

District hospital board receives overview from Centennial Mental Health Center

Written by Chris Lee

East Phillips County Hospital District board members learned about the many services Centennial Mental Health Center has to offer at their Tuesday, July 27 meeting. Dr. Liz Hickman, executive director of Centennial Mental Health Center, brought board members up to speed on some of the new services that are offered.

Toward the end of her presentation, board members agreed they had no idea how many different things Centennial offered.

One of the larger projects Centennial is working on is Communities Coming Together for Mental Health. The initiative was started by First Lady of Colorado, Jeannie Ritter.

In 2008, Ritter toured the state talking with communities about the systems in place to support people with mental health challenges. She discovered the preventative and crisis systems of many local jurisdictions did not satisfy the need for services and that coordination between agencies needed strengthening.

In a response, Ritter will be working with three Colorado communities in an initiative that leads to the development of more holistic systems of care and addresses mental health issues upstream through prevention and coordinated community support.

The focus for the committee and stakeholder's efforts are to develop and implement a plan to address these outcomes:

—a single coordinated mental health plan for the region.

—a confident, competent interagency crisis team.

—increased regional crisis placement options.

—more resources for mental health.

—increased community awareness and responsibility for behavioral health crisis services.

Administrator reports activity

One of the bigger items on administrator John Ayoub's list was the employee satisfaction survey. MMH made a big push to see an increase in the number of participation this year. A goal of 80 percent was set, however there was only a 69 percent return. This is higher than the previous two years.

Of the 69 percent, 91 percent were satisfied with their job at MMH and would recommend MMH as a good place to work to a friend or relative.

Ayoub reported there have been a few position changes and new hires within the hospital since the last meeting. Peggi Pearson began July 12 as the new compliance officer, filling the vacancy left after Erica Brady resigned in May.

Ayoub also said materials manager Terry Barth will be resigning later this year so Tony Massara has been hired and has begun learning the job with the help of Barth.

Other new positions are Melissa Goldenstein as the clinic billing specialist, admissions clerk Chole Villalobos, R.N. Cindy Weed and Sharon Greenman as the EMS coordinator.

Something that came to the hospital's attention recently is a change with the insurance offered through PC Telcom, Ayoub said. The pathology group MMH uses out of North Platte, Neb. and the radiology group from Cheyenne, Wyo. are no longer considered in the network.

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Ayoub said there is a plan in place to try to get things smoothed out. He also noted this is something MMH did not do and there hasn't been a change with either the pathology or radiology groups.

The administrator gave a brief overview of amendments 60 and 61 and proposition 101 that will appear on the ballot in the November election. The purpose was to update board members on how each may or may not affect the hospital and raise awareness on the topics.

Ayoub updated board members on a couple capital purchase items including a fetal heart monitor and a video laryngoscope. The video screen on the laryngoscope that was purchased was a little dark and was sent back to be replaced.

The heart monitor training has been completed and Ayoub said there are a couple hardware items needed to be installed so additional video monitors can be connected.

A couple position pro mattresses were purchased by MMH. As reported at the previous meeting, MMH had been renting the mattresses and hopes to save money by utilizing the new ones.

Credentialing was approved for Mark Howshar, M.D. Radiologist for a two-year appointment.

Committee appointments were announced with Harlan Stern and Steve Young, audit committee; Sheryl Farnsworth and Gary Rahe, community linkages; Stern and Steve Deaver, administrator compensation; Deaver and Rahe, credentialing; Farnsworth and Young, quality.

Other business

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In other business July 27, the hospital board:

—held an eight minute executive session for negotiations.

—noted the next board meeting will be Tuesday, Aug. 24.