

Health care “Close to Home”

Written by hebronjournal

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The “Close to Home” campaign, set to launch by Thayer County Health Services, encourages people to stay in the home area for health care.

Throughout the campaign, the hospital will advertise on radio spots and online to emphasize access to care.

Marketing director, Kassi Hartley, developed the campaign. Hartley is from the Sandhills.

Hospital executive director, David Burd, said Hartley realizes the value of a critical care access facility because she grew up near one.

“She realized the importance of having a facility close to home and once it’s gone, you don’t get it back,” Burd said. “We’re right here in the county.”

Revenue was slow in November, but the hospital saw an increase in volume after a slow start to December.

“People just weren’t sick in November,” Burd, who talked with surrounding hospitals that had the same problem, said. “That seemed to be a common trend.”

December saw a wave of flu patients and Burd said that will continue.

January has been busier and surgeries are rising with the most volume in 2018, the first bump in five years.

Burd attributes the rise to the new specialists TCHS brought in, such as ear, nose and throat and oncology. The existing specialists increased their volumes as well, and rehabilitation remained steady for the fiscal year.

“We receive lots of positive feedback on the specialists related to the breath of services available locally,” Burd said, adding the first chemotherapy treatment was recently completed.

Also showing an increase was the amount of employees using the fitness center as the hospital started an employee bonus program last year. The hospital is currently tracking employee usage.

As of Jan. 1, hospitals were required to post medical charges online as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2009, and TCHS has standard charges in a machine-readable format. The hospital is working with a vendor on the task and will continue to improve the tools for patients to help them be more informed.

Burd said that while the transparency of medical charges was part of the 2009 Act, there were no regulations in place to implement it.

“At some point, our hope is to add more comparisons to other hospitals and give patients tools to estimate what they would owe after insurance,” Burd said.