

## **Centennial Mental Health to work with patients at Melissa Memorial Hospital**

Written by Chris Lee

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Melissa Memorial Hospital will be working with Centennial Mental Health, following action by East Phillips County Hospital District board Tuesday, Jan. 24 at its regular meeting.

Board members approved a contract that will allow for Centennial Mental Health Center employees and volunteers to visit MMH and care for mental health patients within the facility.

Since MMH doesn't have the space or personnel to handle mental health patients, they are usually transported by law enforcement to an in-patient mental health care facility that may be a long distance, according to MMH administrator John Ayoub. This is sometimes done against their will and makes it harder on the patients.

The patients that would be seen at MMH are people who do not pose a threat to themselves or others but are psychologically fragile enough to where they can't be sent home alone. They also will be patients from Phillips County and not brought in from other counties.

"I think this is really an awesome opportunity for our community and for our organization to be a leader in this regard," Ayoub said. "It is the best for the patient and it is the best for the county in terms of funds that are wasted."

During his meeting evaluation, board member Steve Deaver said, "Why didn't we come up with something like this years ago? It just seems like a natural thing."

## **Employee incentive compensation plan to be offered**

Board members unanimously voted last Tuesday to allow Ayoub to roll out an incentive compensation program for employees for meeting meaningful use with regard to the electronic

medical records.

The hospital set aside money to offer employees if the organization meets meaningful use by the end of 2012, according to Ayoub. "We would like to be able to attest to the federal government that we are meaningful users of the electronic medical records in the hospital," he added.

The administrator noted there is a long list of criteria and at the end of the day, they either meet it or they don't. They will have to meet all the criteria to become a meaningful user. Should they do so, they will be eligible for some federal stimulus dollars to help pay back a percentage of the cost.

Not knowing an exact percentage, Ayoub estimates it to be somewhere between 70-80 percent of the cost. That number fluctuates due to the number of Medicare patients the hospital sees. "Every month that changes," he added.

The majority of the actual license fee along with the hardware is expected to be paid for. "This will go a long way to help us pay back this investment that we've made in our organization and our community," Ayoub said.

When all is said and done and the organization meets meaningful use, every full-time employee will receive a \$500 check, according to the administrator.

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### **Grow Our Own Physician Task Force looks into marketing**

Sheryl Farnsworth said the Grow Our Own Physician Task Force is currently looking into a couple different marketing options. One of the companies is a professional business that would come to Holyoke and put together a nice DVD of Holyoke and the hospital. The other is a

person willing to take video that has been compiled by the task force and then edit it with the task force.

The professional company will cost a lot more while the private individual would essentially be free but won't offer everything the company will.

The task force is wanting the board to paint some parameters to find out what they would be willing to provide financially for the marketing project.

### **Administrator reports activity**

Ayoub introduced newly hired Family Nurse Practitioner Deaun Carpenter to board members and noted there will be a meet and greet for her Thursday, Feb. 2 from 12-1 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. in the MMH group room.

This is an election year for board members and should there be the need for an election, Ayoub said it will be conducted through the mail and not at polling places. The election has been canceled the past few times due to a sufficient number of candidates per positions open.

Ayoub said Karen Stoner and husband Dale have moved and although they may and will be back, Karen has given up some of her positions at the hospital, with one of the more important ones being volunteer coordinator. Susan Baker has stepped in to assume the role and Ayoub said she is doing a great job and is looking to grow the program to other aspects of the hospital.

Finally, the administrator said he was appointed to Colorado Rural Health Center board of directors

Prior to Ayoub's administrator update, four first responders from the Wages Fire Department were present to answer questions and present the board with a letter requesting to be paged out to medical calls in the Wages area.

The first responders are currently set up with Haxtun, Yuma and Wray to run on medical calls in the area and would like to do the same with the Holyoke Ambulance Service.

Since the Wages area is far away, they feel they would be able to respond quicker and relay information prior to the ambulance arriving.

### **Other business**

In other business Jan. 24, board members:

—held a 48-minute executive session for negotiations and personnel matters.

—approved credentialing for David Board, Susan Enlow, Ronald Homer, Marshall Mallory, Michael Myers, Richard Ruderman, Bradley Tipler, Brian Twedt, Judith Corey, Arlin Hatfield, Archana Lucchesi, Geoffrey Murrish, Todd Nelson, Keith Spellman, Eric Treflener and Carol Deslauriers.

—accepted the 2011 performance improvement summary.

—noted Cherrie Brown has announced to the MMHF board she will step down as executive director at a date that hasn't been set yet.

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

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