MELOMED HOSPITAL HOLDINGS LTD

Incorporating Melomed Gatesville, Melomed Mitchells Plain and the new Melomed Bellville

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Special Projects, Independent Newspapers, Cape

Looking to a brighter future for South African health care

From page 28

Melomed's CEO, Ridwaan Allie, described the rationale behind this extra service.

"Because the Melomed hospital group is opening the private health care service to previously disadvantaged areas, it is quite possible for a member of Parliament and someone from an informal housing settlement to be lying in adjacent beds. Although companies may be providing medical scheme cover for their employees, the patient may be supporting a large family and so slippers might still be an extravagance they cannot afford," Allie said.

By providing the same for every patient on admission, Melomed is aiming to prevent patients from feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease.

"We are targeting both the 'have' and 'have not' market and providing world-class facilities," said Allie. "We aim to make every patient feel, when they leave our hospital, that they have been well looked after and cared for."

The paediatric ward is designed to make the whole hospital experience less traumatising for children and parents, explained Joe Regal, facilities manager of Melomed Hospital Holdings. Not only does every bed have a LCD TV, so children won't miss their favourite programmes, but there is also a connection for a PlayStation to help ease the hours of boredom for every child confined to a bed. Bright, cheerful colours, the theme of pirates (the nurses' station is in the shape of a pirate ship) and scenes from Cape Town harbour create a lighter atmosphere, to give children every opportunity to focus on something other than their illness and discomfort, and to encourage interest in their surroundings.

A colourful play area provides welcome distractions for those able to get out of bed. Just like adults, every paediatric patient receives a gift on admission – a backpack containing fun furry animal slippers and a teddy bear or soft toy to cuddle for comfort. Parents' comfort is also catered for – a separate waiting room with recliner chairs allows parents to take a break and get some rest.

A spacious nursery adjoins the maternity ward with a wide window for relatives and family to view newborns. Isolation-unit incubators provide a specialist environment for premature infants or ill neonates who need special care. New mothers receive a Melomed bag containing nappies and a selection of baby toiletries to get them started in the first few days of motherhood can be speedily dispensed, and a kiosk opposite reception provides drinks, snacks, balloons, flowers and toiletry essentials for visitors' and patients' convenience. The hospital kitchen is fully halaal and caters for special dietary needs and preferences, when required.

The spiritual needs of patients and visitors have not been neglected. Prayer facilities, where people can pray and sit quietly away from the bustle and stress of the hospital, are available on the third floor.

Melomed Bellville has four theatres with holding and recovery areas, and a setting room for organisation of the instruments, equipment and medication required for each procedure.

The 11-bed intensive care unit (ICU) contains the latest technological equipment to assist the dedicated critical care trained staff to ensure that critically ill patients receive the best care possible.

A fully equipped 24-hour trauma unit and ambulance service take care of medical emergencies. The unit has four beds, a resuscitation room and a procedure room. A pharmacy on the first floor ensures patients' medication can be dispensed speedily.

PathCare, the private pathology practice servicing patients at the new Melomed Bellville Hospital, has a modern, convenient pathology laboratory on site to facilitate a fast turnaround time for pathology test results.

Standard blood and urine tests, including liver and kidney function, full blood count, coagulation studies and cardiac enzymes can already be conducted on the premises, while endocrinological tests like thyroid function and hormonal tests are done at the PathCare laboratory a kilometre away.

Tests that require more advanced procedures (such as HIV and H1N1 virus testing) are sent away to the reference laboratory at N1 City.

Offering paperless technology, all patient data is captured directly onto the computer, thereby making a return visit much easier for patients, as there is no need to fill in forms updating details – any changes (for example, address or cell-phone number) can simply be mentioned to the reception staff and will be updated immediately. The electronic system also saves costs and time, because by the time a patient's blood reaches the medical technologist in the lab, she already knows what tests she has to perform, or whether the sample has to be prepared for referral to the main reference laboratory for processing. Equally the hospital has adopted a greener approach, understanding that the day-to-day running of any hospital may involve life-saving or health-enhancing aspects that may not always have a favourable effect on the environment. Awareness of the environmental impact of health-related processes is something that is being taken into consideration more and more.

Although we are far from a paperless society, we are being encouraged daily to think before we print. For example, no X-ray films are produced at all.

Once the scan has been completed, the image is loaded onto a picture archiving and communication system (PACS) and it is readily available for the doctor to view on his computer in his rooms or in the wards on the hospital network. This has led to the hospital adopting a paperless way of conducting affairs, as far as possible and, to date Melomed Bellville is approximately 80% paperless. Other efforts to save energy and water are made consciously everyday at Melomed Bellville.

Adding to its medical advancements, the hospital has one of the first fully digital and electronic radiology units in the Western Cape. Morton and Partners provides a full radiology service for patients in the hospital and to the consulting doctors in their rooms.

The introduction will see patients experiencing reduced waiting times, as patients attending the radiology unit for examinations don't have to wait while the films are being processed since the PACS system allows for more efficient service.

An obvious leader in the area of medicine and patient care, the Melomed Hospital Holdings group has been at the forefront of advancement in many areas and continues to be that beacon of success that will provide excellent medical care to the people of an ever-changing and evolving democratic South Africa.

MELOMED BELLVILLE MANAGEMENT: Mr F Pedro (pharmacy manager), Rn R Jordan (deputy nursing services manager), K De Klerk (hospital manager) and Rn L Du Toit (nursing services manager).

Melomed 24-hour Emergency Units

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ATTENTION TO DETAIL: The Melomed Bellville reception.

COMFORT: One of the 11 private suites at Melomed Bellville.

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