

Swamp Note by patient

“Gone to lunch, see Karen”

One of the halls of Old Dominion Hospital has a proud chronicle of the hospital developing into a Learning Organization. A suggestion box for employees was introduced in 1954 long before such organizations were described. Over the years the hospital has integrated and rewarded suggestions for improving care and service. Recognition is prompt and consistent. The original administrator has received multiple honors, promotions and national recognition.

After recently visiting a number of other local hospitals and finding the usual confusion of where to go and who to ask for I was immediately impressed by a sign on an empty desk. So often you wait there wondering, am I in the right place. Will he or she ever come back? How long should I wait. The sign said “Gone to lunch. See Karen.” In large bold letters. Sure enough there was another desk with the name “Karen.” Someone noted that patients had the experience I described above and then thought was given on how to deal with this confusion **pro-actively. Contrast this example with “You Cannot Eat Off The Floors Anymore”**, in that example unsafe and unsanitary behavior is passively tolerated, creating an infection hazard for vulnerable patients.

Discussion: This is a difference in “climate” not culture. In one hospital or clinic there is attention to detail and an effort to actively address problems. The other hospital’s clinic, despite being brand new and beautiful is unsafe because of WHAT? How did they become inattentive and neglectful?

Knowledge Base: staff-patient relationships, nursing care, work rules, policy, communication, lack of time, exemplar, forgetting, positive interaction, outpatient care day surgery, acute care, moral action, moral agency. **Exemplar**

Work Points: teaching example, positive example, design example, deserves replication