

Service Excellence

**An Interview with Quinton J. Friesen, FACHE,
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer**



Quinton J. Friesen

EDITORS' NOTE *Quinton Friesen joined the Greenwich Hospital senior leadership team in 1993. Prior to Greenwich Hospital, Friesen was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital Medical Center in Plattsburgh, New York. Friesen holds a Masters degree in Healthcare Administration from the University of Minnesota. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.*

How do you define your role and key areas of focus at Greenwich Hospital?

My focus operationally is on how we provide extraordinary care to every patient that we serve. We need to provide care in an efficient and safe manner providing service excellence in everything we do. The overriding vision is to build, together with our President and CEO, Frank Corvino, and the other members of the administrative staff, an extraordinary organization.

Is the opportunity to run with new ideas key to the hospital's culture, and is there an entrepreneurial spirit present?

There is. When we first started, we focused on building a mission, vision, values, and goal statement for the hospital. Then we took that example and built that in every department; we had 60 teams and about 600 employees involved in putting that together. The whole idea was to tie the organization together around the values that we hold. One of our values is people, and that has guided our decision-making process even to the recent reduction in force that we had. We agonized over how we could reduce the staff fairly and appropriately and cause minimum disruption in the organization, while also treating the employees who were leaving with dignity and respect. Another value is innovation. Our employees have spontaneously come up with hundreds of ideas on how we can run our business better. It's simply been a matter of surfacing those ideas and putting them into place.

How important is coordination among the different units in the hospital with regard to the type of service you're able to deliver?

It's crucial. We are a service line organization, which means that similar clinical areas report to a single program director. There are six service lines. The program directors and several VPs meet with me on a weekly basis to review our progress on the goals that we have set and what actions we need to take to stay on course. It brings a high level of coordination from a policy point of view and an operational point of view. In that meeting, I talk about what's important to the organization – in terms of policies, directions, or things that we're doing administratively – and I ask everybody to report on what they're doing. So you have 10 or 12 people listening to what everybody else is doing and coordinating their own departments.

Another crucial component within our organization is our service excellence focus. In 1999, we moved into the new building, and our patient satisfaction scores went down, which was discouraging since we'd just spent millions of dollars to construct a first-class building. After much discussion, we created the service excellence committee, and that has grown into about 35 managers meeting weekly and going through every patient complaint that comes back to the hospital on a patient survey. Every manager has to be prepared to report on how he or she has resolved that situation. This has served to galvanize the organization. It is one team caring for the patients and that becomes the common denominator of everything we do. ●

A Focus on Finance

**An Interview with Eugene J. Colucci,
Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**



Eugene J. Colucci

EDITORS' NOTE *Eugene Colucci assumed his current role in 1989. Prior to joining Greenwich Hospital, Colucci served as the Chief Financial Officer and Controller of the Mount Vernon Hospital in Mount Vernon, New York. He holds a Bachelors of Business Administration degree from Niagara University in Niagara Falls, New York and a Masters of Business Administration degree from St. John's University in New York, and is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants.*

Would you give a brief overview of your role within Greenwich Hospital?

The areas I oversee are general accounting, payroll, accounts payable, reimbursement, budgeting, and forecasting, as well as patient billing, all registration areas, medical records, case management, IT, materials, and telecommunications.

In light of the current economic crisis, how much of an impact have you seen on the hospital, particularly from a financial and budgeting point of view?

We have seen a big impact, but it's also very volatile. We chalked it up to things like people postponing elective procedures. They may have been let go and become un- or underinsured. We saw our bad debts go up and our free care go up. But after the first quarter, we started to rebound.

Has becoming a regional player made the financial issues more complex?

In addition to becoming regional, we also became affiliated with Yale New Haven Health System, which gave us a bigger footprint among Greenwich, Bridgeport, and Yale-New Haven hospitals. Greenwich did well on its own years ago, but joining Yale New Haven Health System was a great marketing strategy that has also produced a lot of revenue as well as savings on expenses.

Within the hospital, is there close coordination from segment to segment, and is it heavily integrated when you look at working across the different aspects of the hospital?

Very much so. Our six product line directors all manage different sections. We meet with this group once a month, to discuss cost-containment and to make presentations to both financial and clinical leaders. Finance and the clinicians each discuss what the other is looking for. I'm on a patient safety team, which is clinical, but I also co-chair a subcommittee for data, so I understand what data the clinicians need. So there's a tremendous correlation between finance and the clinicians.

Looking back to when you joined the hospital, could you have imagined this to be a place you would have been for this long, and what is it about the culture that has made it a place where you've wanted to spend so much of your career?

When I got here, I thought I'd give it four years because I wanted to move to a very large teaching hospital. But what I walked in on was a very good feeling I had working with Frank Corvino. So I felt strategically, for my career, it was a great move for me to stay. I am involved with strategy and continue to feel challenged. ●