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A12

King-Drew management ills

Re King-Drew hospital payroll hefty: As a health-care professional I know the unique challenges of working in a hospital whose primary mission is to serve those in the community in greatest need. I started my nursing career as a LPN in the pediatric intensive care unit at Bexar County Hospital in Texas, where the patients were so critically ill that we had to decide at the beginning of each shift in which order we would resuscitate them.

Did the physicians and nurse get paid extra to work in such a setting? No. What we got was the knowledge that we were working in a community that needed us and that we would have our skills tested each and every day and that we would acquire knowledge and experiences that many of our health-care brethren would never know.

Sometimes money can serve as an incentive to attract individuals into a setting difficult to serve but it is not the answer. Ultimately what attracts exceptional individuals to settings, such as KDMC, is excellent, responsive and strong leadership.

Throughout this entire sad event leadership for the hospital, from the doctors to the nurses to the support staff has been utterly lacking. Everyone, including the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and most importantly county health director Dr. Thomas Garthwaite has failed to lead. This failure to lead is the single most important reason why change is so hard to effect at KDMC.

How can we expect the physicians, nurses and support staff at

KDMC to change when Garthwaite continues to misrepresent the progress being made at KDMC, fails to answer even the simplest of questions, shops around for another job instead of focusing on the one here, and shows what can only be described as utter contempt for the board and its mandate to lead and make the necessary changes.

Would firing Garthwaite miraculously fix the problems at KDMC, no but it would go a long way to show county employees that less than competent behavior will not be tolerated, not even from a department head.

GENEVIVE M. CLAVREUL
PASADENA