according to Elaina Genser of Witt/Kieffer in Emeryville, who has worked on executive searches since 1984.

“If you haven't ruffled feathers but continued to move initiatives forward, there's a pretty good

chance,” Genser said. “A search allows a board to look at a range of other candidates. They will ask: Is this person doing as well or better than somebody else? An internal person will know all the players. If you have to hit ground running, they will do pretty well.”

Mickiewicz's track record garnered the attention of Catholic Healthcare West, a \$6 billion system that runs Dominican in Santa Cruz and 41 other hospitals.

Jeffrey Winter, president of the CHW group operations, cited her “operational and strategic leadership” and her devotion to the core values of the Dominican Sisters who founded the hospital.

Bob Semas, executive director of the Dominican Hospital Foundation, said Mickiewicz had an edge on outside applicants.

She knows the culture of the hospital, and being a doctor, she can relate to the doctors working at the hospital, he said. In fact, she plans to continue to take calls for infectious disease cases every other weekend, so she will experience what other doctors experience.

“She's positive,” Semas said. “She's upbeat and at the same time she says, ‘Here's where we are going.’”

When the foundation started a physicians' giving club, Mickiewicz was a pacesetter donor and persuaded other doctors to join her. Today, the Pteron Society [named for the Greek word for wing] is a model program for philanthropy.

“She is liked and respected by the Dominican staff,” said Dr. Andrew Nevitt, Dominican's chief of medical staff.

Others with compliments for Mickiewicz include Diane Siri, a longtime educator who chairs the hospital community board; Sister Janet Capone, director of sponsorship at the hospital; and Satish

Dr. Nanette Mickiewicz

AGE: 45.

CAREER: President, Dominican Hospital; formerly chief medical officer; member of the executive leadership team since 2000; member of the medical staff for 13 years; medical practice in infectious diseases.

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree, biology, St. Mary's College in Moraga; Chicago Medical School; residency and fellowship in internal medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

FAMILY: Married to Dr. Michael Ellison; 17-year-old twin daughters [Michele, going to UC Davis, and Melissa, going to UC San Diego]; sons Andrew, 13, will attend Palma, and Alex, 11, attends Holy Cross.

QUOTE: ‘Being a parent and being a mom, being able to multitask has served me well.’

Sheth, vice president at Cemex and a member of the search committee.

“She is a dynamic, vibrant person, someone that the whole community connects with,” Sheth said.

Mickiewicz also has a sense of humor.

She's the shortest in her family — her husband is more than 6 feet tall — and she quipped that she is “5-foot-8, no, 5-foot-7 and 3/4.”

Carrie Arnone, who heard Mickiewicz speak to the Capitola-Soquel Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, was surprised to learn she managed her career while raising four children.

“Quite impressive,” Arnone said.

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