

Press-Telegram

A12 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

King/Drew

Re: "Foxes and henhouses
—Another crooked chapter in the sad saga of King/Drew" [Editorial, Sept. 25].

Your editorial is correct except for two things. Considering the prior failures of Linbar & Associates, the Camden Group, Dr. Thomas Garthwaite and his hand-picked team of experts, and now Navigant, it is entirely appropriate to blame the Board of Supervisors for failing to monitor the going-ons. And the statement that Navigant appeared to have the experience to do the job is not entirely accurate, since Navigant had never actually done a job such as King/Drew with the particular problems they were facing.

The community of King/Drew and the county at large have suffered for three years while the county supervisors, in typical Keystone-Kop fashion, compounded error after error, even when advised by knowledgeable community members such as myself.

When it was uncovered that Dr. Garthwaite had misled the Board of Supervisors in the progress being made by the previous consultants (the Camden Group) the supervisors did nothing. Getting a more ethical and competent company to do the job right is pointless as long as those involved in this debacle continue to be the point persons for this turnaround.

GENEVIEVE M. CLAVREUL,
R.N., Ph.D.
Health consultant
Pasadena

Long Beach, CA, 9/26/2005

Foxes and henhouses

Another crooked chapter in the sad saga of King/Drew

Long Beach Press Telegram

It seems the L.A. County Board of Supervisors will have to look elsewhere for help fixing the troubled Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center. In a deeply ironic twist to the King/Drew saga, the consulting firm that was supposed to clean up misconduct at the hospital is engaged in some of the same ethical lapses they were hired to fix.

The L.A. Times reported Friday, after the newspaper reviewed eight months of expense reports from Navigant Consulting Inc., that the group has been consistently inflating its billing. The report found numerous instances of overcharging, double-billing, padded hours, and indulgence in such luxuries as first-class air travel, which taxpayers shouldn't be expected to support.

We won't blame the supervisors for this screw-up (though we do question why it took a newspaper investigation, rather than county auditors, to uncover the problem). When it was hired, Navigant appeared to be a reputable company with the skills and experience to reform King/Drew. Unfortunately it isn't up to the job.

The Board of Supervisors can't waste any time firing Navigant and hiring a new company to manage the hospital. King/Drew needs quick action, before its \$200 million in federal funding is pulled. The loss of federal funds would almost certainly result in closure of the hospital.

Navigant's misconduct is an outrage, yes. But county supervisors can't afford to waste too much time on indignation.

King/Drew's survival depends on a quick transition from Navigant to an ethical company that can do the job right.