

## Hospital billing issues addressed, explained

Written by Chris Lee

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Problems concerning patient billing were addressed and explained to East Phillips County Hospital District board members at their Dec. 22 meeting.

It was brought to the attention of board members there is a problem with accounts receivable. A handful of patients have voiced their concern with recent statements.

Deb Schimonitz explained the issues and said she encourages patients to call her or Barb Salyards with questions about statements.

MMH uses First Party Receivables in Greeley for billing and Schimonitz said the last round of statements had some minor glitches. She said reports coming off of NexGen are not showing account numbers. Something between the hospital and First Party Receivables is getting lost in the transition.

The main thing is the hospital knows there is a problem and they are taking action, administrator John Ayoub said.

Schimonitz said statements have been discontinued until the first of the year and she will print out statements herself to guarantee they are correct.

CFO Greg Was reported during his financial condition and activities report November wasn't a great month. He said it came down to softness for demand.

Compared to last year, the hospital is ahead of where they stood financially, according to Was. "We are moving in the right direction," he added.

Ayoub reported compliance in all of the policy provisions.

Was suggested a way to save a small amount of money with an unsecured note with a bank in Holyoke. He suggested to pay off the note entirely now to save money in the long run. Board

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members liked the idea and voted to pay off the note.

Clinic director Melissa Mayden said the clinic has received more H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines and encourages people to contact the clinic if they desire a vaccination.

Erica Brady and Mayden updated board members on the annual program evaluation that was conducted. The evaluation reviews the hospital and clinic services offered. They said the process went smoothly and was conducted well.

## **Community linkages committee reports**

The community linkages committee held a meeting and Sheryl Farnsworth reported attendance was high with those attending being very involved. She said Rural Solutions was present to go over the services they offer which include cultural training and ways to reach out to the community.

Positive ideas and large participation by those attending are giving the committee great ideas.

## **Administrator reports activity**

Ayoub reported MMH was awarded a Colorado Rural Outreach Provider (CROP) Grant for Deana O’Gorman to help pay tuition. He said the hospital will match the grant for a final sum of \$16,000 and said he feels it will help with retention. Ayoub said she is liked by her patients and colleagues.

Ayoub said he has been in contact with Pamida in Holyoke about issues with a pharmacist. He said MMH is willing to help in any way they can with the process.

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The nameplates are up on the history wall and Ayoub voiced his appreciation for all those involved in getting the project done.

The upgrade and integration of the laboratory information system is moving along nicely, according to Ayoub. He said they had a successful live test. They continue to work with the interface of the NexGen system and they are on target to go live in March or early April with the electronic medical records in the clinic and to have the lab be fully integrated with it.

A second prenatal care class was held and Ayoub said attendance was up from the first one. Two more are scheduled for the first of the year.

Ayoub, along with other hospital officials, attended a program in Denver titled Crossing the Safety Chasm: Improving Physician-Hospital Relationships. Ayoub said it was very beneficial to the group who attended.

Rocky Vista University and MMH have agreed to have a third year medical student start at MMH next year.

Ayoub updated board members on the health care bill and the state of where things stand. Board members appreciated the update.

The next step in the hospital's hand washing campaign is to involve the public. MMH began the drive internally and is in the process of creating buttons for people to wear to show support for hand washing. It is a goal of the hospital to reach 100 percent compliance on the balanced scorecard next year.

Ayoub was named to the Colorado Hospital Association's shared services board. He said it wouldn't add too much to his plate as they only meet a couple of times a year.

Administrator Ayoub asked the board to allow him to purchase a portable X-ray machine. He

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said he could save money by purchasing it now instead of waiting until next year.

Board members accepted credentialing approvals for David Board, Judith Corey, Harold Chapel, Geoffrey Murrish and Chris Schults.

An executive session was held for the purpose of meeting with an attorney for legal advice and strategies for developing negotiations.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 26 at 5:30 p.m.

### **Other business**

In other business Dec. 22, the hospital board:

—approved the consent agenda which pertained to a mill levy certification vote.

- —appointed Ayoub as the designated election official (DEO) for 2010.