Malheur Memorial Hospital Progress

TERESA PETERSON OF PARMA is pictured in one of the new Simmons Electric beds. Teresa was in the hospital for the purpose of having her tonsils removed, which Dr. Kerby did the following morning.

It has been six months now since the voters approved a special tax levy for Malheur Memorial Hospital District. A great deal, not all apparent to the eye, has taken place during this period.

According to hospital administrator, Jim Mattes, progress is being made in developing programs to solve the hospital's problems, despite the fact that no tax revenues will actually be received by the hospital until December of this year. A total of $17,000 worth of the most urgent equipment needs have been purchased, including: six electric beds, seven wheelchairs, remodeling required to accommodate the new ambulance, an anesthesia machine, dictating equipment, and two new typewriters. Other planned equipment purchases and remodeling have been deferred until budget revenues have been received.

Physician recruitment, has not produced any new doctors yet, but is still active, and on-going. The hospital's recruitment committee has been extremely busy: screening more than one thousand doctors, corresponding with over two hundred by mail, visiting with over one hundred by phone, meeting with some 20 interested doctors, and entertaining fifteen doctors in this community. The only consolation Nyssa has in being turned down so many times, is in the fact that hundreds of small communities elsewhere in the country are experiencing identical problems.

In a profile it was revealed that the ideal city for a doctor to locate in, was as follows:

Not under 5,000 population and not over 10,000.

Had a modern hospital less than five years old, with new equipment, counseling services, special services and special equipment.

Groups of doctors (being 4-5) practicing together.

A reasonable distance from a cultural center. (Boise does not qualify as a cultural center).

Social and cultural advantages within comunity.

Good school districts.

Of this list, the only one Nyssa meets is, the good school district. In the recruiting, it has also been discovered that recreation is not a priority and this was one point that the hospital has used in their advertising.

Hospital business losses will not be reversed until more patients are treated by new doctors. In 1973 a patient origin study identified 59% of the people with a 97913 zip code, who required hospitalization, were not treated at Malheur Memorial Hospital. Today's estimates range as high as 80%, resulting in a 28% decrease in business during fiscal year 1976-1977. Business has decreased an average of 25% per year for the last five years, causing the hospital to lose money and to look at alternatives to alleviate the situation.

The Hospital Board and Administration have been extremely busy prioritizing and testing various alternative future courses for the facility, including:

1) Conversion to a mental health treatment center - this alternative was rejected because of a lack of funding from the state. Also, the State hospital in Pendleton will not be closed as was originally planned.

2) Merger or consolidating services with Holy Rosary Hospital in Ontario - this alternative was rejected by Ontario. Timing was not right for a merger because of Ontario's commitment to a building project at their present site, the fact the Ontario doctors were unable to establish a group practice in Nyssa, and because hospital departments could not be exclusively consolidated between hospitals.

3) Convert to a nursing home - this alternative is not feasible at this time, since no additional nursing home business is available to fill the space vacated by the hospital. The cost of maintaining a half empty building or converting it to a nursing home is prohibitive.

4) Grants - several grants have been applied for. All have been turned down, with the exception of one, about which the hospital has not yet heard.

5) Contract agencies - no one appears to be interested in purchasing the hospital or providing doctors through hospital corporation contracts.

6) Closure - this is a last alternative only.

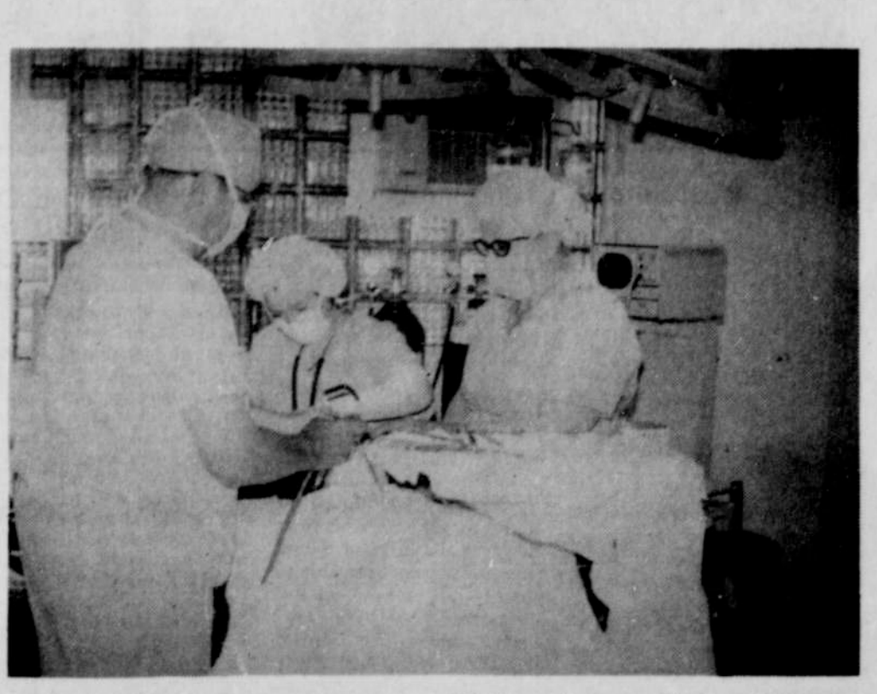
7) Recruit permanent physicians to Nyssa - to date this has been unsuccessful.

8) Establish a clinic in the hospital staffed by doctors practicing elsewhere in the valley - this appears to be the most promising alternative. The hospital is exploring the possibility of affiliating with Mercy Medical Center in Nampa, and relying upon the Nampa medical staff to establish a clinic inside the Nyssa hospital.

The clinic would emphasize outpatient care and seems to offer tremendous opportunities for local people to have access within the community, to a variety of specialists.

A special study of this proposal is to commence on September 1st, during which time Malheur Memorial Hospital intends to send out a progress report and solicit public views regarding the future mission of the hospital

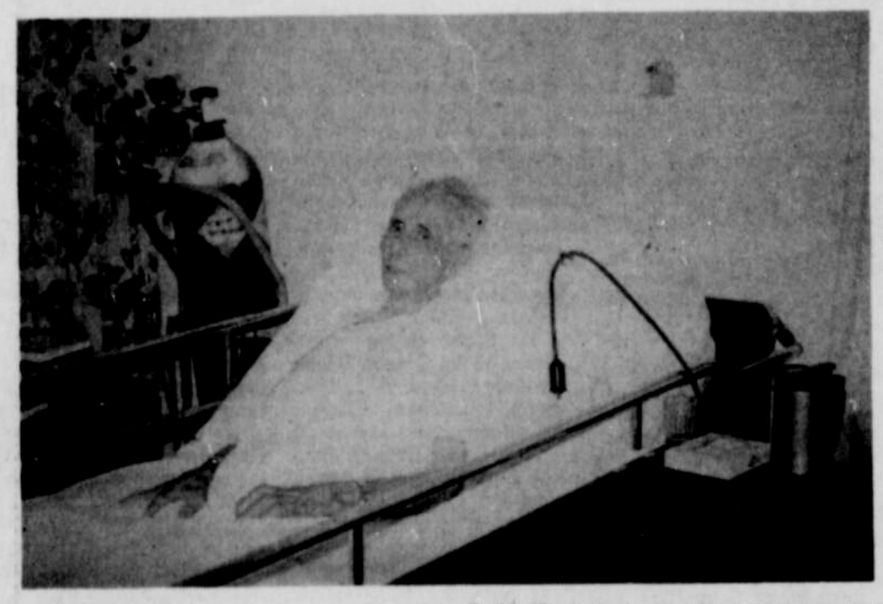
Results of the study and plan of implementation, if accepted by the board, will be made public as soon as they are available.



SHOWN IN THE OPERATING room are Dr. K. E. Kerby, Anesthetist Polly Cundiff and Lillian Wagner, scrub nurse. In the background is the new EKG Heart Monitor. The latest piece of equipment added to the operating room, out of sight behind Polly Cundiff (center), is an Anesthesia Machine which was recently purchased at a cost of $3300.00.

GERRI LASCH AND PATSY PATERSON are pictured with the new ambulance. As LPNs these women are also called upon to help the local police EMTs in the operation of the ambulance.

LYNN WAHLERT is shown with two of the latest pieces of office equipment to be purchased. Lynn is operating the new IBM Selectric II typewriter, in the background is one of the two new Medical Records Transcribers. Malheur Memorial recently purchased two of the new IBMs at a cost of $750.00 each and two of the Medical Records Transcribers at $600.00 each.



EDWARD CLARK is pictured in one of the nine newly purchased Simmons Electric Beds. These beds are the very latest and were purchased for $1500.00 each which included the bedside furniture.

PICTURED IN THE HOSPITAL beauty shop are from left to right, Nellie Newbill, Angie Cook and Betty Johnson of Owyhee Beauty Shop. The day of this photo Angie Cook was celebrating her 90th birthday. Nellie Newbill is pictured in one of the seven new Everest & Jennings Wheelchairs recently purchased at a cost of $200.00 each.

IN JUNE, THE HOSPITAL took possession of this new ambulance. It was manufactured in Illinois by the LeBaron Ambulance Company at a cost of approximately $18,000. It contains all of the latest equipment. The unit will be driven by an off-duty policeman EMT, (Emergency Medical Technician). Also assisting the officer will be a nurse from the hospital.

LOCATED JUST OFF THE RECREATION room is the hospital patio. Many improvements have been made here in the last year giving patients and residents of the nursing home a place to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.