

EDITOR'S PICK

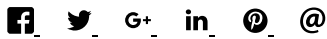
TOPICAL

Newman Memorial Hospital re-opening surgical unit

By Rachael Van Horn Staff Writer Jun 12, 2017



Brad Bunch, RN, Roxeanne Sparks, CNO and Cindy Turner, RN, are all smiles for the re-opening of the Surgery Department at Newman Memorial Hospital. (Photo provided)



SHATTUCK - Like literally all rural hospitals, Newman Memorial has suffered through its share of hard decisions to make.

But in the last two years, the popular Northwest Oklahoma hospital, which in May of 2015 closed its surgical unit at the same time stopped accepting maternity patients, was really feeling on the ropes.

At the time of the surgical unit's closing, there were upgrades on items such as electronic records and repairs to the building that needed to be made and at the time, the hospital simply did not have the funding.

"It was a huge blow to the hospital. We lost OB, we lost cataract surgeries, it cut off that entire revenue stream." Administrative Assistant Rhonda Hayes said. "It was also detrimental to our community. Instead of being able to have surgery and recovery close to home, our patients had to travel elsewhere like Woodward or Oklahoma City. It was an additional hardship on folks."

Now, with its affiliation with People's Choice Hospitals, a management move that took place in the last two years, the hospital is back to ramping up the services

In order to celebrate this milestone, Newman Memorial Hospital is inviting the community to join them for an Open House on June 15 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony. Refreshments will be provided and guided tours of the updated facilities, a prize package drawing and "surgery" gifts for the kids are also included.

Shane Clem, facilities manager, who was instrumental in completing this entire project said, "It takes all of us working together as a team to make this place great and keep it going."

People's Choice is a company experienced in helping financially distressed medical facilities recover and return to a fully functioning system that can deliver valued medical care for its area residents, said hospital spokeswoman Joey Burgtorf.

"Now we are thrilled to announce that all of the hard work and perseverance through this process has paid off," Burgtorf said. "I think the most important initial role that People's Choice played was to help us get our reference lab established."

A reference lab in one that, in addition to the labs it performs for its own hospital, accepts lab work through a contract for other medical facilities.

"This allowed us to begin to establish a revenue stream," she said.

But this is just the beginning, she said, to opening the doors eventually to a fully functioning community hospital. Since then, the hospital has opened an urgent care clinic and added mammography services.

The goal is to slowly and with purpose open services that the community needs which can also be a revenue source for the continued development of even more services, she said.

The reopening of the surgical unit, though, is a special victory, she said, because it is the underpinning of so many other specialties, such as maternity and many others.

"The idea is to start small. We are doing colonoscopies and endoscopies and we will move into general surgeries soon, like gall bladder surgeries and other general surgeries. But right now, we are in talks with an ear, nose and throat physician to come and serve at our speciality clinic and that will likely be connected to surgery as well," Burgtorf said.

Dr. Brenda Huenergardt, M.D. has been conducting endoscopy and colonoscopy at Newman Memorial and will now be able to perform general surgery once again. When asked what this will mean for the community, she replied, "This is a very positive step for Newman Memorial in their mission to provide more services for the community."

David Wanger, interim CEO of Newman echoed the sentiment with his reply, "This is huge! It signals the re-opening of a full service community hospital. Although starting small, this opens the door for expansion to other services!"

The hospital is also reaching out to other specialized medicine doctors such as opthamologists and orthopedic doctors to begin to serve in Newman Memorial Hospital's speciality clinic. The service will likely begin with the physicians serving on a part-time basis, only coming in on certain days, perhaps one day a week, Burgtorf said.

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