

Hospital board committed to safety and community outreach programs

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

As a result of last month's storm, a number of agencies and individuals have taken a second look at how prepared they are for emergencies, and East Phillips County Hospital District is no different.

At the Monday, April 29 hospital board meeting, MMH administrator John Ayoub made it clear that the district continually makes a point to define possible emergencies they may face, then train and prepare staff to handle those situations.

"We are taking every possible step to ensure that our organization is capable of dealing with emergency situations, whether it is pandemic of influenza, a blizzard or a tornado," Ayoub said.

"We have emergency operation plans in place to know what to do. We train our staff so that if crisis hits, we are as prepared as possible. You can't train for every circumstance but certainly we can be diligent."

He noted that every year the Colorado Health Center in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment lays out hospital pandemic preparedness deliverables.

As the district is up to date with all of the policies and procedures relating to emergency preparedness, Ayoub expects to receive the full amount of \$15,000 offered through the program.

Along with coordinating information with emergency responders in the county, the hospital also participates in drills with several other towns in Colorado to further prepare for disaster situations.

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MMH rewarded for Project R.E.D.

Ayoub mentioned that the hospital is still working on Project R.E.D, which is the re-engineering of patient discharge that aims to promote safety and reduce chances of re-hospitalization.

Out of the 95 hospitals in Colorado, MMH is one of just 19 that has successfully participated in the program. MMH will receive \$20,000 for their work in the program.

“This is just another example of something that we are doing that is the right thing to do because it is going to provide better patient care and better efficiency for our organization,” Ayoub said.

Board prepares for community health assessment

As a part of the six-month process of determining how to better serve the needs of the community, the district will host the first of three community needs assessment meetings Thursday, May 23 at the Phillips County Event Center at 5:30 p.m.

The first meeting will be used to share information with the community including: what is the health status of the community?, where do community members go to get their care? and what are the biggest obstacles in the way of living a healthy lifestyle?

The second meeting, which will be held in early August, will give community members the opportunity to take part in a survey and express what they believe are areas of importance.

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In the third meeting, the board will work with a facilitator to define the needs of the community. The board will be able to pull what they learn from the meetings and implement that information into the strategic planning sessions in September.

“It accomplishes multiple things. We have the opportunity to engage the community in meaningful dialogue, we get to learn what they feel their greatest needs are and we’ll get a good jumpstart on an environmental scan for our strategic planning process,” Ayoub said.

Health fair deemed a success

Even though the health fair happened to be held on a day that included Prom, high school baseball and track events and a number of other activities, more than 100 people made it down to Phillips County Event Center to participate, including 35 who had their blood drawn.

Ayoub said that although numbers were slightly down from last year, with all of the obstacles associated with putting the fair together, the turnout was encouraging.

Other business

In other business April 29, board members:

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—held a 20-minute executive session for negotiations.

—received the audit report from Rick Steen of Eide Bailly, LLP.

—agreed to split the costs for employee appreciation night at the Peerless Theatre with the hospital foundation.

—noted the next board meeting will be held Tuesday, May 28 at 5:30 p.m.

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