

10 Thank you. The Patient Safety Commission is
11 pleased to welcome participant number 12, Meredith
12 Richter.

13 We also want to welcome Ralph Cerny.

14 MS. RICHTER: Just a brief comment about me.
15 I'm Meredith Richter. I'm from Petoskey. I'm a
16 retired professor of nursing from North Central
17 College.

18 First of all, I am here to represent the
19 Citizens to Save Healthcare. This is testimony, then,
20 regarding patient safety.

21 I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the
22 Commission on Patient Safety. Holding these hearings
23 bodes well for Michigan. We have every hope that
24 patient safety and medical error reduction will be the
25 result.

1 Citizens to Save Healthcare is a group that
2 formed during the nurses strike at -- and I'm not
3 supposed to mention the hospital; is that correct?
4 All right. But in Petoskey.

5 Our purpose has been to monitor health
6 services at the hospital during the strike and to seek
7 solutions to end the labor dispute.

8 The strike is now two years old and is the
9 longest running nurses strike in the history of the
10 United States, a claim that no one ever could have
11 dreamed.

12 Our group is comprised of citizens from
13 northern Michigan. We include professionals, white
14 and blue collar workers, ministers, retirees, former
15 teachers, retired nurses, and lawyers.

16 We are not affiliated with the union that is
17 currently involved with the unstated hospital in
18 Petoskey, so we in no way have any affiliation with
19 that group, but we do have in many instances striking
20 nurses in our families and/or among our friends.

21 I would just add, too, that because I have
22 been retired now for a few years, many of the nurses
23 that are the experienced nurses that are now on strike
24 have been my students from years past, but they are
25 both on the inside and the outside of this issue.

1 We are also not a professional healthcare
2 group, although many of us are former healthcare
3 workers.

4 We have learned that good healthcare is not
5 just procedures, medicine, and new equipment.

6 Motivated and experienced healthcare providers who
7 have dignity, self-respect, and job security are
8 perhaps the most important ingredient in the
9 healthcare mix.

10 Unlike the hospital, we have always believed
11 that one of the most important goals of any hospital
12 should be to keep its experienced nurses at work.

13 In the body of our written report -- and I've
14 supplied five copies that can be seen at the back
15 table -- we have included several areas that we feel
16 would create opportunity for bettering the hospital's
17 ability to serve the public interest. And, briefly,
18 these would include:

19 Number one, nonprofit hospital boards should
20 have appointments from community and employee
21 organizations. If you have real community input on
22 the composition of the Board of Trustees, it stands to
23 reason that hospitals will be run for the best
24 interests of the community rather than the personal
25 interests of hospital administrators.

1 Number two, hospitals should publish
2 infection rates on a quarterly basis. Publication of
3 infection rates would force hospitals to compete while
4 providing citizens with relevant information.

5 Number three, require detailed financial
6 disclosure from nonprofit hospitals. In so doing, the
7 community has the information that reveals what
8 portion of limited healthcare resources are being
9 spent and on what.

10 As in the current strike at the hospital in
11 Petoskey, there are many travel nurses who are not
12 familiar with hospital routines and procedures, and
13 this raises an obvious concern about both the misuse
14 of resources and patient safety.

15 Minimum nurse/patient ratios should be
16 established. And this is number four. Minimum
17 staffing standards need to be set. In so doing,
18 hospital administrators would no longer be able to
19 overwork the nurses and associated personnel.

20 In each additional hour and increased patient
21 load, errors occur. And this has been well-documented
22 in the literature now for a number of years.

23 We believe that a strong correlation exists
24 between patient safety and the tendency of hospital
25 administrations and boards to insulate themselves from

1 the health concerns of the communities they serve.

2 We are not here to recommend new hospital
3 procedures and techniques, but our experience with the
4 hospital in Petoskey has taught us that fundamental
5 changes have to be made if the state of Michigan is
6 really serious about protecting patient safety.

7 Our hospital's function and operation are at
8 serious risk, and we therefore request -- request you
9 to consider serious structural improvements.

10 We think the solution for better healthcare
11 calls for drastic legislative action ultimately.

12 In conclusion, we, the Citizens to Save
13 Healthcare, as a group are willing to help in any way
14 that we can to enhance the healthcare of all Michigan
15 residents. Thank you.

16 DR. SIMMER: Thank you. Do we have any
17 questions from the...?

18 MS. RICHTER: Again, thank you.

19 DR. SIMMER: Thank you very much.