

My Year at the Tschetter-Hohm Clinic

By Will Hohm 2020

I practiced one year at the Tschetter-Hohm Clinic, 1964. It soon became apparent that the population in Huron and the surrounding area was too small to develop a practice in my subspecialty of proctology/gastroenterology; therefore, we moved to St. Charles, Illinois and I started a practice in adjacent Geneva. It was a very good year, nevertheless. I got to know my physician uncle and cousins very well and maintained close connections with them after I left. They practiced excellent medicine. They knew their limitations and were quick to refer patients which is an indication of good medical practice.

The Tschetter-Hohm Clinic continues to have a very good reputation for practicing high quality medicine. When I was there, patients were of all ages. Now, the practice is limited to adolescents, 14 and older, and adults. Also, no longer does the clinic render obstetrical care.

The examining room setup at the Tschetter-Hohm Clinic is the best I have seen anywhere! There are three sets of examining rooms, each set with two rooms. Each room has a private bathroom off the back side and the adjacent room with bathroom is adjoining but not connected. Thus, the two bathrooms share a wall between them. The area in front of the bathrooms is like a wide hallway connecting the two examining rooms. In 1964, the clinic was dispensing medications and that area was like a small drug store. The configuration and having private bathrooms were so to my liking that I used that plan with modifications when I built my office in Geneva, Illinois. Patients were always so appreciative of having their own private bathroom.

My first day at the clinic, the four of us physicians met together as they welcomed me. Uncle Paul said to me, "You have had all this fancy book learning at the Mayo Clinic, now we are going to teach you to be a doctor." I was a bit taken aback by his statement; however, when I left Huron after seeing Uncle Paul practice for a year, I said to him, "You could make the patient feel better if you had the wrong diagnosis than I could if I had the correct diagnosis." What I was saying is that Paul had an incredible way with patients. He taught

me that the doctor should be quick to refer the patient to a specialist or another institution. That shows the patient you truly have the patient's best interest at heart. He told me, "If the patient asks you for a consultation, you have failed. You should have suggested it first." He taught me a lot about the art of medicine. He believed that it was important in some manner to lay hands on the patient-take blood pressure, look in throat, palpate the abdomen, etc. And, I believe there is value to the "laying on of hands." Of course, it does not take the place of solid application of medical knowledge. Paul had that also. I do not think Dr. Paul would like to practice modern day telemedicine. He was an excellent doctor.

It was a special privilege to have practiced in my home community with my cousins and uncle for a year. I was a better doctor as a result of that experience. Each of them taught me a lot.

For details of the history of the Tschetter-Hohm Clinic, see my write up under that title.

A Few Memories

Dale Everson

This is an incident predating our year as a family in Huron by 12 years. My college roommate at Wheaton College was Dale Everson, a pre-med student from Boscobel, Wisconsin. He was admitted to the University of Wisconsin Medical School for the fall of 1952. He came to visit me before heading to Madison. While there, I wanted him to meet Dr. Ted Hohm and show him the Tschetter-Hohm Clinic. Dale was elated to have that opportunity. When we were at the clinic, he met Dr. Ted just as Ted was preparing to repair a nasty looking bleeding laceration. While we were standing and watching, Dale suddenly turned white and passed out. As he was regaining consciousness, the nurse, who knew nothing about Dale, said, "It sure a good thing he is not going to be a doctor." Dale did become a doctor and practiced in Shell Rock, Iowa for many years.

Grandma Stahl

Huron has many Hutterites; consequently, names like Hofer, Tschetter, Stahl, Wipf, Waldner, and Glanzer are as common as Smith and Jones are in most cities. I had two elderly ladies as patients with the last name of Stahl;

one was quite ill with chronic congestive heart failure; the other was, I thought, quite well. The lady with congestive heart failure required an injection of a diuretic every few days; she lived across town. We had child seats on the backs of our bicycles for Bev and Stu. In summer, we made house calls to Mrs. Stahl on our bicycles. The morning after making such a house call, I received a call in the office; the voice said, "Please come over; Grandma Stahl has just died." I jumped into my car and drove to the congestive heart failure grandma. As I ran up the stairs of the porch, I was startled to see her on the porch in her rocking chair. She said, "What are you doing here? You were here last night." Immediately, I realized I was at the wrong Grandma Stahl! I could not tell her that I was shocked to see her alive. Quickly, I took my stethoscope and did a cursory examination of her lungs and heart; I told her I was glad that the injection from the evening before had helped her. Then, I went and pronounced the other Grandma Stahl dead.

My Mother as a Patient

During that year, I took care of my mother's arthritis. I prescribed medications for her that helped her symptoms. As soon as her symptoms abated, she would stop the medication; then, she would have a relapse. After one such cycle, she called me and I drove out to the farm. She was lying on a couch in rather severe pain. I reprimanded her for not continuing the medication, and said, "If all my patients were as bad as you about following my instructions, I would be very exasperated". Mother, although hurting badly, was as feisty as ever. She raised up on one elbow and said, "If the people ever found out how little you know, you could not make a living being a doctor."

I think it gave Mother special joy, however, to talk to people about "My son, the doctor." Another time, Mother said, "Do you know how fortunate you are to spend your life helping people?" I did and do know.