



Kathy Fohn doesn't work much with patients, but her job does take . . . *patience*. Kathy is the Imperial Beach Health Center's Billing Coordinator, and as she explains, "Most of our job is getting money from the insurance companies. You call and you have to keep asking for supervisors. Everything you send them has to be perfect, and if it isn't, or they have any reason to reject it temporarily, if there's one thing wrong on the claim, they'll send the whole thing back to you." She knows which providers out there are easy to work with and which are not so easy. Speaking of one of the latter types she says with a laugh, "I save those for really good-mood days!"

Kathy worked in regular doctor's offices before starting at the IB Health Center in July 2005, and she considers her job now to be the best one she's ever had. "This is my first experience with a community clinic," she says. "I think it draws people that have different priorities. The attitude of the people is very accepting. That's part of the community clinic atmosphere."

Another benefit of the job for Kathy is that it leaves her the mental energy to pursue her passion for writing poetry. "It's a huge thing to me psychologically. You can talk about things you don't really know about, just have inklings of. I lead with my intuition, so it's a nice way to talk about things I can't really formulate and I don't quite know yet, but I intuitively know. I don't have any formal training in it, but to me it's a numinous experience to write it."

Kathy has been published in a journal, and has recently found a kindred soul locally to share her interests with. "It's really exciting to me and thrilling," she says. "It's a small world and I feel lucky for that."

Perhaps unexpectedly, Kathy has a sophisticated background in Science, including a degree in chemical engineering as well as graduate work that's one quarter shy of a Master's degree. She studied molecular biology and biochemistry in college. "Then I got interested in physical chemistry and found I didn't like cutting off chicken heads," she laughs. She studied in a more theoretical chemical physics program and worked in chaos theory. When the program turned to math, she found it wasn't her career choice. The prospect of oral exams decided her. "I'm not a great public speaker," she says. "I didn't want to be grilled."

Her scientific studies did not go to waste, however, since they support her pursuit of poetry. "**There are patterns underlying everything**, they underlie everyday life as much as physics or chemistry. It's all related underneath." Kathy is also working on a children's book. "Because it's science fiction, I have certain issues with projecting the science, because there's star travel. I want to be realistic and put some real effort into that. I don't want to take the easy way out. It puts me out there studying, which I haven't done in a long time."

Kathy was born in Seattle and raised in Yakima, Washington, the land of apples and cherries. "I was trained on the Pacific Northwest. Mountains and trees." She loves San Diego, but she admits she misses the seasons and the greenery of her girlhood. She's looking forward to a family reunion in Oregon this year, when her parents will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. She says she'll probably retire up North, but her scientific mind measures the alternative. "Realistically I could stay here," she says -- "because it's just so nice!"