

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

of

Seventh-day Adventist
Medical Institutions

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Statement of Objectives of Seventh-day Adventist Medical Institutions

Several decades having passed since Seventh-day Adventists began establishing and operating health institutions, it has been deemed desirable to restate the objectives of these institutions with a brief explanation thereof so that managing boards might have a current guide with which to check over-all accomplishment, and that our workers and people generally might be given a renewed understanding of the work and opportunities in our system of sanitariums and hospitals.

Healing was a significant part of the Saviour's work. He healed the incurable, and even on the Sabbath day brought relief to long-time sufferers. He combined preaching, teaching, and healing, giving most of His time to healing. Through acts of healing He gained the confidence of many to whom He was then able to say, "Follow me." This is our pattern for medical ministry.

The medical work of Seventh-day Adventists, in all its phases, is a part of the ministry of the church. It is not a tool, it is not a separated area, it is a part of the whole. Every duty and service in the medical work is to be characterized by the influence of the gospel. Every person connected therewith - doctor, nurse, manager, minister, craftsman, general helper - should be constantly aware of his responsibility to demonstrate the spirit of the Master. The Christian service of each individual, combined with all other members of the gospel team, should culminate in an effective medical ministry, creating favorable impressions of and strong influences for the church, which will be fully measurable only in eternity.

In the early, days of the Advent people, instruction was given to establish health institutions whose objectives were:

1. "To relieve the sick and the afflicted,"
2. "To awaken a spirit of inquiry,"
3. "To disseminate light,"
4. "To advance reform." – Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 104.

These objectives set before us as a people our responsibility to care for the sick and the afflicted in every community in which our medical institutions are located. Thus we can serve in the welfare work for the people of the community, and at the same time we can set before them the gospel message which may result in the saving of their souls.

The accomplishment of these objectives calls for the establishment and operation of medical institutions equipped and staffed to use the most effective diagnostic and healing agencies and methods known to medical science.

This medical ministry by devoted Seventh-day Adventists, adequately trained and working together in an atmosphere of Christian love and service, will, in harmony with inspired counsel, make profound impressions on many who are recipients or observers of such care. Some will

be led to inquire concerning the spirit and motive that impel these Christian workers and the reasons for conducting this distinctive type of service.

The bringing of patients, relatives, and friends into close contact with devoted medical missionaries – doctors, nurses, attendants, dietitians, chaplains, and others – creates many opportunities for imparting a knowledge of the love of God as well as an understanding of the laws of health by which the Creator intended that we should live.

An understanding of these laws of health and the reasons underlying them will lead to changes in the living habits of those influenced thereby. A continuing study by workers of the basic principles of Christian living will contribute to a growing understanding of the values of the simple health principles by which God's people should live and should result in an ever-increasing ability to impart this information to others.

While our health institutions must always strive to render the finest of scientifically sound care to those who seek help, and to augment essential medical and hospital service to their communities, it should be uppermost in our minds that they are basically agencies of the church to carry out these services in the spirit of the Master, and, through the demonstration of this spirit in all their activities, to create an atmosphere for the accomplishment of the inspired counsel that states:

"The health institutions connected with the closing work of the gospel in the earth stand for the great principles of the gospel in all its *fullness*." – *Medical Ministry*, pp. 27, 28.

Our sanitariums are to be health institutions, not hotels, not resorts. They are to be medical missionary centers controlled in every particular by Seventh-day Adventists. They are to be more than hospitals, they are to be health education centers of a high character for service to their patients, to their communities, and to nearby churches. Some are to be large enough to conduct recognized educational departments, training nurses, technicians, and other medical missionaries yet all should be small enough to preserve and keep active an integrated family spirit and an inclusive atmosphere of unity and oneness of purpose. In them and through them health services and a spiritual ministry are to be provided in an expanding, dynamic manner. They are to be not only hospitals but institutions rendering, in addition to hospital service, those distinctive features and services of medical, dietetic, instructional, inspirational, and spiritual value which stamp them as primarily and singularly effective church agencies. Such institutions, in addition to bringing relief to sufferers, will bring our distinctive principles of truth before many whom it would be impossible to reach by other means, and will bring peace and rest to many troubled minds.

Connected with these institutions, through approved staffing arrangements, should be Seventh-day Adventist physicians who, in addition to being scientifically capable of treating the patient, are profoundly interested in grasping the opportunities for spiritual ministry which come to the physician. as to few others.

Members of the nursing-staff of an institution are in exceedingly close contact with the patients. In their hands, to a large degree, rests the reputation of the institution and the denomination, and by their service accomplishments can, to a considerable degree, be

measured The importance of nursing service makes it imperative that there be a continuing study of policies that have to do with the work of nurses so that there shall be no lack of capable missionary nurses for this important service.

As some of our medical institutions have expanded their services and enlarged their facilities, it has become increasingly difficult to secure enough Seventh-day Adventists to carry the work involved. We recognize that a strong denominational medical program cannot be offered by a staff made up of a large percentage of non-Adventists. Especially is this true of physicians and nurses, for on them the medical missionary work of the church so largely depends. The solution to the problem is threefold:

First, we must instill into our medical workers, while in training, the spirit and genuine zeal of our Advent Movement, a greater appreciation of our message, and a more fervent love for Christ and for the early triumph of the gospel in all the world.

Second, we must constantly study methods of improving personnel policies and working conditions for our medical workers.

Third, we must make certain that plans for expansion include provision for staffing with Seventh-day Adventist personnel.

Seventh-day Adventist sanitariums should be noted for the excellence and soundness of the therapeutic procedures practiced therein. The inspired counsel on this subject does not permit a mediocre or a static program, but rather leads to the acceptance of sound scientific fact, with strong emphasis on the rich values of doing those things which "assist nature," and the elimination of the harmful, questionable methods, procedures, and medications – continuing to use the proved things of the past and willing to accept the sound from that which is new. Our sanitariums should be constantly striving to develop effective departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation regarding which so much counsel was given to us in years past even before the worth of such treatment was recognized by others.

The dietary program of our sanitariums should be well, and favorably known. The quality and adequacy of the food offered should be superior. Our distinctive vegetarian service should make our institutions famous. No effort should be spared to provide appetizing, balanced, nourishing meals without the use of meat, harmful condiments, or stimulants such as tea and coffee. A strong program of education should be conducted so that all might have an opportunity to learn the value of such a diet and how to prepare such food for use in their own homes. The wise, balanced counsel compiled in *Counsels on Diet and Foods* should be carefully followed.

Pervading all the activities of the sanitariums should be a strong spiritual influence. Chaplains and their assistants should be available to bring the story of salvation to all who will hear, to participate in fostering the spiritual life and activities of the institution, to help conduct a dynamic program of spiritual instruction in the school of nursing, and to join with physicians and nurses, in bringing to patients and others a clear concept of the work of Seventh-day Adventists.

Such a program, conducted in a humble spirit, with generosity toward all and with the understanding support of the church members everywhere, should and can be one of the greatest agencies yet conceived for advancing the total program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that of interpreting to the world a knowledge of the Master and causing those who see and hear to accept the salvation He offers.

