

Dear Mr. Swan,

I am a nurse. Never thought I would be rich. Knew I would not be able to bank much. Saw right away that Sparrow had heart. Long after other hospitals had succumbed to beauty and profits Sparrow remained a family. I signed on.

I care. I tend all. I guard some and comfort others. I weep with many and walk to the River Jordan with the lost. I am elated and broken hearted. I am supported and directed.

I take the blame for patient dissatisfaction while physicians are excused. I bear the burden of compassion and the stress of maintaining regulatory requirements. I am given scripts of Sparrow Speak by leaders who never talk to patients.

Don't overstock linen. Don't work a minute extra. Be sure to round. Write on the white board. Know all the policies. Wash hands even if they never touch anything. Satisfy the patients. Don't duplicate efforts but chart things twice. Reduce pain to a number but be sure the patient is comfortable. Respond immediately, save lives, but do AIDET first. Believe in transparency, but don't expect it. Think critically but not about my own future. Believe in Shared Governance while staff ideas are overlooked, denigrated. Get Magnet because it will prove that the best nurses work at Sparrow. Be the best but don't expect to be rewarded.

Take the hit when Sparrow's investments lose money. Accept staffing at the 30th percentile but perform at the 75th percentile. Document like health care leaders but do it with a pen. Adhere to Core Measures, Keystone, Joint Commission requirements. Save 5,000,000 lives and watch as the old guard physicians ignore research and best practice.

Take pride in the new tower, TCI, Ionia hospital, a new logo. Watch while executives receive 6.5, 12, 18, 41, 45% raises. Fight to retain critical care differentials. Take furlough days. Accept pension gutting. Pay more for health insurance. Be threatened with the unaffordability of COBRA because nurses aren't paid enough, can't save enough to afford it. Get locked out.

Become sick with worry because the honorable man who once could not stand to see associates hurt, who road in on the white horse because he really believed in the Sparrow family has succumbed to his detractors. High powered lawyers have been hired, publicists engaged, union busters are in place, all to prevent Sparrow executives from feeling too much, from caring too much, from saddling the white horse.

God willing when this is over I will still have a job but I will never again have a Sparrow family.

Sincerely,

An admirer of transparency, who is too terrified to leave a name.