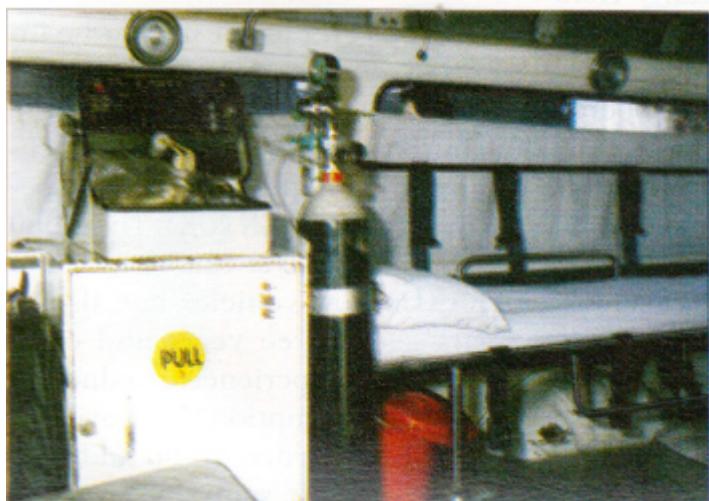


Medi-calls Cares



Whaling sirens, doctors and nurses rushing to and fro, ringing telephones.... a general state of emergency is part and parcel of a normal day at Medi-calls, Colombo's first ever medical call-up service.

Medi-calls Private Limited commenced operations initially as a night service in January 1983. It continued to be a night service for 12 years until 1995, when it commenced operations as a full-fledged 24-hour emergency call-up service. A company source said that Medi-calls was established keeping in mind the need for a doctor to attend a patient at home, especially in the case of an emergency.

The company provides service to households registered with them. The service includes sending an ambulance within 30 minutes of a telephone call (though on occasions it may take longer due to traffic or the distance to the registered household or designated office premises), the provision of a doctor to attend the patient at home, if hospitalisation is necessary the doctor who is attending the emergency will assist to obtain admission to a hospital of the patient's choice. Also if a registered party requires general medical advice over the telephone at any time, the doctor on duty would communicate with the caller.

At present, Medi-calls has around 1,500 households in Colombo and suburbs as well as 105 companies registered with them. They have eight doctors working on rotation, all of whom are registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council with a minimum of five years experience. Each of these doctors have undergone intensive

care, training and are wholly equipped to deal with any emergency, a company source said.

The company owns an ambulance which is fitted out with a mobile phone, key equipment such as E.C.G Machine-Biocard, Cardiac monitor-Defibrillator, Oxy Viva Transport Resuscitator Set etc. A spokesman for Medi-calls said that they are in the process of acquiring 2 more wholly fitted out ambulances. In the meantime, if their ambulance is occupied, they have access to ambulances belonging to another emergency service, at no additional cost to the patient. If required, Medi-calls also provides services such as laboratory tests, physiotherapy and mobile X-Ray services, which are available on call to them.

The service however is not as yet islandwide and is so far restricted to areas such as the Colombo city, Dehiwela, Mount Lavinia, Ratmalana, Moratuwa, Maharagama, Nugegoda, Nawala, Battaramulla, Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte, Wellampitiya, Kelaniya and Wattala.

The center which also operates as a communication hub is manned 24 hours of the day all year round, and is geared and prepared for power failure with a battery back-up facility. A spokesman for the company said that their telephone operators are able to communicate in English, Sinhala and Tamil, and are extremely capable and unflappable in an emergency situation.