

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort of The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

I had my first personal experience with our local emergency room lately. As an overweight middle aged man with diabetes and high blood pressure, I suppose it was only a matter of time. Like most people, I ignored the trouble signs as long as I could, but after an hour of persistent chest pain it seemed wise to get it checked out. There was a point at which my certainty that this was nothing had been overshadowed by the idea that it might be something. And on my arrival at the ER the reception nurse was quick to affirm that I had made the right decision. In just a moment or two I was on my way to an exam room for an EKG.

The women and men serving in our community's medical facilities are among the most dedicated and hard working I've encountered. Over the course of the night and into the next day I interacted with over two dozen of them and every one of them showed practiced care for my well-being and my comfort. I also witnessed a number of interactions between the staff and saw how they worked with other patients with the same friendly professionalism they used with me. And this, in spite of a heavy influx of new cases and difficult interactions.

Rather than referring to us as "patients" it would perhaps be better to call us "impatience". While I hope that I was as well behaved as I believe myself to have been, the sad truth is that human beings tend to become cranky when they are stressed or don't feel well, a disappointing fact of life which was acted out all around me while I was there.

One visitor insisted they must be seen immediately, then went outside for a smoke. They were upset to find someone else had been taken ahead of them when they returned even though they weren't there when their name was called.

Another spent a significant amount of time telling the receptionist to just order up the treatment that she knew her son would need. No reason to bother the doctor; she had looked it up on the internet!

And, particularly hard on my pastor's heart, a nurse was making her first family notification about a relative who only had a few hours left, but the family members she could reach couldn't be bothered to come see their mother before her death if it meant having to go out at night.

Being a medical care provider anywhere is a tough job, filled with difficulties and challenges that may seem to outweigh the rewards at times. Up here in the center of the world, where we don't have enough providers to meet our community's needs, it's even more intensive. I am so grateful to those who have taken on the responsibility of our health.

Most of us probably know one or more nurses, doctors, or other medical professionals. The next time you see one of those friends, stop and give them a hug or a handshake or a pat on the back and give them your thanks and mine for the job they do. They deserve it and they probably could use the encouragement.

What happened with me? I lived, and hope to do so for a long time to come, God willing. But without the help I received in the hospital I might not have known that. It was a good visit and I hope never to need to go back.

Grace and peace to you today. This has been Lt. Roger McCort for today's KINS Community Comment.