Family matters at The Pavilion at Queens Rehabilitation and Nursing

By Anthony Giudice

When the Fuchs family took over operations at the former Dr. William Benenson Pavilion in the beginning of 2015, they wanted to assure both patients and staff alike that any changes on the horizon would be for the better. They wanted to let everyone know that they are very family oriented and will continue to uphold the standards set forth by the previous owners.

“It’s extremely important to us as a family because it’s important for the families of all the residents to know … we know how important it is to be sensitive to everyone else, to all the families of the community and of the residents of this facility,” said Gerry Fuchs, COO of the Pavilion at Queens. “And we knew that sometimes people could be nervous that there’s new ownership … it’s just the uncertainty which is what everyone was concerned about. And that’s why it is our number one mission to let them know, from day one, that the administrator and the director of nursing, Richard [Sherman] and Liza [Dowd] are going to remain here, because we know how important it is to have continuity.”

In an attempt to maintain the continuity of the Pavilion at Queens, when changing the name of the facility, the Fuchs decided to keep “Pavilion” in the name and renamed it The Pavilion at Queens Rehabilitation & Nursing.

“What’s unique about this facility is it’s really a family environment,” said Richard Sherman, administrator for the Pavilion at Queens who has been with the facility since it opened in 1997. “We were a family environment with the Benensons and today we are a family environment with the Fuchs. They are not only the owners, but they are engrained in this facility. They’re here every day, they walk the floors, they talk to the people, they get to know who people are. I think it’s important for the community to know that it’s just not a new corporation, that it’s a family here really interested in the wellbeing of their residents while they’re staying with us.”

In order to introduce themselves as the new owners of the facility when they took over in January, the Fuchs came together as a family and went to each patient’s room and delivered a gift basket containing shampoos, soaps and lotions. This level of kindness runs through the entire facility, from the ownership, to the therapists, doctors and staff. They are concerned with providing the best experience possible for anybody that uses the Pavilion and welcoming them into their family.

The Fuchs family have had the ideals of health-
care with them since childhood. As children, the Fuchs grew up with their grandmother and aunt in their house, so they know and understand the importance of taking care of elderly family members.

“Our dad instilled in us healthcare, because you’re caring for your loved ones,” Gerry Fuchs said. “It’s always important to care for your elders. And that’s something is just natural.”

Now that they are taking care of other people’s family members at the Pavilion at Queens, they take the time to get to know the patients there, remembering that they are people who have lived rich lives and are continuing to do so under their care.

The Fuchs family is also invested in the happiness of their patients and understand the feelings, cultural or religious needs of those that use their facility. So much so that they plan on moving patients from one floor to another because of their cultural beliefs.

One instance of that is when the Fuchs family learned that four is an unlucky number in the Chinese culture. At the Pavilion at Queens, many Chinese patients reside on the fourth floor.

“My dad … has in his travels has been going to China for a while … he said, ‘Gerry, do you know that four is a very unlucky number?’” Gerry Fuchs recalled. “The way the word four in Chinese is pronounced is similar to the word death.”

In an attempt to make the Chinese residents feel more at ease while at the Pavilion at Queens, the Fuchs family plans on moving them from the fourth floor to the eighth floor, since eight is a lucky number in their culture.

“We are extremely sensitive to everyone’s needs in the community,” Gerry Fuchs said. “We understand cultures and we understand what is important for everyone’s needs, religious needs and cultural needs.

The staff at the Pavilion at Queens is expertly trained to help residents get back on their feet and resume a self-sufficient way of life. The Pavilion at Queens offers occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and respiratory therapy for patients suffering from broken hips or shoulders, knee replacement, people who have had cardiac episodes, and many other ailments.

The Pavilion at Queens’ physical therapy team works towards individual-specific goals of achieving...”

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ing the patients’ highest level of independence.

Physical therapy at the Pavilion at Queens focuses on individuals with physical impairment and pain, as well as future injury prevention.

Occupational therapists treat patients whose functional abilities, daily activities and independence have been impaired by illness, injury or aging.

The speech therapists provide a range of programs to assess and help restore the patients’ abilities in communication, swallowing and cognition. This is especially important for the ventilator patients. The treatment programs are designed to help residents affected by stroke, brain injury, dementia, and other neurological disorders.

“What’s unique about this facility is we have a family experience and we have an investment in proper tools and the proper equipment in the proper facility to treat high acuity patients to the best of our ability,” said Joel Edelstein, CFO of the Pavilion at Queens.

“That is our commitment to the community; that we will do whatever it takes to get the best care to them in a friendly environment, in the most hospitable environment and the safest environment.”

At the Pavilion at Queens, staff is on hand 24-hours-a-day, with several 24-hour registered nurse supervisors and respiratory therapists. They also have doctors come in every day to see every single patient to make sure their rehabilitation and therapy are going smoothly.

“It really creates a good flow of care,” Sherman said. The Pavilion at Queens has updated its dialysis unit, ventilator unit and is currently under construction to move their gym, which is located in the facility’s basement, to the main floor.

“We just expanded our dialysis unit, because it was very successful, from a six chair station, to an additional six chairs. Now we will be able to treat 96 patients through dialysis,” Sherman said. “We increased our ventilator capacity … now we have 12 stations that can handle vents. And we also have the ability to have a stretcher dialysis, which are at very few facilities.”

The new gym will be a state-of-the-art 3,000 sq. ft. facility that will have more modern equipment to better help the patients, which will be unveiled in November.

The Pavilion at Queens is also outfitted with a ventilator unit, comprised of two 40-bed units for a total of 80 beds. Each room has piped in oxygen. They have ability to take ventilator stretcher dialysis patients as well as critical care patients. These services make the Pavilion at Queens like a step-down hospital.