

**MMH REDEFINES ITSELF TO MEET CHALLENGES
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Hospitals nationwide are reconfiguring services and redefining their roles in the communities they serve as healthcare delivery changes to meet needs within the confines of an ever-tightening financial noose. Muenster Memorial is no exception.

“Hospitals today, especially smaller, rural facilities, are feeling the crunch of dwindling reimbursement and increased regulation,” said Brian Roland, Chief Executive Officer of Muenster Memorial. “We are looking at all of our services and streamlining where we can in order to ensure operations going forward.”

Also impacting the local medical facility is the recent loss of physician Abena Krow-Rodney, who did not renew her contract.

“Services, in large part, are dictated by the providers you have on staff,” Roland stated. “The good news – the GREAT news – is that we have a physician already under contract to come in June.”

Khawaja Anwar, M.D., a board-certified cardiologist and internal medicine specialist, will be leaving his Gainesville practice to establish as a full-time physician in the Muenster Memorial Hospital Family Health Clinic, 509 North Maple, June 17.

“We think he will be a great addition to the staff and local healthcare in general, and we are excited to see what his presence brings to the clinic and the hospital,” noted Roland.

Roland stated that he feels the addition of Anwar will bring stability to local healthcare, which has long been an issue. “We feel he will be a great source of information and mentorship for Muenster native Eric Hellman, who will complete his medical degree next year and come to Muenster in August 2020, while also providing steady support for our nurse practitioners.”

Roland noted that the hospital is also looking at other facets of the operation in order to tighten operations and bring costs in line while still providing quality services.

“It is a most challenging time for us,” Roland said. “But we are bringing in some administrative expertise in the form of a new Chief Financial Officer, who will be onboard May 23, and a new Chief Nursing Officer, who should be announced soon.”

Some services have been affected to the point of discontinuation. They include Respiratory Care and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, which was discontinued in mid-February. Utilization started strong for this service line, but eventually leveled off and then dropped.

“Respiratory Care and Pulmonary Rehab were both extremely appreciated by the patients who used them,” Roland stated. “The forecast was good going in and the director and staff did an excellent job

promoting, but when certain services under that umbrella failed to come to fruition and utilization was not high enough to cover costs, as hard as it was, we could not afford to keep the department.”

Another service that will not continue past May is MMH Home Care.

“Home Care has been struggling for a while now,” Roland stated. “We did a lot of things to boost it, and in the end, instability of the director position finally took its toll. The nursing staff over the years has been great and the care we provided was good, but we could not keep taking the financial losses. It was a heart-wrenching decision to suspend operations, but we felt it was the right choice for us at this time.”

Roland emphasized that although the cuts sound ominous, that it is just one of the challenges associated with keeping a small, rural facility like MMH available in the community. “There are small hospitals all over the nation closing their doors every day. We do not intend to be one of them.”

Roland mentioned there will be other actions over the next several months, including some outsourcing in the wake of employee departures, and more aggressive collection activities on the part of the business office. “Like any business, we need people to pay their bills to sustain.”

“Swing Bed and Therapy Services continue strong, and we only see growth in the clinic and our outpatient areas going forward,” Roland said.

For information on Muenster Memorial Hospital and the services offered, see advertisement in this edition or go online at www.muensterhospital.com

The hospital also maintains a very active Facebook page.