

From: wendy Pollock [wendypollock@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2009 10:52 AM
To: Linda HOGAN
Subject: call me please

Hi Linda,

Working at home this am and wondering if we can chat!
 865-3907 or 232-3738

Below is some info on a cool program in Farmington ME.

Wendy

Be the change you wish to see in the world
 -Gandhi

Contract for Care

Franklin Memorial Hospital has revived an age-old solution to a modern problem: allow people to volunteer and work off their bills when they cannot otherwise pay for them. Hospital President Rick Batt introduced the program, *Contract for Care*, in 1998 as a pilot program.

The primary purpose of the *Contract for Care* is community service. People whose income falls between 100 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level will qualify, and they must either have no insurance or very limited insurance so that they are unable to pay the balance of their bill. This program is for those whose bills probably would not be paid otherwise.

The *Contract for Care* program matches people's skills with projects that need to be completed at the hospital and allows the former patient, a family member, or a friend to work off the bill. The program is totally voluntary. The former patient or a representative of that person volunteers to do one of the available projects, and the hospital voluntarily credits their account in full, an arrangement that is made clear in a [letter of agreement](#) from the hospital to the volunteer.

People working under the *Contract for Care* do not replace hospital employees, and participants in the program, who must fall below the poverty guidelines to qualify, will still be eligible for charity care. "We've set up a thorough screening process to assure that we don't inadvertently place the person at risk of losing any state or federal aid," Batt said.

Patients who participated in the pilot project report a high degree of satisfaction. Former FMH patient Della O'Leary paid off her share of an \$8,000 gall bladder surgery by doing data entry work. "It gave me a good feeling to know I wasn't a charity case. I enjoyed it," she said. Bo Jespersen, who had wrist surgery following a motorcycle accident, called the program "noble." He worked in the same emergency department where he was treated, cleaning up, taking samples to the lab, and reassuring fearful patients.

The Wall Street Journal, *The Boston Globe*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *the LA Times*, *the NBC Today Show*, the Associated Press, hundreds of smaller papers across the nation, and numerous trade

publications have done stories on the program. Richard Wade, senior vice president of the American Hospital Association, said the program is unique. "To our knowledge this is the only program quite of its kind in America." Some of these stories are linked below:

- [Will Work for Surgery](#)
- [Healthy Trade](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Contract for Care

Q. Why is Franklin Memorial Hospital doing this?

A. The primary purpose is community service. We have many people here that do not have the ability to pay their bills in a traditional way.

Q. Will the hospital make money on this?

A. No. We may break even on the program at best, but this is not why we are doing this. We are doing this because it is good for the community.

Q. Who qualifies for this program?

A. Individuals whose income falls between 100 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level. They either have no insurance or very limited insurance and no ability to pay the balance of their bill. Family members and friends can also participate in the program.

Q. Can't you just set up payment plans?

A. Those who can make payments do so. This program is for the people who cannot make payments. Their bill will not be paid otherwise, or it would be paid over a long period of time. Generally the bill is written off.

Q. Then why not just write it off?

A. People want to pay their bills if they can. The people who went through the pilot program last year speak openly about how this improved their self-esteem and made them feel they were providing a valuable service in exchange for a bill that otherwise may not have been paid or paid at great financial burden to the patient.

Q. What will they be doing?

A. Special, short-term projects, not jobs currently filled by regular employees. This program will displace no one.

If you have questions about *Contract for Care*, or would like to speak to someone further about the program, please contact Franklin Memorial Hospital's [Director of Volunteer Services](#).