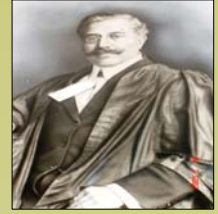


R.K.KHAN HOSPITAL



COMMEMORATING 40 YEARS



THE LATE ADVOCATE
RAHIM KHARIM KHAN



Our hospital is named after the late Advocate Rahim Karim Khan who founded the R.K.Khan Hospital and Dispensary Trust which donated 50% of the initial capital costs of building the core block of the hospital.

The first outpatient was seen on the 3 March 1969 and the first admission was in July 1969. The hospital has grown from being a minor district level hospital to one of the major hospitals in the Ethekwini District providing the full package of services expected from a regional/district hospital. In addition the hospital performs a significant amount of work that may be classified as tertiary as we experience major problems in transferring patients who require a higher level of care. It is fortunate that the hospital has the medical staff with the necessary expertise and experience who can manage these patients. The hospital budget does not cover this cost.

The hospital has a catchment population of over 1 500 000 whom are amongst the poorest in Ethekwini. St Mary's Hospital, a subsidised institution, is the only hospital between R.K.Khan and Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg. Furthermore, the Primary Health Care facilities including Community Health Clinics in our drainage area are inadequate.

Thus the workload at the hospital is huge and an enormous challenge to manage adequately. Over 400 000 patients attend annually and over 36 000 patients admitted. The hospital performs almost 10 000 surgical procedures annually including an average of 180 caesarean sections a month (more than 6 500 babies are born at this hospital in a year). The hospital commenced the ARV rollout in September 2004 and has one of the largest enrollment (5 010 at end January 2009) of patients on the ART program.

In addition to its health service role the hospital plays a major role in training health care workers of different disciplines. The College of nursing trains 4 year integrated students who qualify as professional nurses and the hospital has a long association with the Medical School and other tertiary Institutions in Ethekwini. Students and professional staff trained here have made their mark both in South Africa (in public and private) and all over the world.

A legacy that I consider to be a spin off from the fact that community pressure forced the then authorities to build the hospital is that the community has always engaged with the hospital. The R.K.Khan Hospital Board has been active throughout the existence of the hospital and in November 2002 Friends of R.K.Khan (FORKK) an organization that recruits volunteers to assist the hospital and raises funds to undertake various projects in the hospital was formed. Religious groups like the Sri Sathya Sai Organization and Tea for Africa have worked with the hospital over many years in assisting patients. The hospital is also involved in an initiative of using community facilities and organizations to dispense medication to patients in an effort to decongest the hospital pharmacy and improve patient waiting times.

The transformation of the hospital staff establishment and patient population from being almost exclusively Indian to one that reflects the composition of the South African population has not been without difficulty. The process is ongoing and will ultimately result in a hospital vibrant and proudly reflective of the South African community.

The financial constraints that we currently face (estimates show that although the hospital has the lowest patient day equivalent (PDE) costs of hospitals providing the same type of services in the province that the budget will overspend by over R60 million in this financial year) are the most severe in the history of the hospital. It is going to require the collective wisdom of all to overcome the challenges we face.

It is encouraging to note that even in this time of severe financial constraints, presently there are many positive infrastructure and equipment developments that have been authorized by head office. Construction costing over R 30 million has started on major renovations that will greatly improve the hospitality aspects of outpatient services at this hospital. An additional 2 400 sq. metres of outpatient clinic space will become available when the site is handed over in July 2010 enabling us to provide outpatient services in a modern, spacious, attractive and user friendly environment.

The radiology department is also scheduled to receive a 64 slice CT scan costing over R 8 million rand in May this year and a screening unit costing almost R 1 million.

During the years that I have been in charge of the hospital I have been impressed with the dedication and commitment of the majority of people that I have the privilege of leading. I am therefore confident that the collective talent and dedication of the staff working at this hospital will enable us to overcome the many challenges and obstacles that face the hospital and that we will achieve our vision of ensuring that R.K.Khan Hospital is the leading Health Care facility in KZN and that the hospital will be strong and vibrant when celebrating its 100 years of service.

From the desk of the CEO Dr. Prakash Subbar

March 2009