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BVE PRODUCTIONS COMPLETES "***PATIENTS' NEEDS COME FIRST***"

for ATLANTIC HEALTH SYSTEM

Training Video Shot Over Three Days in Active Emergency Room

With real-life emergency room episodes unfolding around them, the production team from BVE Productions, Inc.(NY), was recently busy in the ER of the General Hospital Center at Passaic, NJ, shooting a fictionalized version of real ER situations submitted by employees of the parent Atlantic Health System. The three-day-shoot for a 25 minute ER training video entitled **Patients' Needs Come First: Service Excellence in the Emergency Department** --- involved some 26 cast members; a mix of hospital employees and professional actors.

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The video opens at a meeting of the hospital's eight-member *Quality Management Team (QMT)* which convenes to discuss and review critical incidents and reported events that reflect on the quality of ER services. The video dissolves back and forth between the QMT and the ER where the reality based incidents are played out.

Unlike most training videos, *Patients' Needs* is a seamless dramatic presentation without interruption. It also differs in another respect. "It proposes no solutions," says AHS writer/producer Bertil Nelson, PhD. "The solutions are to be found by the learner. It is a slice of life, a look at an Emergency Department as it might be at any short block of time in its busy week."

"It was a really humbling experience," notes BVE Director/Producer John R Buonpane. "On the one hand, we found ourselves immersed in the grim reality of the minute-by-minute activity of a real emergency room. On the other hand, we were play-acting and creating drama. We had to keep reminding ourselves that this was no set—this was the real thing. And, while we may have been guests, we had a heavy responsibility to avoid being intruders."

Jack Sharf, AHS Vice President for Quality and Outcomes Management, who served as Executive Producer for AHS, commented, “At first we planned to simulate the ER on a set. But the more we thought about it, the more convinced we were that the video needed the authenticity of the ER. James Espinosa, Medical Director of the Emergency Department for AHS’s Overlook Hospital, and the man who came up with the creative concept, was determined that with careful planning, we could make it happen.”

In reviewing the hospital facilities of the System—Morristown Memorial, Mountainside, Overlook, and The General Hospital Center at Passaic—it was decided that logistically and strategically, Passaic was the most practical.

Robert Silver, Executive Vice-President and COO of Passaic General, said, “We knew that if anyone could make it work, it would be ER Medical Director, Dr. Paul Mastrokyriakis and his *can do* staff.”

Director John Buonpane liked the reality aspect with the challenge. To ensure continuity and to avoid excessive overtime which would have put the project over budget, it was essential that the ER be available for two full shoot days with 4 location setups. A daunting challenge. “If you can start at 5:00AM on a Friday and Saturday,” said Mastrokyriakis, “we can work it out. But you have to be out of the main ER by 11:00am each day.”

The third day, Sunday, Super Bowl Sunday, would be reserved for shooting the QMT sessions in a large classroom within the hospital.

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Director Buonpane, Co-producer Ed Silverman, Project Manager Mark Brodie and Director of Photography Rob Haley were in unanimous agreement that to achieve maximum flexibility, and in order to create the feel and movement of ER action, we would shoot with 2 cameras hand-held.

The script by AHS’s writer/producer Bertil Nelson, called for 26 actors, with 20 of them speaking roles. Once again, budget problems. Casting all the parts with professional actors would have severely strained the budget. BVE compromised by casting six crucial speaking roles with professional actors while Nelson issued a casting call among AHS employees.

Director Buonpane was now challenged with the task of working with a mixed group of actors, most of whom would not meet one another until the first day of shooting. With

last minute rehearsals of placement and direction while lighting was being tweaked before rolling tape.

“While John (Buonpane) had carefully blocked out all the shots in advance,” says Silverman, “we were depending on our professional actors to lead the way. When John and I auditioned the actors we were looking for leadership quality in addition to acting skills. All of our choices turned out to be simply terrific. They never played down to the non-professionals, and instilled a sense of pride and comradery that was infectious.”

Some of the ER action took place in the waiting room area which was partially blocked off, but always in full view of the actual patients who formed a sort of spectator gallery. Buonpane recalls, “Despite their ailments and injuries, they became absorbed in the drama unfolding before them and at several points, following the action, they responded with cheers and applause. I’ve never seen so many sick people smiling—watching the action was therapeutic.”

Bob Silver observed, “The extent of the commitment of the Emergency Department at Passaic General was exemplified by Dr. Mastrokyriakos himself, who consented to play the role of a security guard. The biggest problem was finding a size 18 shirt and uniform to fit the doctor who looks like a NFL tackle.”

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Because it portrays generic situations and problems, the video, which will be accompanied by a discussion guide written by Dr. Nelson, will be available for distribution nationally by AHS. Funding for the video was provided by the ADP Foundation, and the New Jersey Healthcare Foundation

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BVE Productions, Inc. is a full-service, multi-media production and marketing company based in the heart of New York’s Film Center. For nearly two decades, BVE has created memorable, award-winning video, television and internet programming running the gamut from fashion to brain-surgery. These achievements have been made possible by a dedicated team of former network professionals with scores of major awards recognizing their accomplishments.
