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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Health Care inspection report reveals hygienic problems

By Aimee Gulshall, Clint Alwahab

January 10, 2011 | 12:18 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — A registered nurse at University Hospital entered a patient's room without a hand-washing, removed the patient's IV lock without wearing gloves and left the room, again without washing. The nurse then went into another patient's room, opened a drawer, grabbed a flashlight and brought it back into the first patient's room.

The detail is among scores in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services report from November 2010 that MU Health Care representatives said Monday they are addressing in preparation for a follow-up inspection by the regulator. The inspection report was obtained by the Missouriian through a Freedom of Information Act request from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

"It's (hand-washing and gloves) so basic," a clinical improvement specialist told an inspector in a subsequent interview, according to the report. "I don't know why this happens."

The centers conducted an unannounced, on-site survey from Nov. 1 to Nov. 5 after receiving a complaint from a former employee, MU Health Care CEO Jim Ross confirmed.

Though the complaint was unsubstantiated by the inspection, other problems were cited with infection control and physical environment standards. Inspectors found expired supplies, inconsistent hand-washing procedures, dust on surfaces in the surgical unit, dirt and debris in kitchen preparation areas and stains on floors and equipment.

Hospital administrators said a follow-up inspection will occur within 60 days of the report was received, which was Dec. 6.

"These are issues we take seriously," said Dr. Les Hall, chief medical officer for MU Health Care. "We are going to do our due diligence to make sure that it's corrected."

Dr. Hal Williamson, vice chancellor of MU Health System; Carey Smith, manager of regulatory affairs; Jo Ann Wait, spokeswoman for the hospital, Ross and Hall met Monday with Missouriian reporters to talk about the report. They emphasized it was being taken seriously, though some observations were minute in detail.

About 120 University Hospital and Clinics employees put in overtime and unpaid hours in December cleaning up facilities, according to earlier reports in the Missouriian.

"The staff has done great, and we may not agree with how (inspectors) looked at us and elevated the issue, but if they brought it up we are going to address it," Ross said.

He said hospital staff members have reviewed the national standards for hand-washing and are increasing their scrutiny of hand-washing habits by other employees.

Among the other problems cited by the inspectors:

Report: Black and brown residue accumulated in cracks where heat-sealed vinyl floor strips had separated in an operating room. Several tiles were buckled and black-colored debris was found in the sterile storage area.

Ross: Although some of the floors in question typically never come into contact with patients, they have been replaced.

Report: Dark red and brown dry spots were found on two infusion pumps at the Missouri Orthopedic Center's Post Anesthesia Recovery Unit. An interview with a supervisor stated that the "pumps had been cleaned by housekeeping and the spots on the pumps appeared to be either dried blood or Betadine."

Ross: Multiple staff members told the inspector that the spots were Betadine, an antiseptic used in surgery.

"When I've got staff telling them it's Betadine, not blood, and it still comes back in a report as it may be, it's very suggestive," Ross said.

Report: Dust was found on multiple surfaces throughout the facilities, including "the top horizontal surfaces of an anesthesia cart and a fluoroscopic camera." The report states, "When the surfaces were wiped, dust particles fell to the floor and onto the surgical table."

Hall: "All of us would say that the amount of dust they found in some areas of the hospital, even though many of those areas were not direct patient-care areas, is something that we want to take care of."

The hospital administrators said problems observed in the report have not affected their out-patient infection rates.

The centers will conduct a second unannounced inspection, and the hospital has been preparing, Ross said.

"We are absolutely prepared for it," he said. "The staff is anxious to get the survey team here because they want to show them (the improvements)."



Inspection report shows MU Health deficiencies

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Published January 10, 2011 at 3:22 p.m.

University of Missouri Health Care officials said Monday that items flagged in a recent complaint-initiated inspection of the surgery department at University Hospital have been corrected.

Jim Ross, CEO of MU Health Care, said hospital officials are waiting for a follow-up inspection by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services on behalf of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

A Dec. 29 letter from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to a former MU Health employee said that the surgery department was not in compliance with infection control standards and that MU Health Care could be in danger of losing Medicare reimbursement for its services.

However, the letter that notified MU Health Care officials about the preliminary findings did not point out noncompliance or possible impact on Medicare reimbursement.

"We're asking CMS for some clarity on the matter," Ross said.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services report provided by MU Health Care officials stated that the complaint brought by former employee Sam Backues was "unsubstantiated," but that there were "unrelated findings" of violations of infection control standards.

The findings included improper handwashing, broken or discolored floor tiles, adhesive tape residue on medical equipment, and general housekeeping deficiencies, among other things.

"They found dust and dirt in places they didn't like," Ross said, adding that hospital and health system administrators considered each finding serious. "CMS told us these things are serious, so we're taking them that way."

Hal Williamson Jr., vice chancellor of the MU Health system, said the hospital was told not to file a plan of corrective action, which is typically done after deficiencies are reported.

“There are a lot of things in” the report, “and we may not agree with some of it,” Williamson said.

He said eight “surveyors” from DHSS were on site for five days in early November.

Les Hall, chief medical officer for the health system, said the hospital’s infection reports it submits to regulatory agencies show the hospital does not have an infection control problem. “We’re already implemented corrective action on everything” in the 47-page report, he said.

Ross said he had strong endorsement for the hospital’s practices.

“My wife actually had surgery here after this report,” Ross said. “Our reputation for patient safety is everything.”

The letter from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to Backnes on Dec. 29 said the DHSS investigation discovered the hospital was not in compliance with regulations relating to infection control practices in multiple areas of the hospital and maintenance of the physical environment throughout the hospital. It was signed by Mary Woltje of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regional office’s division of survey, certification and enforcement.

In her letter, Woltje said state investigators will conduct an unannounced “revisit” to the hospital “to assure it comes into compliance with federal regulations.”

Backnes was a certified sterile processing technician at university-owned Columbia Regional Hospital in 2006 and 2007 and at University Hospital in 2007 and 2008.

“I’m glad to see things moving forward in patient safety,” Backnes said Monday in response to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services report. “That’s the main goal, obviously.”

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The Chronicle of Higher Education

U. of Missouri President Resigns to Care for Wife

January 7, 2011, 1:22 pm

The University of Missouri system's president, Gary D. Forsee, resigned today, citing his wife's health, the university announced. His wife, Sherry, is undergoing treatment for cancer. Mr. Forsee, a former chief executive of Sprint who was appointed president of the Missouri system in 2008, had been on leave since December 2. Stephen J. Owens, the university's general counsel, will serve as interim president while the Board of Curators looks for a new president.



The Tribune's View

Gary Forsee: Businessman as university president

By Henry J. Waters III

Monday, January 10, 2011

When time came to look for a new University of Missouri president to replace Elson Floyd, University of Missouri Board of Curators then-President Don Walsworth led a movement to find someone from private industry who would be adept at working with conservative state government and managing the sprawling education institution through economic tough times.

Everyone on campus recognized the need for businesslike management, but many worried about hiring a president with no academic experience. Walsworth & Co. spoke encouragingly of the need for someone with a strong affection for the academic side, but the overt move to hire a business person remained worrisome to many.

At the time, it occurred to me a good leader would know how to allocate functions and responsibilities for the benefit of the whole institution. Even if the person came from a private corporation, he or she would see the big picture at UM and perhaps be more likely to delegate academic matters to campus chancellors while using business skills to build revenue and strengthen relationships in Jefferson City.

I thought this could even be better for academic managers than dealing with a president from campus more prone to get directly involved in classroom affairs.

For this university and most across the nation, this was a bold new concept. As Gary Forsee leaves office after three years at the helm, he has proved businessman-as-university-president can work. Tension between system headquarters and campus chancellors has been low, and leadership at both levels improved.

The proper assignment of roles, made necessary because Forsee was not qualified by experience to run the academic side, served the institution well and provides a valuable lesson for the future. Today, a number of people on campus say they would like an academic to be president, but potential angst over choosing someone from private industry surely has been lessened. Forsee has shown that the best qualification for a university president is good management skill no matter where learned. In their bones, faculty surely agree. When they ask for an academic, they mean someone who will enable the academic enterprise. I think they know Forsee did that.

A president with a lifetime of experience on campus might be just as potentially deprived as a person from industry. In both situations, good presidents manage people and organizations to accomplish coveted goals.

So, as the search begins for another president, let the curators and deans and professors pray for a good manager with a deep affection for higher education. Such a person might come from a lifetime on campus — or not.

HJW III



Manuscript collection loses employees in merger

By Andrew Denney

Published January 10, 2011 at 12:41 p.m.

The State Historical Society of Missouri has assumed management duties for the Western Historical Manuscript Collection on the University of Missouri campus, and historical society officials announced Monday that its first act as a new administrator will be to lay off 10 collection employees.

Gary Kremer, executive director of the historical society, said as of Monday morning, not all of the manuscript collection employees who will lose their jobs had been informed of the decision. In addition to the layoffs, two vacant positions will not be filled.

Kremer said personnel costs make up the majority of the society's budget and that it could not seek out cost savings through cutting back on equipment or facility expenditures.

"We've cut everywhere we can cut," Kremer said.

Before the merger, the historical society and the manuscript collection had operated under separate funding streams, with the former receiving funding through an appropriation by the state legislature and the latter receiving funding from a \$1 million allocation from the UM system.

Steve Graham, vice president for academic affairs for the UM system, said the university would continue to pay a fee to the manuscript collection, which is located in Ellis Library on the MU campus. He said the university would pay a \$600,000 fee to the manuscript collection in the coming year and \$500,000 in subsequent years.

The manuscript collection officially merges with the historical society at a time when the historical society has seen dwindling funds from state coffers. Last year, the state appropriation to the historical society was reduced by 25 percent.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

10 employees laid off at State Historical Society

By [Caitlin S. Miller](#), [Raha Obaei](#)

January 10, 2011 | 5:13 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — The State Historical Society of Missouri announced Monday that it planned to lay off 10 employees.

While demonstrating the collections available in the society's new online database during a news conference, society Executive Director Gary Kremer said a state budget cuts forced the layoffs. The loss of staff is happening even as the society takes over management of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection.

In November, the University of Missouri System transferred full management responsibility for the manuscript collection to the society. Still, funding for the society has decreased over the past year. There was a 25 percent cut in state funding for the Historical Society during fiscal 2010, which led to previous layoffs, as reported previously by the *Missourian*. The society also has had to cut back on its hours occasionally.

In addition to laying off 10 staff members, two vacant positions for the society will remain unfilled, according to Kremer.

The society will be closed until Jan. 18 so that its staff can consolidate its materials with those of the Western Historical Manuscripts.

Despite the cuts, society President Stephen Limbaugh Jr. said the organization would be "aggressive in seeking grants."

Kremer said the society will strive to provide the same quality of service.

Columbia Business Times

LaBrunerie's Leverage

By Dianna Borsi O'Brien
Jan 7, 2011

How a small financial services company in Columbia landed major players for a Chinese equity research center to help investors understand the world's second largest economy

Four years ago, as China was gradually opening its financial markets, Alex LaBrunerie came up with a plan to translate information from inside the communist country that could help American investors tap into what was to become the world's second-largest economy.

LaBrunerie knew, however, that he had one brief shot at persuading the top executive of one of China's largest investment information providers to form a partnership with his small financial services firm in Columbia.

LaBrunerie parlayed a personal connection from the University of Missouri into a meeting with Yi Zheng, the chairman and CEO of publicly traded Hexin Flush, at a hotel near O'Hare International Airport in suburban Chicago.

They spent three days talking about the business and answering each other's questions. In between their meetings, Yi made phone calls to colleagues in China to ask even more questions and nail down answers. "I honestly don't know when he slept," LaBrunerie said.

At the end of that weekend in 2006, the two men signed an agreement that eventually resulted in the creation of Rising Tide, a Columbia firm, and the affiliated Asian Equity Research Institute based at MU. Rising Tide now has the exclusive rights in the United States to the Chinese investment information developed by Yi's financial firms, which employ about 150 equity market analysts and provide the software for about 85 percent of the Chinese brokers.

LaBrunerie had brought a draft of the contract with him that weekend in hopes that he and Yi would come to terms.

"I wanted to be ready," LaBrunerie said. "If he was ready to go, I knew it wouldn't be easy for him to get to the United States again, and I wanted to be prepared."

The Asian Equity Research Institute at the Trulaske College of Business was created in 2010 after getting \$700,000 in seed money from a Small Business Administration grant. The institute is designed to eventually turn a profit by providing accurate, real-time investment information to people who subscribe to its weekly newsletters, which cost \$100 to \$200 each annually. MU professors and students will also have access to the information coming from Rising Tide to conduct research.

One of the newsletters from the website, www.aerresearch.com, for example, pointed out that a sharp drop in business activity in November was linked to a holiday migration of Chinese consumers. The unpolished translations explained what's behind a "cement shortage" and is tracking the Politburo's commentary on whether the yuan will be allowed to appreciate.

So how did LaBrunerie of Columbia get to meet Yi, a high roller in Chinese equity and investment information?

LaBrunerie credits Columbia's diverse global community.

In 2006, LaBrunerie and a friend of his, John Critser of the University of Missouri's College of Veterinary Medicine, were discussing China's economy. Although it had a solid manufacturing base, the two agreed its equity and stock markets were in shambles. But they also agreed it would only be a matter of time before China's markets began to sort themselves out and soar.

'John and I saw China as the next big thing,' LaBrunerie said.

The two created a prospect list and started talking to anyone they knew who was from China. As it turned out, someone from China was closer to a top financial information executive than anyone could have predicted; one of Critser's graduate students, Jun Liu, was friends with Yi.

Liu called Yi and gave Yi's cell phone number to LaBrunerie

And one evening in Columbia, when it was morning in China, LaBrunerie made the initial long-distance call

"I still remember the first time I talked to him on the phone," LaBrunerie said. "We talked in broken English, and I could hear the bikes and cars. He was on the side of the street." LaBrunerie doesn't remember how much it cost to call Yi (he's since learned to use Skype), but he recalls what they talked about: "trust," and how important that sentiment was to each of their respective businesses.

As for Yi, LaBrunerie said he seemed bemused that an American was interested in the Chinese stock market

When the two finally met in Chicago a few weeks later, LaBrunerie said, "We quickly hit it off." Yi's been to Missouri many times since then, and LaBrunerie has been to Hangzhou, China, where Yi's firms are headquartered.

To help the deal along, LaBrunerie brought Jun Liu with him for the initial meeting. He knew the deal would depend on Yi feeling comfortable and able to trust LaBrunerie. Yi was also traveling with his own entourage of translators and company officials.

Knowledge is power

LaBrunerie knows how crucial information and communications are for investments.

That's also why LaBrunerie was eager to create AERI, an organization that harkens back to 2006 as well, when the University of Missouri began to put more of an emphasis on economic development.

"It's a natural partnership," LaBrunerie said. His firm was founded in 1966, and he knows some Wall Street information is designed simply to sell one product or another. But with AERI and the MU partnership, investors will be able to access independent, objective research information that can be trusted.

"You have all that talent at the university," LaBrunerie said. "Why not use it?"

And he said, "China is a good place to invest. The Chinese are doing an amazing job creating wealth for themselves and a prosperous society."

Philip Abbenhaus, AERI's director, said he's confident the new public-private partnership will become profitable. He's familiar with a bottom-line focus; a 1987 graduate of MU, he's held the position of chief financial officer at three firms, started four companies and earned a master's in finance from St. Louis University.

The point of AERI is to provide information to investors — paid subscribers. The institute also will provide data from Yi's Chinese companies to Trulaske College of Business researchers and students. AERI is housed in Cornell Hall at MU. Other AERI leaders include Bruce Walker, former dean of the College of Business, and Stephen Ferris, an MU finance professor.

Plans for developing AERI began in 2007 with the SBA funding secured in fiscal year 2008. Abbenhaus was hired in 2010 and has since hired Marc Zhu as assistant director as well as several part-time workers. The center could employ as many as 10 workers in the next two years if its progress continues, Abbenhaus said. Dozens of subscribers have signed up, and Abbenhaus expects more paying customers.

"You won't find a better source of information than that in the AERI newsletters," Abbenhaus said. This isn't vague information about China, such as stocks are up or down. It's down-and-dirty, on-the-ground, real-time, accurate, timely information, often including background on the Chinese agency or culture behind the financial statements.

That's because it comes directly from China.

Not lost in translation

Although China has great potential for investors, LaBrunerie said, "The language barrier is very great."

The partnership with Flush Financial intends to bridge that barrier. In some cases the communication obstacle doesn't stem from the language or word usage, it's from the cultural divide, and that's where Yi's company has an edge.

Most of Yi's financial analysts in China don't speak English. Nor are they American-educated. LaBrunerie said the translated information Rising Tide provides often includes explanations about Chinese governmental, regulation or cultural influences on the markets, information most American firms are unlikely to be able to provide in a timely, accurate fashion.

Creating a partnership with MU's College of Business was a natural fit, LaBrunerie said. The college has business teachers, professional researchers and students, and China is a forward-looking country, which makes it an attractive subject for research. Abbenhaus added he's working to develop connections and projects with other MU schools and colleges, including the College of Agriculture and the School of Journalism.

The flow of information from Yi's companies will create a library of information on China's economy.

"This will be a real niche in research," LaBrunerie said.

Bob Newman, senior area manager of the US Small Business Administration, said the SBA grant that seeded the development of AERI will provide opportunities at MU, Columbia and beyond. "I think it will help people all over the state," he said.

LaBrunerie pointed out the rarity of a Midwest financial firm with a presence in China. "It ties Missouri to Asia and China," he said. "Missouri is doing very well as a state in its connection to China."