An Innovative Approach to Mandatory Inservice Offerings
Marilyn Hudson, RN, MSN

What has your experience been with staff reaction to mandatory inservice programs, such as those recommended by the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), like safety and infection control. If it has been, "Oh no, not again," or "Do we have to?" or "Not the same old film again," then we have an idea that will perk up your programs and turn those negative remarks into positive ones.

This year, the Florida legislature added more programs to the annual mandatory list. Florida Statute (§85-175), under Health and Rehabilitative Services rule 10D-75, now also mandates two hours of educational inservice offerings on risk management-related topics. Besides safety and infection control, risk management, back care, and guest relations are now included. So, our programs must include all of these topics and be presented in such a way that staff would experience learning and have fun.

Representatives from these various departments met to discuss how this could be accomplished. The director of infection control offered the following suggestion: "Why not present these topics in a fair-like atmosphere, using gaming techniques?" This has been done successfully at the University of Massachusetts and other hospitals in Florida. Ideas started to flow from all of the representatives. "Let's use play money and have a booth of prizes, so employees could win money as they play each game and then buy prizes." "We could possibly obtain a gambling wheel and use it for a game of 'Wheel of Isolation'," was another idea. It started coming together! The educational services department staff and other committee members were assigned the task of devising games which would elicit evidence of learning from the participant.

The real challenge was to create a desire for learning! Objectives were developed for each game and topic. The learning modality was question and answer, via gaming. Through this technique we were able to: 1. motivate the learner; 2. involve the learner; and 3. give instant reward.

As plans progressed, the committee decided to change the name from "Fair" to "JCAH Carnival," since the educational services department at Martin Memorial Hospital conducts an annual Health Fair. Prizes were obtained from vendors, various hospital departments, and community businesses. The grand prizes, a one-day cruise to the Bahamas and a moonlight sail for six, had been donated by a local travel bureau and a local businessman.

Straw hats and carnival vests were worn by volunteers and booth managers, in keeping with the carnival theme. The area where the carnival was held was decorated with colorful balloons. A popcorn concession sold popcorn for $10 in play money per bag. This was a big hit with the employees. The food service department served grilled hot dogs and punch under a tent.

Employees registered upon entering the carnival area. Each employee was given the registration form and, as he/she moved to the six gaming booths, the form was initialed by the booth manager. When all booths had been visited, the employees "bought" prizes with play money they had won, and then turned in their registration forms. One copy was placed in the Grand Prize drawing box, and the other copy returned to employees' department heads as proof of attendance.

Department representatives used a great deal of imagination and ingenuity in developing their game(s). What better way to elicit responses on AIDS than by "AIDS BINGO," and what would a carnival be like without a

Ms. Hudson is Coordinator for Nursing Education, Department of Educational Services, Martin Memorial Hospital, Stuart, Florida.
gambling wheel called, "WHEEL OF ISOLATION." It's always a problem to come up with new ideas for fire and safety. The representatives from the security and biomed departments developed a quiz and dart game, which, along with their enthusiasm, generated interest and fun.

The perfect game for risk management was a takeoff on the game "JEOPARDY." The coordinator for back care developed a "HUMAN BOARD GAME" played with large dice, where each block on the board represented proper bending and lifting techniques, with slip and fall squares interspersed. The guest relations coordinator used a ball toss game in a question-and-answer format.

It was three days of hard work and fun. It took each employee approximately two hours to complete all six games. Eight hundred sixty-seven out of 1,000 employees from all departments attended. Comments were all positive—"It was fun," "I had a great time," and "Let's do this again next year."

The cost benefit of the carnival made it worth the effort in staff time and the approximately $700 expenditure for supplies. Eighty-seven percent of the employees of Martin Memorial Hospital met the mandatory requirements within a three-day period.

A self-study unit was developed for the 13% who could not attend the carnival, using subject matter that was included in the various games. While not as much fun, the self-study unit reviews the essentials and fulfills the mandate.

Two goals were met; mandatory Health and Rehabilitation Services and JCAH recommendations were reached and employee morale was given a boost. We plan to do it again next year, only better!