

Health

Elderly abuse runs rampant

"If a nation is judged by how it treats its aged citizens, we must don a hair shirt of shame with 1 million senior Americans victims of abuse each year," Senator John Heinz (R-PA) said today, speaking in support of legislation to create a task force on elder abuse.

Heinz noted that while the 75-plus age group is the fastest growing segment of the population, and statistically the most at risk of abuse, "we know so very little about the extent of the problem, even less about the causes, and nothing at all about solutions." Government spends less than \$3 on protective

services for each elder abuse victim, but seven times that amount for child abuse victims.

In the five-county area of Pittsburgh, 162 cases of elder abuse were reported in a 12 month period ending June, 1985, Heinz said. Although physical maltreatment accounts for about 75 percent of reported cases, many abusers of the elderly employ more subtle means. The Senator cited examples of an 85-year-old woman whose daughter took her Social Security checks and spent them on shopping sprees and drugs, and the son who refused to allow his elderly mother to eat.

As Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, Heinz said he is particularly sensitive to added pressures created for family caregivers by Medicare's new method of hospital reimbursement. Under the Prospective Payment System, patients come out of hospitals sicker, needing greater levels of care for more extended periods of time.

"Families burdened with such heavy levels of care will experience stress that can lead to abuse," said Heinz. Exacerbating the situation is the absence of any coherent long



Nurses honored

Wilkes-Barre General Hospital's Operating Room (OR) nurses recently celebrated National Operating Room Nurses Day by setting up a "mock" operating room in the hospital lobby, complete with a "patient" and surgical instruments. Operating room nurses staffed the display throughout the day, answering questions on OR nursing duties, uses of surgical instruments on display, and surgical procedures. The unique and informative display was meant to better familiarize the public with the different aspects of the surgical setting. Pictured above are three surgical nurses who helped staff the lobby display. From left, Edwina Soreth, R.N., Plains; Lisa Zorzi, R.N., Wilkes-Barre and Lynne James, R.N., Shavertown.

Blue Cross begins annual campaign

Gilbert D. Tough, president and chief executive officer, Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania, announced recently that the regional hospital service organization, in cooperation with Pennsylvania Blue Shield, has begun its second consecutive, month-long Drunk Driving Awareness Program which urges motorists to refrain from driving while under the influence of alcohol, especially during the upcoming holiday period.

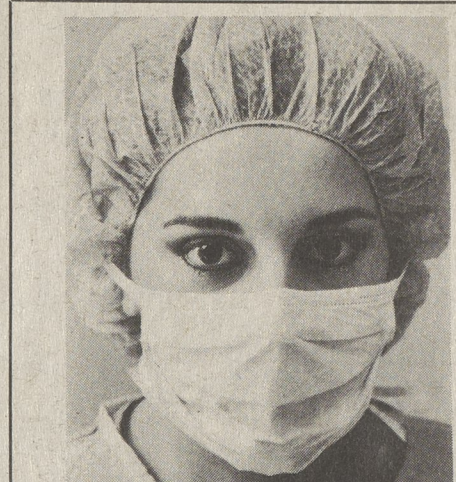
"As a caring organization, which serves the health care needs of more than 645,000 subscribers in 13 counties of northeastern Pennsylvania," Tough said, "we would hope that our message, 'Don't Drink and Drive,' will be remembered by all who sit behind the wheels of their vehicles during this holiday season. The grim reminders of countless innocent persons who have suffered

serious injuries and, most importantly, the lives of loved ones that have been destroyed by careless, inconsiderate drivers are part of today's road safety lessons that cannot be over emphasized."

Tough added that, in its attempt to publicize the importance of the Drunk Driving Awareness Program, Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Blue Shield have launched a two-prong effort as a means for urging public cooperation. During the past week, more than 100,000 brochures on "A Sensible Guide to Alcohol and You" were mailed to business and industry groups, and other community service agencies, which cite suggestions, tips, and other facts for persons to consider before and after drinking alcoholic beverages.

As a pre-holiday campaign

starter, Tough stated that a news conference involved concerned area principals who have endorsed the program will be held in the Blue Cross Building, Wilkes-Barre, December 9, at 10 a.m. Addressing media representatives will be Tough, and the following participants: Ms. Donna F. Hooper, project director of S.O.B.E.R. (Slow on the Bottle, Enjoy the Road); Ms. Alice Deats, president of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers), who will conduct a brief candlelight vigil ceremony memorializing victims of drunken drivers; Thomas M. Cesarini, associate director of the Luzerne County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program; David Lombard of Clearbrook Lodge; Debbie Ropers of the Luzerne County Court Advocate Program; Luzerne County District Attorney Robert Gillespie; Lackawanna County District Attorney Ernest Preate; Bernard Ott, coordinator of the Luzerne County Seatbelt Program, and several local and state officials.



ARE YOU HAVING SURGERY AT WILKES-BARRE GENERAL HOSPITAL?

If so, you might be interested in attending General's new "Pre-Surgical Class," beginning January 8 and held every other Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the hospital. The informal class, which is also open to family members of patients scheduled for surgery and for parents whose children will undergo an operation, is one-hour long and is held in a group setting. Class is free-of-charge with free parking in the hospital parkade.

To register, call 829-8111, extension 2205 or complete the form below. (Persons registering by mail will be notified of next available class.)

Class format includes discussion about:

- reasons for pre-operative fasting and medication
- operating and recovery room routines
- the administration and effects of anesthesia
- post-operative exercises and the post-operative period
- pain control

I would like to attend an upcoming class.

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My family physician is

My surgeon will be

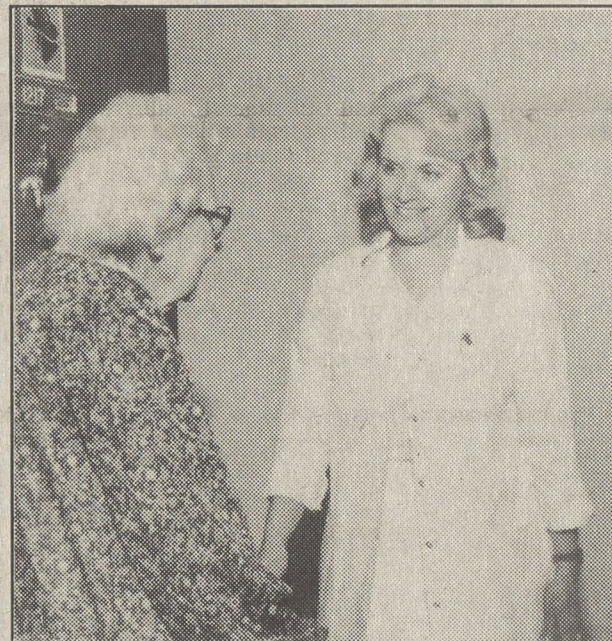
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Mercy gets accreditation

Mercy Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, has been awarded a three-year Certificate of Accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH). JCAH accreditation is evidence of Mercy's efforts to provide quality health care for residents of the Wyoming Valley area.

To become accredited, Mercy voluntarily requested an on-site evaluation by JCAH surveyors who applied standards designed to further the objectives of quality patient care and the safety of the environment in which that care is provided. These national standards represent a consensus among health care professionals and are periodically updated to reflect changes in health care delivery.

JCAH is a private, not-for-profit organization created by and composed of health care professionals.

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Dr. Murray Dolphin, local cataract-implant surgeon, announces the enlargement of his offices for the rendering of a second opinion regarding the advisability of cataract or cataract-implant operations.

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