Healthcare Workers and the Holidays

People still get sick around the holidays, and so when everyone else is lighting candles, crowding around trees, and opening gifts, hospitals are fully staffed with doctors, nurses, and of course patients.

It can be hard not “being home for the holidays,” but with everyone pulling together to get through, medical staff members make the best of their situations while providing care for their sick patients.

“They really aren’t tough,” says infectious disease specialist Dr. Josef Romano. “Because everyone is kind of nice when you work on a special holiday.”

“The nurses are very kind to the doctors. The patients are nice to us. I think it’s really nice,” Romano adds.

And even if there are some people bringing the mood down, everyone does their best to put a smile on.

“A lot of times the patients don’t want to be there, and the staff doesn’t want to be there. But you do your best to be jovial for the patients,” says Sharon Brosocious, program director for Nursing at South University — Richmond.

One of the things that medical professionals do to keep a positive attitude is enjoy the season for what it is – a time to be generous and spend time with friends and colleagues. “Well [the hospital staff] has little parties and little get-togethers and it’s kind of nice,” Romano says.

It may not be the same as relaxing in front of a roaring fire at home, but in a world where coworkers can become like a family, these small holiday celebration really can make all the difference.

Healthcare Holidays

Although the doctors and nurses do their best to keep moral high, the fact of the matter is, illness does not observe holidays, and it can be tough working when everyone else is on vacation. “If there are patients there, the staff is still needed,” Brosocious says.

In some instances patients have no other choice but to be in the hospital over a holiday. “Many times it’s patients that don’t have anywhere else to go,” Romano says.

But these patients are the most appreciative of the efforts that their doctors and nurses are making.

“They may be elderly and quite ill, and so they are very grateful that someone is being nice to them,” Romano adds.

Doctor Christmas

Although most everyone in the hospital tries to make the best of what could be considered a bad situation, there are some healthcare professionals that have to work hard to stay positive during the holidays.

“GI (gastro intestinal) has it rough because that’s when they have the most problems with alcohol or things like that,” Romano says.

This is particularly taxing after the ball drops in Time Square. “Well I think it would be New Year's,” Romano says about the hardest holiday to work. “Because the day after New Year’s and a couple days after, patients come in with problems with alcohol, and they have GI bleeds and things like that.”

Because emergencies don’t take the holidays off, emergency room doctors and nurses are also left without a break when everyone else starts decking the halls. “In the emergency room, their holidays are pretty much like any other day,” Brosocious says.
“Probably for the most part it’s business as usual,” she adds.

Although it can be hard for the families and friends of health professionals, working around the holidays can really shed some light on what is really important this time of year.

“I remember as an intern, my mother and father came in to have lunch with me,” Romano says about working over Christmas his first year as a doctor. “I’ll never forget that Christmas Eve.”