

MMH improves its emergency preparation

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

Improvements to first responder services were highlighted during the Tuesday, July 23 East Phillips County Hospital District board meeting.

MMH Administrator John Ayoub informed board members that an Emergency Support Functions group had been initiated. The Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan is maintained by the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and lays out the roles and responsibilities for several agencies during a disaster. Responsibilities are assigned as Emergency Support Functions.

The hospital receives grant funding for participating in these activities. Through the program, it is required to establish working relationships with other organizations for smoother operations in times of emergency.

Ayoub mentioned that while participating in this program, it became clear that MMH needs to have a better relationship with Phillips County and be ready to work through the emergency operations management of the county.

Recently Ayoub met with Phillips County Emergency Manager Randy Schafer and a few other organizations around the county to make sure the MMH emergency plans reflect reality. The meeting aimed to ensure organizations were ready and capable of working together in emergencies.

Ayoub also notified board members that the district had been awarded the Phillips County ambulance operational review grant.

A review of MMH will take place in the upcoming months to help determine how MMH can better serve the entire county.

MMH also received grant money for the ambulance and trauma departments. The biggest item the grant will help with is the purchase of an AutoPulse, an automated, portable,

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battery-powered cardiopulmonary resuscitation device.

The device straps on to patients' chests and automatically performs compressions. Ayoub noted that the piece of equipment is especially useful when transporting patients.

He mentioned that there have been instances in the past when transporting patients in storms that chest compressions had to be performed for hours, and the machine eliminates the tiring process for the medical staff.

"This is becoming more and more the standard for care for first responders," Ayoub said.

The state will cover half of the expenses for the purchase.

Programs put to use at MMH

MMH had a record month in June, performing 32 ultrasounds, the most ever for one month. Banner Health performed 11 during the month to match May's total.

"We're starting to see more volume for our program with our equipment and our people without seeing a decrease in volume that Banner is doing out here," Ayoub said.

The recently purchased stroke robot also saw action within two weeks of going live.

Ayoub reported that the medical team responded great and the patient was flown to Swedish

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Medical Center in Denver. Before arriving in Denver, the patient's symptoms began to resolve and a full recovery is expected.

"I just couldn't ask for a better start to the program," Ayoub stated.

Board members also viewed a video related to preventing harm and death by medical errors.

According to the video, roughly 98,000 people die every year from medical errors, making it the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S.

Board members discussed ways in which to prevent such errors through the flow of information, policies for administering drugs and communicating with patients' family members.

Other business

In other business July 23, board members:

—approved credentialing of Sidney Adler, M.D., OB/GYN; Daniel Possehn, D.O., radiology; and James Swinehart, M.D., dermatology.

—announced that the next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 27.

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