

Waiting for Godot

Category: The Waiting Room

written by Stephen Schoenbaum | May 1, 2016

The Scene: The crowded waiting room of a busy, university hospital dermatology practice on a day when Mohs surgery and other treatments of skin cancers have been scheduled.

As a patient, you go to one of the business-like receptionists. After giving your name, date of birth, and insurance information, you are told that you can now sit down. No information is available about waiting times.

Occasionally, someone in a scrub suit emerges to call out one or more last names, and some patients do get to go into the clinic itself. More commonly, staff go over to a water dispenser where there are no cups. They fill their containers with cold or hot water and disappear back into the inner sanctum. And most of us continue to wait, well past our scheduled appointment times. One wonders: *Why was the water dispenser, usable solely by staff, put in the middle of the patient waiting area? Why aren't these staff members providing information about waiting times? What are the priorities of the physicians and the staff? Has a physician or administrator ever sat in the waiting area to see how it functions from a patient's perspective?*

We wait, in my case, two hours beyond my appointment time. One wonders: *Do we wait too patiently?*

Anonymous