Life in These Parts
Lean Years Ahead

Hawaii Health Director Lawrence Miike reported in January that the Health Department will have to make do with $24 million less for fiscal year 1996. State Human Services Director Susan Chandler reported that her department will have $16 million less. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, which costs $12 million a month, will be cut by the federal government.

International Heart Program

Dick Mamyla, internationally known cardiac surgeon, retired from active practice after 31 years and will promote a Queen’s Medical Center-sponsored heart program. In the past, Dick has treated more than 300 foreign patients. Income from bypass surgery on international patients currently runs $79 million per year (including housing costs for family members). Tim Yee, Chief Executive Officer for the Queen’s International Corp, says patients from the Asia-Pacific region will keep Queen’s Hospital beds filled. This market will bring new money to Honolulu, will have a multiplier effect, and will create new jobs.

Dialing for Flowers

Local plastic surgeon, Dr. Bob Flowers is known for his lifts. He and his wife Susan got a lift of their own. Between their home and office, the two fielded eight requests for Valentine’s Day roses. Typical questions: “Do you deliver? Do you do weddings? And Do you accept credit cards?”

Dialing for Flowers may not get you a bouquet, but may give you a lift.

(From Hawaii—Dave Donnelly. Honolulu Star-Bulletin)

Letter to the Editor (In brief)

John Corboy wrote: “We continue to be assaulted by examples of thoughtless waste in ill-conceived government programs. It seems everything the state touches results in waste and mismanagement. The Health Quest program is an excellent example of the “spend first, plan later” mentality. As the program approaches bankruptcy from overutilization, it was decided to apply a means test for participants. This revealed that 40,000 persons are not even eligible. The waste of Quest runs $28 million per year. The only solution is to cut state spending by 20% per year until we return to accountable, bare bones government.”

(Honolulu Star-Bulletin, February 16, 1996)

News in Brief

The $30 million, 50 bed North Hawaii Community Hospital (funded with half state and half private funds) becomes operational in April. It has surgical and OB units and will offer critical care for accident victims and a variety of outpatient services for Waimea, Kohala, and the Hamakua coast.

The 26-bed Kahuku Hospital suspended maternity services in January for financial reasons. FP-obstetrician James Lew, who has worked under contract for two years, was notified that his contract will not be renewed. Jim delivered 120 babies last year and has about 80 patients at any one time. Kahuku Hospital has decided that it couldn’t keep a maternity ward open and maintain other patient services.

In February, Renal Treatment Centers—Hawaii Inc (a subsidiary of Berwyn, Pa-based Renal Treatment Centers, Inc) announced plans to acquire Intercontinental Medical Services, Inc and its four centers for $24 million in stocks.

In January, Intercontinental treated 445 patients (about 38% of all cases in the state. Treatment of chronic renal failure is a $6 billion industry nationally with 2,500 facilities in the U.S. Medicare and Medicaid cover 70% of the patient cost.

Potpourri

A man ordered four expensive 30-year-old single malts and had the bartender line them up in front of him. Then, without pausing, he downed each one.

“Whew.” the barkeep remarked, “You seem to be in a hurry.”

“You would be, too, if you had what I have.”

“What do you have?” the bartender sympathetically asked.

“Fifty cents.”

(From Playboy Party Jokes, December 1995)

Overheard in a brokerage:

“I worry about economists who are so young that they think the Great Depression was ended by Prozac.”

(The American Legion Magazine)

Jesus returns to Earth and goes into an ER and starts healing people.

The first guy is blind and Jesus heals him. Next is a deaf woman; he heals her. The next guy starts backing away and yells, “Stay away from me! I’m on Workers’ Comp!”

(From Stitches, Nov-Dec. 1995)