

NEWSDAY, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1974

2

Hospitals Bar Consumers From Meetings

By Marilyn Goldstein

Consumer advocates who pressed for and were granted the right for representatives to accompany an accreditation team on tours of three Nassau County hospitals said yesterday that their victory was "hollow" because their representatives had been barred from final meetings between the survey team and the hospital administrations. The findings of the team from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals are discussed at those meetings.

The consumer advocates also said they were disappointed that none of the three hospitals would promise to publish the accreditation reports. In January, the Nassau County Medical Center became the first hospital on Long Island to do this.

Administrators of North Shore University Hospital and the Community Hospital at Glen Cove, whose two-day inspections were completed this week, and Syosset Hospital, which goes into its second day of inspection today, said only that they would discuss publishing the findings with their boards of directors.

John Haynes, an associate professor at the State University at Stony Brook and a member of Community Advocates, a health-oriented consumer group, said: "Unless the consumer is involved in the report, it is a farce to go on tour. We were used by North Shore as an act of tokenism to make them look good. We want the facts, not to give the hospital a face lift."

Hospitals are surveyed by the commission every one or two years and, although the surveys are voluntary, hospitals must win accreditation to receive certain funds, such as Medicare and Blue Cross.

Lawrence Dickovic, executive vice president of the Community Hospital at Glen Cove, said he had refused to allow a consumer representative and a reporter into the final meeting Wednesday because "I don't think it's in the interest of accomplishing what we want to do to have people not involved in the internal operations of the hospital at this meeting." He said he would bring the request to publish the final report to his board but added, "we have always considered it confidential."

Dennis Buckley, North Shore's executive vice president, could not be reached for comment on the accreditation survey.

At the consumer forum at Syosset Hospital yesterday, three members of Community Advocates asked the accreditation team to check into the patient-nurse ratio, the referral of patients in the psychiatric section to community out-care facilities, the availability of staff residents in all services and the staffing of the emergency room.

In Suffolk, the commission is expected to begin an inspection of Lakeside Hospital in Copiague on Monday. The inspection will be the first at the hospital to allow consumer representatives to meet with the inspectors.

A spokesman for James Bavetta, Lakeside's administrator, said that as of yesterday no consumer groups had asked to meet with the inspection team. Consumers or consumer groups wishing to meet inspectors at the hospital should make arrangements with Bavetta, she said.