A study of hospital alumni membership and its effect on donor giving

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A STUDY OF HOSPITAL ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP
AND ITS EFFECT ON DONOR GIVING

by
Linda Michael

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan College of New Jersey
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Approved by ____________________________
Professor

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ABSTRACT

A Study of Hospital Alumni Membership and Its Effect on Donor Giving
1995, Dr. Donald Bagin, advisor
Graduate Public Relations Program

Linda Michael

This study profiled Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center’s Baby Alumni Society to determine whether members are likely prospects for financial support. Established in 1980 by The Cooper Foundation, the fund-raising arm of the hospital, the Baby Alumni Society consists of 6,500 members who range in age from infancy to senior citizens.

To determine alumni attitudes and opinions about the institution, a questionnaire was conducted. Participants were selected, using the systematic random sampling method. Of the five hundred questionnaires mailed, eighty-five were returned. Overall, respondents were pleased with the publication Baby News and wanted to continue receiving it. Members also expressed an interest in learning more about cancer, women’s care and outpatient services.

Trust in the institution was reflected by 80 percent of the members who said they would consider Cooper for a future hospitalization and would recommend it to family and friends. Research showed that members are committed to giving and felt strongly enough about Cooper to use its services. Members, in general, did not give a financial gift to Cooper; however, an overwhelming majority -- 97 percent -- contributed to charitable
causes. Respondents were 68 percent female. On average, respondents held either a high school or college degree; ranged between 40 and 55 years old; and reported an average family income of $25,000 to $49,999.
MINI-ABSTRACT

A Study of Hospital Alumni Membership
and Its Effect on Donor Giving
1995, Dr. Donald Bagin, advisor
Graduate Public Relations Program

This study of Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center's Baby Alumni Society
investigated whether people born at a hospital are likely prospects for giving. A research
survey provided a demographic profile of members as well as an opportunity for
members to express their attitudes and opinions about Cooper and the alumni
organization.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Cutbacks in government funding and escalating costs of charity care are forcing hospitals to rely more and more on the community for support. With charities at large facing major funding cuts, the competition for donor dollars remains fiercely competitive.¹

To combat declining revenues, hospitals across the country have established foundations as a means for raising additional funds. Through fund-raising programs, hospital foundations are providing their institutions with money to purchase medical equipment and to support education, research and capital improvements.

Lester Gordon, a program consultant in Massachusetts, writes:

As the gap between hospital expenses and payments continues to widen, hospitals are depending more and more on philanthropic support to both balance their budgets and provide additional funds for facilities improvements and new equipment purchases. This dependency is placing increased pressure on the development office to broaden and enlarge the hospital's base of support and to identify new prospects for capital, special and planned gifts.²

Since 1980, The Cooper Foundation, the fund-raising arm of Cooper


Hospital/University Medical Center, has depended on the support of businesses, community members and individuals to help fund hospital projects and programs. On average, contributions from individuals make up nearly three-quarters of the Foundation's charitable revenue. According to fund-raising experts, this trend toward individual giving will continue to grow and be an important source of hospital funding.

Need for the Study

Despite incessant demands for support, Americans are giving money to non-profits more than ever. According to the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy [AHP] 1993 Report of Giving, contributions to hospitals and other health care institutions totaled 1.9 billion that year. While fund-raisers feared that managed care and health-care reform would affect giving, AHP reported that it had actually helped by educating donors about the importance of their gifts.³

"People are not giving less because of health care reform," explained Larry Wolgast, EdD, CAHP, who chairs AHP's research committee and is director of development for a Kansas psychiatric hospital. "In fact," continued Wolgast, "the increased publicity about hospitals and health care could be having a beneficial effect... People are learning more about the funding problems of health care."⁴

With a lucrative source of money available, the challenge said nationally know fund-

³"Who are Your Donors? Hospital Uses Survey to Find Out," Hospital Fundraising 2, no. 7 (July 1994): 95.

raising authorities Gene Attal and Sonia Messerole is to seek supporters who believe your organization is worthy of their support. People, who are familiar with an organization and believe in its work, possess the strongest potential for giving. Hospital donors, family members and potential supporters are all prospects for giving, but the strongest base for donor support exists among patients -- the people who have been directly served by your institution.  

"Hospitalization is the ultimate donor cultivation tool . . . " explained Attal and Messerole, "one that has more impact than dozens of luncheons, hundreds of institutional tours, and millions of brochures." Hospital Development Authority Gordon, who has written on the topic, summarized it best, "Conducting an annual giving program in a hospital without soliciting your patients is like running a college fund drive without soliciting alumni."  

Hospitals across the country have witnessed unprecedented success when soliciting former patients. A British Columbia hospital foundation, for instance, generated more than $26 million, in one year, from patient solicitations alone. Moreover, Camp Hill Medical Center in Nova Scotia began soliciting patients a year and a half ago for its $10 million capital campaign. So far, more than 11,000 former patients have responded with

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4 Gordon, Solicit Your Patients, 6.

5 Gene Attal and Sonia Messerole, "Fluff or Substance? A VIP Guest Relations Program," Fund Raising Management: 38.


7 "Hospital Fund-Raisers Face More Restrictions on Using Lists to Solicit Former Patients," Hospital Fundraising 2, no. 9 (September 1994): 109.
donations totalling $2 million.9 The trend continues in hospitals nationwide.

Before soliciting donors, however, it is wise to investigate the range of motivations behind donor giving. Maggie Haggberg, vice president and creative director of a corporate development company, offers her philosophy on donor giving. She writes:

Some of us give to benefit from tax advantages; some of us give out of a sense of gratitude for all that we have; some of us give to be recognized and receive public acclaim; some of us give out of guilt or sense of obligation; and some of us give out of the conviction that it is the right thing to do.

From fulfilling a community need to giving something in return for a job well done, the savvy fund-raiser understands the multiplicity of giving and develops ways to translate it into benefits.10

In addition to understanding donor motivations, effective fund-raisers need to conduct research to gain a better perspective of their donors. "One of the most important words in fund-raising and communicating is targeting," shared Ralph Sanders, a respected authority in hospital development. "That's simply knowing your audience -- and targeting your message directly to them." Research defines a basis from which communication can be launched and long-lasting relationships formed.11

Though most fund-raisers know the value of research, many overlook it. Constrained

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by resources and time, many development programs fail because of a lack of research. Surveys, telephone interviews and one-on-one interviews can determine how donors first learned of the organization; what they like most; and whether they will support future projects. Feedback as such is crucial in shaping messages that attract and maintain donors.12

Equally important to maintaining philanthropic support is developing an ongoing communications program that keeps donors actively informed of a hospital and its work. "One of the hardest things on earth to do is to give money away wisely, where the need is greatest and where the organization or group is fulfilling its purpose," shared an anonymous donor. The key to fund-raising is staying in touch with donors and fostering long-term relationships. This is how hospital philanthropy is going to stay alive.13

Hospital development experts revealed that unfamiliarity with an organization's goals is the primary reason that potential contributors do not give. Developing a newsletter can easily correct this problem. "The more a reader knows about an organization, the more that is shared, the better the reader will like and be loyal to the organization," writes hospital development authority, Vincent S. Foster.14

Newsletters, in general, keep donors in touch with an organization, but more

12Ibid., 27.
importantly they convey an image that can lead to on-going support. A communications program executed effectively can convince a donor to maintain or even increase support.

Maintaining donors in today's market can be a difficult task. However, if hospital development offices examine donor needs more closely, they can communicate more effectively and, ultimately, achieve their fund-raising goals.

Problem

The author uncovered many articles relating to donor giving; however, no articles existed on the potential for giving among people born at a hospital. Thus, this study is justifiable in that it is the only one of its kind to analyze this relationship. The Cooper Foundation has never conducted a survey of the 6,500 Baby Alumni Society members, all of whom were born at Cooper. As the literature points out, initial research is necessary to construct a plan of action. If this is true, then the need for the study is warranted.

Purpose

The focus of this thesis was to determine if a willingness for financial support exists among members of the Baby Alumni Society of Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center. For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand how this group evolved.

16Litman, Donor's Perspective, 33.
In 1980, The Cooper Foundation, the fund-raising arm of Cooper, established the organization by launching a series of membership campaigns to identify those who were born at Cooper. To date, there are 6,500 members. Some members responded themselves while others were inducted by a parent or family member. To keep in contact with members, The Cooper Foundation produced an alumni newsletter, which featured articles about the pediatric staff and the pediatric programs available at Cooper.

Results of the mail survey will provide demographic and psychographic information about the alumni group and determine whether members are a potential source for fund-raising.

Procedure

The body of the thesis was based on results of a mail survey, sent to five hundred members of the Baby Alumni Society of Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center. The author conducted a preliminary telephone survey in which eleven members of the group were asked to share their opinions about the institution, as well as their familiarity with Cooper and its programs. Responses provided a basis for selecting questions for the mail survey. Additionally, related literature provided the author with insight for developing survey questions. From a list of 3,400 names, participants for the telephone and mail surveys were selected using the systematic sampling method. Participants were chosen from a membership list, which was limited to residents of New Jersey who were listed by their full names.
Terminology

**Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center**: A non-profit hospital, situated in the urban community of Camden, New Jersey. An affiliate of the Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine and Dentistry, Cooper is a tertiary care center that employs 3,400 staff members.

**The Cooper Foundation**: The fund-raising arm of Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center that manages and dispenses charitable funding and raises money for the institution's programs and services.

**Baby Alumni Society**: An organization made up of members who were born at Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center. Members range in age from infancy to senior citizens.

**Philanthropy**: The act of raising money for a non-profit organization to promote its mission or the act of giving money to charitable causes. Individuals who donate money to charitable causes are philanthropic in nature because they promote goodness in a community.

**Non-profit Hospital**: A health-care institution that offers services and care to the community regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Funding for these hospitals is provided from state and federal funding programs, as well as from corporate foundations, individuals, community groups and businesses.
CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this study was to identify if members of Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center's Baby Alumni Society are likely prospects for charitable giving. Though much has been written on hospital philanthropy, none of the literature examined if a willingness to support a hospital exists among those who were born there. Since information on the subject was not available, the author conducted general research on patient and donor giving. Ultimately, the study provided insight in identifying and soliciting hospital alumni members.

Research for the study was gathered through the Reuben Sharp Library at Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center and Savitz Library at Rowan College of New Jersey. Using MEDLARS, National Newspaper Index, Dissertation Abstracts and ABI-INFORM data bases, the author used the key terms "donors," "charity," and "philanthropy" to uncover literature on donor giving. For information on membership and group giving, the following key words were accessed: "members," "involvement," "giving," and "hospitals." Additionally, the author identified articles, relevant to the study, in current health-care and fund-raising periodicals and conducted a telephone survey of Baby Alumni members to provide direction for the study.

Overall, the literature uncovered general motivations for giving. Several articles,
however, discussed the importance of patients to a hospital's fund-raising efforts.

Information applicable to the thesis was identified and grouped into four major categories: health-care reform; motivations for giving; the importance of research; and cultivating donors.

Health Care Reform

Before introducing the topic of donor giving, it is important to understand the framework in which hospitals are currently operating. The following articles provided an understanding of what health-care providers, nationwide, are facing and how it affects the development effort. In particular, the articles discussed the charity care reimbursement issue and the ramifications they have for hospitals.

_The Philadelphia Business Journal_ painted a bleak picture for New Jersey hospitals in "N.J. Hospital Group May Fight Medicaid Payment Cuts." With state legislators proposing to reduce charity care payments by $135 million in 1995, hospitals statewide will be taking severe cuts in revenue that will radically change the way hospitals are organized and operated. State officials expect Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center in Camden, New Jersey to take the hardest hit -- a $6 million decrease.¹

Heim, in "What's Ahead for Hospitals?" further discussed charity care reimbursements and contended that hospitals are under intense pressure to raise unrestricted funds to defray the expense of costly procedures and care. Since the

introduction of The Diagnostic Related Group (DRG) -- a system used to determine how much hospitals are reimbursed for certain procedures -- charity care reimbursements have forced fund-raisers to rework their appeals. "In the next century," writes Heim, it is predicted that "hospitals will need philanthropy for their continued existence and in many cases their very survival will depend on the big gift." More than ever, he concluded, development offices will be required to raise money for capital improvement projects.2

An article in Modern Healthcare, "N.J. Hospitals Face Instability -- Report," maintained that the financial stability of New Jersey hospitals is eroding due to reductions in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements; increased costs of charity care; and discounts given to managed care plans. The article pointed out that hospitals lose roughly $450 each time a Medicare patient is treated. On average, New Jersey hospitals provided $600 million in non-subsidized care each year. According to the New Jersey Hospital Association, which released the report, hospitals will face insolvency unless they are fully reimbursed for the charitable care they provide.3

Hospital FundRaising reported optimism on the health-care homefront in "Donations to Hospitals Rise Despite Healthcare Reform Debate." According to the article, contributions to health-related organizations rose to 1.92 billion in 1993. Experts believed that publicity about health care reform helped to raise public awareness of hospitals' need for support.


According to Larry Wolgast, EdD, director of development for a national mental health agency in Kansas, "Hospital fund-raisers can find cause for optimism in the overall upward trend in giving." He continued, "People are not giving less because of health-care reform . . . If anything, publicity has worked to the advantage of fund-raisers, illustrating the need for public support."

In conclusion, the Association of Healthcare Philanthropy, which is known as the barometer of health-care giving, reported these findings:

- Institutions with a specialized focus had a higher median of cash donations: $32 million for Children's Hospitals and $1.62 million for teaching hospitals.
- Nearly 65.4 percent of health-related donations stemmed from individuals.4

Motivations for Donor Giving

As hospitals approach the 21st century, patients will emerge as an increasingly important base for hospital support. These articles emphasized the importance of individuals in the fund-raising process.

Carter, for example, regarded the individual as an invaluable source of funding in "Hospitals Turning to Individual Donors for Gifts." Referring to planned giving as "the wave of the future," she maintained that government grants and corporate sponsorships are difficult to obtain, and planned giving offers a more realistic approach to fulfilling capital campaign goals.

A Children's Hospital Foundation in Columbus, Ohio, for instance, focused on

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4Donations to Hospitals, 79-82.
building personal relations rather than seeking contributions through mass mailings. The effort amounted in $11 million from individual contributors. Another example: an orthopedic foundation in Los Angeles relied on a direct mail campaign to tell the hospital's story in the form of personal letters. Individuals provided 98 percent of donations in that campaign. "With corporations unable or reluctant to contribute money, more hospitals will discover the importance of individual donors," concluded Carter.\(^5\)

In "A Study of Attitudes, Preferences and Expectations of the Donors to The Cooper Foundation in Southern New Jersey," Touhey advised fund-raisers to take note of the rise in individual support. She writes, "In any philanthropic institution, the individual holds the greatest promise of financial support." In a 1990 survey of Cooper Foundation donors, Touhey discovered the top three reasons for donor support: a concern for healthcare issues in South Jersey; a positive hospital experience; and awareness of a specific need. The author also found the following information helpful to the study of Cooper's alumni population:

- The majority of donors want to know how Cooper benefits from charitable gifts.
- Feature stories on hospital services were considered the most important element in publications.
- Readers were most interested in reading articles on current health topics and new technologies.\(^6\)

\(^5\)Carter, *Hospitals Turning to Individual Donors*, 86.

\(^6\)Michaela Touhey, "A Study of Attitudes, Preferences and Expectations of the Donors to The Cooper Foundation in Southern New Jersey," (1990), 96.
The following four articles presented a strong case for soliciting patients.

In "Where Have all the Donors Gone?" Cunningham maintained that patients are the strongest candidates for giving. With the right encouragement, patients can fulfill a large part of a hospital's funding needs. In particular, patients are interested in patient care and want to know how their gift is helping that effort.

Though publicity of the corrupt practices of certain organizations has helped dampen the image of charitable giving, fund-raisers can rely on the thriving force of philanthropy. In short, people will always feel the need to help those who cannot help themselves, concluded Cunningham.7

Chamberlain and Dittrich explained how grateful patients can make a significant difference in hospital fund-raising in "Waving the Flag of Emotion." The authors asserted that grateful patients extend beyond the traditional sense to include family members, affluent members of a hospital constituency; and patients who have developed a rapport with physicians. In most cases, these groups support the hospital through an annual giving or capital campaign. The key to increasing donations is to incorporate a system by which doctors refer grateful patients to the development office.8

Taking patient solicitations a step beyond, "Excellent Service Bolsters Development Efforts" summarized a National Association for Hospital Development educational

7Robert M. Cunningham Jr., "Where Have All the Donors Gone?" Trustee. (February 1990): 18-22.
8Chamberlain and Dittrich, Waving the Flag of Emotion, 77-83.
conference by pointing out the importance of patient care. Referred to as the 10-10-10 rule, the article explained that it takes $10,000 to obtain a customer, 10 seconds to lose one and 10 years for a problem to go away.

To ensure good patient relations, make sure that every area a patient comes in contact with is favorable because "a happy patient is an excellent prospect."9

"Hospital Fundraising Faces More Restrictions on Using Lists to Solicit Former Patients" discussed the need to solicit former patients with regard to legislation protecting patient rights.

Regulating patient information could have a devastating effect on hospital philanthropy, forcing hospitals to give up millions of dollars in potential revenue. Citing the effectiveness of patient campaigns, the article referred to a Nova Scotia hospital's capital campaign effort, which raised 20 percent of its $10 million goal from patient contributors. Regarding the release of patient information, the article closed by recommending fund-raisers to:

- Know state laws concerning the use of patient information.
- Sign letters from the hospital CEO, not a foundation official.
- Allow patients an opportunity to remove their name from the mailing list.
- Keep patient lists within the hospital limits. 10

From past experiences to moral obligations, donors give to non-profits for various

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10 "Hospital Fundraising Face," 109-111.
reasons. An understanding of who donors are and why they contribute can help fundraisers generate more money for their organizations. Literature regarding motivations for donor giving provided information relevant to the study.

In "Four Motivations for Charitable Giving," Dawson presented the top motivations for giving: reciprocity, self-esteem, tax incentives and career advancement. He maintained that donors should be studied in terms of their behavior. Though difficult to analyze, studying behavior goes beyond demographics to focus on the thoughts that take place before giving occurs.

The primary motivation, reciprocity, is the notion that people who have benefitted from a charity's service in the past are likely to support it in the future. A cancer patient, for instance, helped by a program that was funded in part by community supporters can appreciate the value of donor giving. Secondly, Dawson explained how self-esteem, the feeling of self-worth and belonging, compels donors to support a particular cause. Tax incentives, the third motivation, is probably the most frequently used appeal to attract financial supporters. Tax incentives provide donors an opportunity to support a charitable cause, while receiving the benefits of tax breaks. Finally, association with a non-profit can bring a donor into the proper business circles, enhancing career opportunities.

Knowing the level of influence that each of these factors has on donor giving is useful in designing a successful fund-raising program, Dawson concluded.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\)Scott Dawson, "Four Motivations for Charitable Giving: Implications for Marketing Strategies to Attract Monetary Donations for Medical Research," *Journal of Health Care*
With respect to patient solicitations, the following authors provided these findings.

Gordon, in "Soliciting Your Patients," maintained that patients are the best source for hospital fund-raising. He offered three reasons to solicit patients for support:

- They have benefitted most from your service and understand your case.
- They are one of the easiest groups to identify.
- They constitute a continuous source of support.\(^2\)

In "Hospital Campaign Hits Home," Grout depicted the revolution in hospital marketing from slick, image-building campaigns to soft-sell approaches that market service and the human touch. Excellent service and a caring staff, she stressed, are strong selling features that remain with patients long after they have left a hospital. "Many of the buying decisions are based on emotional values," writes Grout. "Patients generally don't choose a hospital because of the professional services. They choose them because they were treated nicely while receiving those services." In conclusion, Grout said hospitals need to communicate more often with patients.

Many articles took a general approach to donor giving. Hagberg, for instance, contended that individuals are an important source of funding in "Why Donors Give." Philanthropy is alive and well, thanks to the basic principles that remain unchanged within us. "Today, more than ever, there is a longing for meaning and significance," she writes. People, lost in a high-tech world, are asking themselves: "How do I count? How

\(^2\) Gordon, Soliciting Your Patients, 6-7.
can I make a difference?"

The act of giving is an important part of our being. Donors achieve a sense of belonging, and a feeling of importance through giving. If fund-raisers can find ways to translate these needs into benefits, Haggberg said, they will be successful in their fund-raising efforts. For instance, there will be times to emphasize the tax advantages of giving before year end or to publicly recognize donors. Regardless of the forces that motivate giving, a call to action is always necessary.13

Mears probed a step further in "Understanding Strong Donors" by identifying the characteristics of strong donors. According to research, strong donors have higher education, higher incomes and, in general, have a higher awareness of charitable agencies. Additionally, strong donors support more charitable agencies and have a better understanding of community fund-raising needs than non-donors.

Additionally, Mears found that donor giving correlates with higher income, education, age, number of years living in the area and general awareness of the services provided by charities. Strong donors support 3.8 charities and give a minimum of $100 a year. Furthermore, these donors are more likely to be active community members. He added, "Strong donors seem to have their minds made up and are not swayed by the simple act of being asked to contribute to a charitable agency."

In "Profile: Wealthy Donors to Federated Campaigns," The Chronicle of Philanthropy surveyed 254 affluent people who gave a minimum of $50,000 to a

federated campaign [United Way] within the last three years. The study revealed this about donor giving:

- 76% said it improved the quality of life in the community.
- 54% said it helped many worthy causes.
- 51% said they received recognition from prominent community leaders.
- 39% said they selected charities that paralleled their personal values.

Furthermore, a quarter of the respondents were characterized as devout donors who support mainly religious causes; 22 percent gave for tax incentives; and 16 percent supported charities that touched their social network.

Mears concluded that donors, in general, do not know enough about community organizations. Thus, organizations need to educate contributors to maintain their support. Newsletters and communication programs are ideal ways to show potential donors how an organization is improving the community.¹⁴

The Importance of Donor Research

Knowing how to identify donors is just as important as knowing whom to approach. As the literature pointed out, every organization has a unique donor population. Therefore, the best approach to understanding donor needs is to conduct research.

"It's important to start with an understanding of who the donor is and what his or her interests, concerns and giving potential are," writes Haggberg in "Why Donors Give."

Once a donor framework is built, fund-raisers can tailor development programs to meet donor needs and ultimately their own.\textsuperscript{15}

In "Donor's Perspectives on Giving Opens Some Eyes," Littman examined fund-raising from the philanthropist's point of view. He spoke of the importance of talking to and understanding donors and noted that donors, in most cases, are eager to support a specific cause.

Furthermore, he advised fund-raisers to focus on restricted giving and to provide donors with timely updates on how their money is being spent. "Progress reports have great value," writes Littman. "They show people what has been done with their money. More importantly, they demonstrate why a donor should increase his gift or even continue to give."\textsuperscript{16}

Several articles focused on the power of surveying donors to enhance fund-raising efforts.

Sanders, for instance, detailed the importance of surveys in "Donor Profile Survey: A Way to Determine Priorities." Surveys not only determine a fund-raising direction, but they also provide valuable information for the cultivation process.

Before developing a survey, Sanders asks fund-raisers to carefully think through each question. He cited an example in which survey results changed the way a bequest program was presented. Originally, the program asked donors to make out wills and

\textsuperscript{15}Haggberg, Why Donors Give, 39.

\textsuperscript{16}Littman, Donor's Perspectives on Giving, 32-35.
include the organization as a beneficiary. Survey results, however, revealed that 84 percent of donors already had a will. Thus, the campaign shifted from requesting people to create a will to asking them to name the organization as a beneficiary.

Surveys can also determine the hook of an appeal or the type of story to include in a newsletter. Sanders shared several benefits of conducting a survey:

1. to provide a continual source of donors
2. to uncover new methods for communicating with old donors
3. to increase donor support
4. to improve programs
5. to redefine fund-raising goals
6. to serve as a testing ground for new ideas.

In conclusion, Sanders remarked that surveys are a necessary tool in keeping up-to-date with donors and are vital to the fund-raising process.\textsuperscript{17}

Stocker further illustrated the value of surveying donors in "Market Research Points Out Donor Perceptions." Citing the success of Braille Institute's research program, Stocker showed how research can help organizations structure a program in keeping with donor attitudes and expectations. Research studies also enable organizations to provide insightful information to their contributors, which ultimately can lead to increased awareness and support.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}Sanders, \textit{Donor Profile Survey}, 18, 20, 22.

Cultivating Donors

Once organizations establish a donor base, the next step is to maintain active relations between an institution and its contributors. The following articles demonstrated the importance of developing a cultivation program.

In particular, these publications discussed the significance of cultivating patients. Attal and Messerole in "Fluff or Substance? A VIP Guest Relations Program" advised fund-raisers to cultivate donors before they enter the hospital and continue the effort after they have left the institution. The authors, who referred to hospitalization as the "ultimate donor cultivation tool," maintained that a positive hospital experience can have more impact than any luncheon, tour or brochure.

"Hospitalization is the donor's personal examination of all the platitudes we preach about our institution -- that we serve patients with compassion, that we offer exceptional quality, and that we are consummate professionals." From gold cards benefits to free parking, Attal and Messerole detailed the components of their VIP guest relations program and expressed the importance of developing one. They cautioned, however, that a recognition program as such takes time to reap benefits, but is worth the effort in the long run.19

Sione, as well, emphasized the importance of notifying the development office when a donor enters the hospital. In "Spot Donors When They're On Your Turf," he maintained that a well-orchestrated system of identifying patient donors can protect the

19Attal and Messerole, Fluff or Substance?, 38.
development office from missed opportunities. From sending get-well cards to arranging for a private room, special incentives strengthen relations between donors and a hospital. Though scanning hospital discharge reports and matching them against active and potential donor lists may seem cumbersome, the payoff can be well worth it, especially when it is time to ask for money.29

Foster took donor solicitations a step further in "Hospitalized Donors Should Receive TLC" by outlining specific steps. By compiling a list of patients scheduled for admission, development offices can cross check names against the donor list to determine who are significant donors. Prior to admission, telephone each patient donor and extend a special perk: 24-hour visiting passes, parking passes or a private room. On the day of arrival, greet and introduce patients to key hospital staff members and offer ways to make their visit more comfortable. Additionally, personal letters or flowers can be sent and novel approaches taken to show donors how important they are.

An elderly woman, for example, whose family members were out of town, was driven home by an executive staff member. Five months later, the hospital received a $125,000 serendipitous grant from a foundation president who was the brother of the elderly woman. Though many factors motivate patient giving, Foster contended that a program as such increases the likelihood of maintaining and increasing donor support.21

In "Excellent Service Bolsters Development Efforts," the importance of excellent

29'David Sione, "Spot Donors When They're on Your Turf," 27, 29.
21Foster, Hospitalized Donors Receive TLC, 52, 54, 56, 58.
service in fund-raising is discussed. The article presented five elements of service that can boost hospital fund-raising: technical competence, environment, people skills, systems and amenities. Additionally, the article asserted that excellent service "is cost-effective" in terms of fund-raising and is one of the most powerful weapons available. In closing, the article emphasized direct mail as a lucrative avenue for acquiring new donors and upgrading current ones.22

Many authors agreed that cultivation is necessary to maintain a successful fund-development program. From direct mail to newsletters, the following articles discussed the need for building on-going communication programs. In particular, these articles stressed the importance of a direct mail program.

Grout maintained that direct mail is the best way to develop on-going communications with donors in "Hospital Campaign Hits Home." To illustrate the impact of direct mail programs, he alluded to a successful program launched by a Kansas hospital. Using a humanistic approach, the hospital altered its high-tech image and positioned itself as a caring, concerned facility. Featuring letters from grateful patients, the direct mail campaign acquired 2,500 new donors and raised $100,000 for the hospital's capital campaign. The hospital development staff attested that a personal letter from a real human being made the service seem more real.

Grout concluded that the beauty of direct mail is its measurability. Responses can be tallied and the program evaluated by counting the number of new patients using your

22Excellent Service Bolsters Development, 54.
Gordon, in "Soliciting Your Patients," said a well-executed direct mail program can be highly effective in increasing a hospital's donor base. Cultivating donors takes time, Gordon cautioned, but direct mail can fuel the process by keeping a hospital in front of its constituents. The best time to solicit patients is soon after they have left the hospital, while the best approach is always a personalized appeal. In conclusion, Gordon said the optimum goal of direct mail is to acquire new donors and maintain their support.

A variety of articles discussed the use of newsletters to keep donors informed. Haggberg expressed, in "Why Donors Give?," that giving is inspired by emotion—the type that can be achieved through a heart-wrenching success story. The power of a good story triggers emotions and compels donors to support a cause. Moreover, success stories call attention to an organization and its specific needs. Donors, in general, want to know how their gift is making a difference and who is being helped. Haggberg concluded that newsletters are the best vehicle for communicating these ideas.

In "Motivating Your Donors Through Better Newsletters," McKoane said newsletters are "one of the most important support tools" fundraisers have to increase donor commitment and support. Newsletters are effective cultivation pieces especially when they inform donors of your mission; involve donors as part of the group, reinforce


24Gordon, Soliciting Your Patients, 6.

Mears argued that donors possess limited understanding about the services provided by the agencies in their communities. To reach the strong donor market, she recommended "developing and distributing communication programs that show how agencies benefit the community." Not only do communication programs appeal to donors, but they are likely to be more effective than a direct solicitation.

Overall, the literature provided general information on donor giving and motivations. Articles regarding patient solicitation programs and general hospital giving, however, were most helpful to the study.

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CHAPTER III

Procedure

The author conducted literature searches on donor giving and the effect of groups on giving through the Reuben L. Sharp Health Science Library at Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center in Camden and Savitz Library at Rowan College of New Jersey in Glassboro. Periodical, textbook, journal and dissertation searches were conducted, using MEDLARS, National Newspaper Index, Dissertation Abstracts and ABI/INFORM databases. Word combinations used for the searches included "donors," "health care," "charity," "involvement," "giving" and "membership."

Most of the research yielded articles from trade magazines and journals on hospital fund-raising and marketing. The search unearthed 238 articles related to the subject, twenty-four of which were applicable to the study. Recent editions of *Fundraising Management* and *Hospital Fundraising* were the most resourceful in providing timely information on donor giving with respect to managed care. In addition to the computer database searches, the author found several articles in current publications that were helpful to the study. No information was drawn from newspapers, magazines or books relating to the topic.

The body of the thesis was based on results of a survey, mailed to five hundred donors of The Cooper Foundation, the fund-raising arm of Cooper Hospital/University
Medical Center in Camden. Survey questions sought to develop a membership profile and to determine whether members are likely to support Cooper because of their affiliation with it. Articles pertinent to the topic provided the author with a basis for developing survey questions.

Prior to the mail survey, the author conducted a telephone survey to learn more about members and their opinions about Cooper. The author discovered there are two categories of members: those who recruited themselves and those who were recruited by a parent. This was an important distinction to consider when conducting the mail survey. To gain insightful information from the two groups, portions of the mail survey were divided into two tiers: one for the alumnus and one for the relative of the alumnus. In some cases, the alumnus was no longer living in the parents' household yet the newsletter was still coming to the parents' home, addressed to the child. In any case, it was important to know whether parents, even though their child was no longer living at home, still wished to receive the publication, Baby Alumni News.

Telephone survey results further revealed that members did not expect any special benefits as a member of the Baby Alumni Society and most wanted to receive additional publications about Cooper. Eighty percent of the members signed up for membership themselves, and the median age was forty-six. These responses helped to formulate questions for the mail survey, which consisted of multiple-choice answers. Questions covered topics such as patient care, interest in hospital programs, donor giving and demographics.

Designed on a desk-top publishing system using 8 1/2" x 14" legal size paper, the
mail survey was printed on two sides and folded into four panels. A letter to participants was printed on a panel of the survey. [For a survey sample, see Appendix A.]

Participants received an envelope addressed to them with the survey and a business-reply envelope inside. In all, eighty-five surveys were returned.

Participants for both surveys were randomly selected using the systematic sampling method. Only members living in New Jersey who were listed by their full names were considered for the study. The selection process for five hundred participants was calculated by dividing the total population [3,400 names] by the number of intended participants [500] \( \frac{3400}{500} = 7 \). The number seven indicated that every seventh name on the list would be chosen to receive the mail survey. To determine a starting point, the author numbered separate slips of paper — one through seven —, folded them, put them into a bowl, and selected a paper with the number seven. Starting with the seventh name on the list, the author counted every seventh name until the five hundred participants were chosen. Participants for the telephone survey were selected in the same fashion, yielding a group of eleven randomly selected participants.

Surveys were tallied and results organized using Lotus. Resulting data were used to draw conclusions and to make recommendations for the Baby Alumni Society program.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

The author conducted a telephone survey and a questionnaire to gain insight about Baby Alumni Society members for the study. Using the systematic sampling method, eleven participants were selected for the telephone survey and five hundred for the mail survey. Telephone survey results provided preliminary information that was helpful in developing questions for the mail survey. A synopsis of the telephone survey results precludes a summary of the survey questions. (For a survey sample, see Appendix A.) Of the five hundred surveys mailed, eighty-five were returned. Survey questions, which were calculated according to the total number of respondents, reflect a breakdown of how respondents answered.

Telephone Survey Results

Preliminary research revealed that all members did not sign themselves up for membership. In some cases, the parent of a child born at Cooper made the inquiry. This was important to note because it could affect results if questions were targeted at alumni members who either have no interest in the organization or are no longer living with their parents. The survey revealed that 82 percent of members responded themselves. Thus, a section for non-members was warranted. In the mail survey, participants were asked to
describe their relationship to the alumni member [self, mother, spouse, etc.] and answer specific questions regarding hospitalization.

In terms of the membership program, 72 percent were familiar with the publication Baby News and, overall, were pleased with its content. Ninety percent of respondents wanted to continue receiving the publication and requested to be on the mailing list to receive other Cooper publications.

Approximately 55 percent of the members described Cooper as either excellent or good, while 45 percent remained neutral. As the literature pointed out, having a positive experience with a hospital is an important connection in fund-raising. While 72 percent of members had not been back to Cooper since their birth, 45 percent revealed that a family member had been treated at the institution. Close to 72 percent revealed they would recommend Cooper to another person, and 63 percent said the hospital’s location in an urban setting was not a deterring factor.

Cooper’s latest ventures include The Children’s Regional Hospital at Cooper and the expansion of physician practices in the suburbs; however, only 63 percent were familiar with these projects. In terms of donor giving, more than half reported they would support Cooper with a financial contribution; 28 percent said they were unsure, while 18 percent responded "no." The median age of members was forty-nine.

Questionnaire Results

1. Relationship to the Cooper Baby Alumni Society member
   Total respondents: 84

   Most of the members -- 92.9 percent -- signed up for membership themselves,
indicating that the target audience is alumni members. Another 4.7 percent of the respondents indicated they were not the alumnus, but the mother of the alumnus.

2. Familiarity with Baby Alumni News
   Total respondents: 84

   A resounding 91.7 percent were familiar with the publication Baby Alumni News.

3. Impression of Baby Alumni News
   Total respondents: 77

   Overall, members rated Baby Alumni News excellent [12.9 percent] or good [64.9 percent]. Eighteen percent rated it fair, while the remaining percentage said it was either poor or had no impression.

4. Would you like to continue receiving Baby Alumni News?
   Total respondents: 78

   More than three-quarters of the respondents wanted to continue receiving the publication. Only 23 percent said they did not.

5. Would you like to receive other Cooper publications?
   Total respondents: 80

   This question was a testament to the alumni's interest in Cooper. Respondents revealed that 65 percent want to receive additional publications about Cooper. Only 35 percent said they do not.

6. Programs of interest
   Total responses: 185

   The following answers provided insight into the topics that interest alumni members. Only seven percent of members wanted to know about pediatrics. This was interesting because the content of Baby Alumni News is geared toward pediatric programs. The
The author discovered that members preferred to know more about these topics:

- Cancer: 10.8%
- Women's Care: 10.8%
- Outpatient Services: 9.2%
- OB/GYN: 8.0%
- Pediatrics: 7.0%
- Cardiology: 7.0%
- Same-day surgery: 7.0%
- None: 16.2%

The remaining topics of interest in descending order included diabetes, psychiatry, geriatrics, rehabilitation, colorectal and cleft palate.

7. How do you stay informed about Cooper?
   Total responses: 151

- Baby News: 32.5%
- News Media: 22.5%
- Friends: 10.6%

Ten percent of members said they have no reliable source for information. The rest of the respondents were kept informed through Cooper employees, special events, their own contacts and business contacts.

For Baby Alumni Members Only

Questions eight through ten were intended for the baby alumni member. The relevance of this section is to determine if members have been back to Cooper since their birth. If they have, it is important to know the type of care they received and whether they were pleased with the experience. If they have not returned to Cooper for care, members were asked if a family member has. Research in previous chapters suggests that hospitalization can be a strong tool for solicitation.
8. Other than birth, have you been hospitalized at Cooper?  
   Total respondents: 78  
   
   Only 33.3 percent of alumni members have been back to the hospital since they were born.

9. Has a family member been hospitalized at Cooper?  
   Total respondents: 78  
   
   Yes 70.5%  
   No 23.0%

10. Reasons for hospitalization at Cooper  
    Total respondents: 120  
    
    Major Surgery 22.5%  
    Minor Surgery 21.7%  
    Major Illness 15.0%  
    Maternity 14.2%  
    Diagnostic Tests 13.3%  
    Minor illness/critical injury 13.0%

   The purpose of this question is to determine the type of service alumni or family members have received at Cooper. Major surgery, for instance, indicates that patients spent time in the hospital, possibly enough time to gain a favorable impression. Results show that more than 14 percent of responses were maternity-related, which strengthens the connection between alumni and maternity services.

For Non-Alumni Members

Questions eleven through fourteen are similar to questions eight through ten asked of alumni members regarding hospitalization. However, this portion was created for non-members who may be interested in Cooper as well as the Baby Alumni Society. If the
alumnus did not sign up, it is likely that a parent of a child born at Cooper did and is receiving the alumni newsletter. If that is the case, the author wanted to know whether these respondents have a significant interest in Cooper. Ultimately, it is important to know whether non-members have the potential and willingness to give.

The average number of respondents to questions eleven through fourteen was 3.6, indicating that participants consisted mostly of alumni members. Preliminary research indicated the need to address non-alumni members who, in most cases, were the parents of the alumni. If enough people fit this scenario, it was important to know if an interest in Cooper existed among this group of potential contributors. A low response rate suggested that the relationship between non-alumni members and Cooper is insignificant to the study.

15. Would you consider coming to Cooper for care?
   Total respondents: 81

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The fact that more than three-fourths said they would consider coming to Cooper for a future hospitalization reflects a positive impression among respondents. Trust in an institution is an important factor in fund-raising. The more people that choose Cooper for treatment, the more opportunities the development office has for soliciting patients.

16. Would you recommend Cooper to others?

   Total respondents: 80
More than 80 percent would recommend a family member of friend to Cooper, illustrating confidence in the institution.

17. Have you given to Cooper?
   Total respondents: 80

   Eighty one percent of respondents have not given to Cooper and only 13.8 percent have contributed. It is important to note that members have never been formally solicited.

   Questions eighteen through twenty are applicable only to respondents who have donated to Cooper in the past. Otherwise, respondents were instructed to skip to question twenty-one.

18. Number of donations made to Cooper in the past five years
   Total respondents: 10

   Results are not significant enough to draw any relevant findings. However, respondents answered as follows:

   Two or three years   40%
   Four or five years   40%
   One year            20%

19. Average annual donation
   Total respondents: 11

   $1-$24       45.5%
   $25-$49      27.3%
   $50-$199     18.2%

20. Donation preference
    Total respondents: 11
Of those who have contributed, unrestricted giving accounted for almost half of the donations and restricted giving for 27 percent.

21. Would you donate to Cooper?
   Total respondents: 74

   More than half said they were uncertain whether or not they would support Cooper with a financial contribution; 33.8 percent responded "no," and 12.2 percent answered "yes." Considering the fact that members have never been solicited and their level of commitment to Cooper is unknown, this was an important question to the study. With more than half responding that they are unsure whether or not they would give, the results indicate that there may be giving potential from this group.

22. Types of charities supported
   Total responses: 226

   Literature suggested that strong donors give to 3.8 different charities. A look at the types of charities supported by respondents has implications for the study of alumni members. The following organizations ranked highest in terms of total donor support:

   Religious 20%
   Community 16%
   Youth 12%
   Education 12%
   Health Care 12%

   Environment, political causes and other organizations made up approximately 15 percent of the miscellaneous causes that alumni member supported. Only 3.5 percent of respondents said they supported no charitable causes.

23. Affiliation with Cooper
   Total respondents: 82
This question attempted to determine the relationship between respondents and Cooper. Though many were born at the institution, not all members indicated that they were past patients; 54 percent, however, did consider themselves as such. Nearly 20 percent reported having no connection with Cooper. In all, 14 percent of respondents indicated that they were either a special event attendee, employee, vendor, volunteer or donor.

24. Sex
   Total respondents: 82

   Most respondents were female -- 68 percent.

25. Age
   Total respondents: 82

   40-54 years  47.6%
   26-39 years  20.7%
   55-69  20.7%
   Under 25  9.8%
   70-84  1.2%

   Nearly half of the survey respondents were between the ages of 40 and 54, indicating that they are approaching their prime earning years. Individuals in the 26-to-39-year- and 55-to-69-year-range were equally divided, each accounting for 20 percent of responses.

26. Education
   Total respondents: 82

   High School  42.7%
   College  31.7%
   Graduate  21.9%

   Combined, more than half of the respondents had either a high school diploma or a college degree. Eleven percent had either grade school or a doctorate degree.
27. Annual family income
Total Respondents: 65

Thirty-eight percent of the three-fourths who responded earned between $25,000 and $49,999; 21.5 percent earned between $50,000 and $74,999; nearly 17 percent earned between $75,000 and $99,999. The remaining 21 percent reported family incomes of $10,000 to $24,999 [13.9 percent]; $100,000 to $299,999 [7.7 percent]; and $300,000 and up [1.5 percent].

Furthermore, the following responses were cross-referenced to draw these findings:

- Of the respondents who have been hospitalized since birth, 77 percent indicated they would return to Cooper for a hospitalization.

- More than half of the respondents were uncertain whether or not they would support Cooper with a financial contribution. Those respondents, however, supported 2.9 charities on average. Of the respondents who said they would not give money, only one percent supported no charitable organizations at all. Twenty-eight percent of those who said no, gave money to health-care organizations.

- Nearly half of the respondents were between 40 and 55 years old. The top charities supported by this age group included: religion [22 percent]; community [20 percent]; education [13 percent]; youth [11 percent]; and health care [10 percent].

- Respondents who fell within the $25,000 to $49,999 salary range -- 38 percent -- gave to 2.8 charities. All respondents within this salary range donated money to charities.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

To determine whether Baby Alumni Society members at Cooper Hospital/University Medical Center are likely to give a financial gift to the hospital in which they were born, a survey was developed and mailed to five hundred randomly selected participants. Survey questions were separated into five distinct areas to provide information for the study: 1) familiarity with the Baby Alumni Society; 2) relationship with Cooper; 3) impression of Cooper; 4) charitable giving; and 5) demographics. A detailed analysis of the survey questions yielded these conclusions:

- Most people were pleased with the content of Baby Alumni News; three-fourths wanted to continue receiving it. In particular, respondents indicated an interest in learning more about cancer, women's care and outpatient services.

- The majority of members viewed Cooper favorably. Eighty percent of survey respondents would consider Cooper for a future hospitalization or would recommend it to others. Seventy percent of the respondents have had a family member treated at Cooper, illustrating yet another connection between alumni members and Cooper.

- Overall, members are not giving Cooper their financial support. Ninety-seven percent of respondents, however, support other charitable organizations, indicating that charitable giving is intrinsic and important in their lives.
Most respondents -- 81 percent -- have not supported the hospital with a financial gift. If asked, more than half said they were unsure whether or not they would give. Potential for funding does exist as evidenced by the study. Only three percent of respondents supported no charitable efforts. Religion, community efforts and youth/education/health care were rated the most frequently donor-supported organizations.

A profile of the membership revealed that 68 percent were female. On average, participants were between 40 and 54 years old. Forty-two percent held a high school diploma, and 31 percent graduated from college. The average [38 percent] earned between $25,000 and $49,999 and another 21 percent reported family incomes between $50,000 and $74,999.

Recommendations

People who have benefitted from the services a hospital provides know the attributes an institution has to offer firsthand. To elevate support among Cooper's Baby Alumni members, the following recommendations suggest ways to maintain contact with members and elicit their support:

- Produce Baby Alumni News twice a year.
- Include an opportunity for giving in each issue. Insert a business-reply envelope, and include a solicitation message.
- Provide a section in each issue of the newsletter that keeps members updated on other areas or care [i.e. new treatments in cardiac medicine, a day at the Women's Care
Include success stories of alumni in the newsletter.

Insert a yearly survey in the newsletter, asking members to rate the publication; to evaluate the alumni program; and to indicate whether they want to continue or discontinue receiving the newsletter.

Follow up survey with a personalized letter to members. Introduce the purpose of the publication, and instill pride in the organization.

Conduct a yearly solicitation of alumni members.

Identify Baby Alumni donors by comparing them against the general donor list.

Work with hospital admissions to identify alumni members scheduled for hospitalization. Send get-well cards to members upon discharge and a survey to evaluate their hospital stay. Follow up with a solicitation letter in two weeks.

Compile monthly reports, supplying all departments with a copy for review.

Break members into giving categories; maintain the list regularly.

Include members on the annual-appeal solicitation list.

Recommendations for Further Study

Once alumni members give a contribution, the Baby Alumni program should aim to maintain their support by incorporating these steps:

- Determine why donors give support [pressure by peers; need to help community; support of medical advances, etc.].

- Focus on building personal relationships with key alumni members: call to thank
them personally for their gifts; visit them during hospital stays; and invite them to special events as a VIP guest.

- Develop a direct mail campaign specifically for alumni members. Feature successful alumni and personal stories of Cooper's care.

- Conduct training sessions with hospital staff to stress the importance of good patient care. Demonstrate how clinical, admissions and housekeeping staff members contribute to a friendly, productive environment.

- Encourage restricted giving by asking alumni to support areas of interest. Illustrate, through thank-you and follow-up letters, how gifts are enhancing care in that department.

- Develop a list of alumni members who support specific areas. When money is needed for certain projects, solicit donors who are likely to support those areas.

- Develop a fund-raising program that targets family members of the alumni group.

- Keep track of alumni-giving programs by recording the number of charitable gifts generated through newsletters, direct mail campaigns, etc.
Cooper Baby Alumni Society Survey

Whether you are a Baby Alumnus or a relative of someone who was born at Cooper, your views and opinions about Cooper are important. Circle the answers that most closely match your response. Thanks, in advance, for your participation.

1. What is your relationship to the Cooper Baby Alumni Society member?
   1-self  2-mother  3-father  4-guardian  5-son/daughter  6-spouse  7-grandparent  8-other

2. Are you familiar with the publication Baby Alumni News? 1-Yes  2-No
   If not, skip to question 3.

3. How would you rate the publication? 1-Excellent  2-Good  3-Fair  4-Poor  5-Very Poor  6-Do not know

4. Would you like to remain on the mailing list to receive Baby Alumni News? 1-Yes  2-No

5. Would you like to be on the mailing list to receive general publications about Cooper? 1-Yes  2-No

6. Circle the following medical programs available at Cooper that you would like to know more about.

   1- Pediatrics  2- Cancer Center  3- Heart Institute  4- Trauma Center  5- Women's Care Center  6- OB/GYN  7- Psychiatry  8- Same-Day Surgery  9- Rehab Services  10- Geriatrics  11- Diabetes Center  12- Cleft Palate Center  13- Outpatient Services  14- Colorectal Center  15- None

7. Which sources do you depend on to stay informed about Cooper? Circle all that apply:
   1- Baby Alumni News  2- Cooper Notes  3- special events  4- news media  5- friends/family  6- self  7- business contacts
   8- Cooper employees  9- none  10- other

DEPENDING ON YOUR SITUATION, ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN EITHER THE BOX MARKED "SITUATION A" OR "SITUATION B."

SITUATION A. If you are the Baby Alumnus, answer the questions in this box. If you are not the alumnus, go to the next box.

8. Other than when you were born, have you ever been hospitalized at Cooper? 1-Yes  2-No  3-Do not know
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