

## **MMH uses grants to better serve community**

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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Ways in which to improve patient satisfaction and to increase overall efficiency were discussed at length at the Tuesday, May 28 East Phillips County Hospital District board meeting.

Administrator John Ayoub notified board members that Melissa Memorial Hospital had been named as one of just six rural hospitals in Colorado to receive additional services from Colorado Rural Health Center.

Colorado Rural Health Center provides expertise and support to many rural and critical access hospitals across the state. They have a long-standing working relationship with MMH, including their involvement in the community health needs assessments.

CRHC recently received extra grant money to further assist six rural and six federally qualified hospitals. After CRHC performed a healthy assessment of MMH to determine the hospital's performance, it was decided that MMH would be one of the select rural hospitals to receive extra support.

"I think it's a great honor," Ayoub said. "They know us, they like us, and our staff works well with them. We actually show a desire, a willingness to improve to help our community better, and so they thought we would be a great partner to work with."

CRHC will soon perform another assessment to pinpoint areas MMH is excelling in as well to determine areas that can be improved upon.

"The idea is to provide better care, do it quicker and do it cheaper so that the end result for the patient is a better care experience," Ayoub said.

Ayoub is actually the CRHC board of directors president but said it was a nice surprise to him when MMH was chosen for additional support.

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### **MMH finds solution to dead spots**

Up until a few years ago, Phillips County emergency workers used pagers to communicate. Recently, MMH, Haxtun Hospital District, Holyoke and Haxtun police departments and Phillips County Sheriff's Department all moved to a cell phone based single paging system.

Upon making the transfer, it became clear that there were some service dead spots within MMH. To work around dead spots, MMH has had to use the overhead paging system.

MMH recently received grant money from the state to install wireless boosters throughout the building. Because the ambulance service uses the paging system, MMH was able to apply for the grant through their trauma process. As the situation poses a possible safety issue, the state agreed to cover half of the \$25,000 price tag to improve cell signals within MMH.

Wireless boosters work to grab cellular signals from the air and amplifies them down through the building.

### **MMH to fill positions**

Ayoub has stated many times that MMH has a goal to increase the medical staff to four full-time doctors and three full-time nurse practitioners.

In July, Dr. Aaron Wilson will step in to bring MMH's staff to three doctors and three nurse practitioners.

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Ayoub is actively looking for another doctor to join the staff as he currently is in contact with another doctor out of New York.

A candidate has also recently interviewed for the director of medical records position. The hospital has been paying for a contracted consultant to fly out from Washington state to perform the tasks a director of medical records would handle, but it is not financially beneficial to keep paying to fly somebody out to work.

### **Patient surveys reviewed**

In 2008, MMH adopted the national standard for survey questions they present to patients.

Results from January-March surveys show a high level of satisfaction with the performance of MMH. For the first three months of 2013, there was an 86 percent satisfactory rate for in-patients. Emergency room patients showed a satisfaction rate of 96 percent, and the overall patient satisfaction level was at 93.8 percent.

The return rate on the surveys is between 20-22 percent, with ER patients being more likely to take part in the surveys.

Starting in April, MMH contracted an outside independent government deemed group to conduct in-patient surveys for MMH.

Surveys are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Results from April-June will not be made available until August.

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These surveys will be conducted over the phone. The incoming call will be from Maryland, a 301 area code. Ayoub encourages people to take the survey as it will help the hospital improve performance and understand how to better serve patients.

### **Other business**

In other business May 28, board members:

—approved credentialing of Darrell Fenton, D.O., orthopedic; John Harris, M.D., PadNet/radiology; James Hubbard, M.D., radiology; Ronald Homer, M.D., radiology; Michael Shedd, M.D., pulmonology; and Gary Kliewer, C.R.N.A.

—announced that school physicals will be held July 23 and 25 and Aug. 27 and 29 at a reduced price. A makeup date for physicals is also set for Tuesday, Oct. 8.

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