Open Foundation Course, 1987

Australian History - Research Assignment

"The Friends of Warrnambool Hospital"

(Tuesday 7pm-9pm)
"The Friends of Wallasey Hospital" is a voluntary welfare organization which commenced in 1967. The then Board of Directors had been approached by a local clergyman who presented a case for non-medical and non-nursing services which could be performed for patients. A public meeting was called with good response, and "The Friends" founded.

Various services were able to be carried out by the newly formed group and included message andERRand, and the washing of clothing for patients with nowhere to do this for them. Members were also available to assist if a mother was hospitalized and the father unable to cope with a child at home. The child would be cared for by a "friend" in their own home until such time as the child could return to their family home. Hairdressing and interpretation services were organized if required. Other members would assist by the transporting of the patient or shocked relative not able to get home by their own means and too disturbed to travel by public transport. It was also possible to assist the discharged patient who required help in the home, until such times as they could cope themselves or until official agencies could be organized. Some of the services are now carried out by the Social Work Department, and were transferred to this Department, when a part-time Welfare Officer, and later, a Social Worker, were appointed.

One group was formed to provide services to children who were hospitalized. This group was able to
expand its activities with the appointment of a teacher, initially providing part-time then subsequently full-time enabling the children to continue with their education. This facility was utilized by the College of Advanced Education with students attending for practical experience. As the hospital no longer accommodates major paediatric cases, the group has been phased out.

A Day Care Centre was established, catering for long-term inpatients and outpatients who needed some form of activity. This group would attend on a specific day and conduct craft and games activities. With the advent of the Therapeutic Assessment and Rehabilitation Unit, this group now caters for a 23-bed unit plus day patients, with similar activities to those when the group commenced.

Two groups have been formed to assist staff rather than patients. The Flower Group was formed to relieve the nursing staff of the tasks of arranging and caring for patient flowers. The Blanket Group undertakes the tasks of assembling the necessary medical records. Sheets used when a patient is admitted to hospital so that the chart is already assembled and available for use when the patient presents to the ward.

Unfortunately, it seems that not all patients equally appreciate the service provided by the voluntary workers, despite the fact that such services are of a personal nature. However, it is considered that there will always be a need for voluntary workers within the hospital situation and especially in view of
an ageing population. This is an area where there will be a greater need for voluntary help, to support trained personnel working in this specialty.
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Signed

Date 18/9/1987

Interviewer