

## **Flu committee formed, budget issues discussed**

Written by Chris Lee

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It was reported Melissa Memorial Hospital (MMH) has created a flu committee as a result of recent H1N1 cases in Holyoke at the East Phillips County Hospital District board meeting Tuesday, Sept. 22.

Director of Nursing Claudia Powell said they are urging people to wash their hands and stay home if they are sick. Staying healthy is a big push the hospital would like to see. She added there are people in town with flu-like symptoms, and it is rather early for the seasonal flu.

Powell said the seasonal flu vaccine should be available around Oct. 6 with the H1N1 vaccine tentatively scheduled to arrive towards the end of October.

Changes have been made to visiting the hospital. Children under the age of 12 are encouraged not to visit the hospital unless they're seeking medical help. Masks and hand sanitizer have been placed around the hospital as well.

For the past few board meetings, personnel from departments throughout the hospital begin the meeting by telling board members a little about themselves and the department they work with. Deb Schimonitz from clinic billing was present to speak with board members. Administrator John Ayoub and CFO Greg Was both complimented Schimonitz on her work.

### **Committee reports**

Board members accepted the monitoring reports which included the financial condition and activities, emergency administrator succession and achievements with resources.

Was reported another good month for the hospital. Planning for the 2010 budget is in full swing, according to Ayoub. CFO Was and Ayoub asked every department to submit a request for what they would like to see in the budget and to plan to meet with all department heads to discuss it.

Board members also discussed the board's budget for the upcoming year.

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The emergency administrator succession pertained to procedure in the event of Ayoub's unexpected absence. Erica Brady and Was are in the policy to fill in if such an occasion arises.

The quality committee report was given by Brady. She said the H1N1 committee came out of their last meeting.

The Melissa Memorial Hospital Foundation report was given by Steve Young. He said there is progress on a clock tower to be built in the southwest corner of the hospital lot. They also discussed names on the donor history wall and some misspellings that need to be fixed.

Sheryl Farnsworth reported for the community linkages committee and said they have been talking about ways to reach the Hispanic community. She was asked by pastor Ismael Lopez to visit his church to find out what members would like to see from the hospital. Farnsworth feels this would be a great start in connecting with the Hispanic community in Holyoke.

Young gave an update from the Colorado Hospital Association annual meeting. He said much of the conversation was aimed toward the health care reform issue and the budget.

Ayoub said it was a great opportunity to speak with other hospitals to find out what other places are doing.

### **Administrator reports activity**

Ayoub reported Dr. Stephen Volin OBGYN held a community inservice for roughly 30 women recently. A second inservice is in the works because of the success of the first one.

Sandra Rafols began as a new physical therapist assistant Monday, Sept. 21.

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Ayoub said the new consultant pharmacist Casey Clark conducted his first site visit. Everything went very well, and a lot was accomplished. The plan is to bring him out once a quarter for visits.

Ayoub participated in a meeting concerning mental health, and first lady of Colorado Jeannie Ritter invited him to participate as a member of the task force for communities coming together for mental health.

Ayoub said the state passed a bill where an advisory board is to be formed that would approve a formula used to divide up spending and assess fees. Ayoub said there is an issue with the formula he doesn't like, and he has made the advisory board aware of his concerns.

He said the initial formula had MMH losing money instead of acquiring money.

Hospital records located at the old hospital building were recently organized, and records available for shredding were shredded. Was said they ended up shredding roughly 7.5 tons.

The digital mammography program MMH was hoping to get off the ground has seen a setback. Ayoub said there were many pieces that fell apart. DMS, the mobile provider for the project, has seen more demand in other places. The process for a new route is being looked at, and if nothing is resolved within six months the contract will be dismissed.

The fiber network is still in the works, and plans for that are to be finished at a later date. Ayoub said he hopes to still see the program happen and has every intention to see it happen.

Ron Seedorf of the Colorado Rural Health Center visited MMH to present a water purification and filtration unit. The units were distributed to all hospitals in Colorado.

Dr. John Drury, a cardiologist from Sterling, will be conducting two clinics per month at MMH.

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Ayoub pointed out Audrey Murray recently retired after working at the hospital for 40 years.

Ayoub finished his update by asking board members to vote on a couple of topics. The first being a contract that exceeded the limit he has authority to sign and another being a contract with Harry Sprague who farmed wheat behind the hospital last year and plans on farming grass this year. Ayoub can't make decisions about leasing without the board's approval.

Board member Gary Rahe gave the meeting evaluation at the end and said it was another productive meeting. He felt the information on the H1N1 committee was very important because it is on the minds of everyone.

Board members entered executive session for an hour and 20 minutes. The sale of the modular building was discussed, and the board approved to allow Ayoub to negotiate the sale of the unit.

The next hospital board meeting will be held Tuesday, Oct. 27.