

MayoMessenger



Many Changes in Healthcare- Including at Mayo Regional Hospital **Marie Vienneau, President and CEO**

Since 2012, on average, 18 of Maine's 25 community hospitals have operated with negative operating margins. Now, it seems that nearly every day there is news about a hospital or health system closing or reducing services to control costs. Most recently, Calais Regional Hospital in Washington County announced it will no longer be delivering babies and will shutter its Obstetrics program. Maine General Health in Augusta is closing a long-term care unit and the urgent care center in Jackman. In Ellsworth, Maine Coast Memorial is closing a dental clinic and eliminating its valet parking. These are some of the changes affecting the ongoing evolution of local healthcare -especially in rural Maine.

Hospitals are doing what they need to do to survive. Mayo Regional Hospital is navigating its own set of challenges, as unfortunately, we too feel the pressure of reduced reimbursement and expense control; and as a result Mayo has operated in the red for the past several years. So we continue to make hard decisions. We recently had to end the contract with a pediatrician at the Dover Foxcroft Family Medicine clinic. While access to service was *not* affected, it was a very difficult decision to make. Going forward, Mayo's pediatric program will be well-managed by our highly qualified family physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

Beginning this fall, we will no longer have a psychiatrist on staff at our Psychiatry and Counseling office. We will continue to provide excellent service through Mayo's skilled psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioners, counseling staff, and our primary care providers.

Both of these decisions were painful to make but were necessary given our limited choices and finances. Rest assured, we are working on a plan for the future. As has been discussed, Mayo's Board of Trustees, is actively seeking a closer relationship with Brewer-based EMHS. Closer ties to EMHS could help control costs in our benefits program, physician staffing and recruitment, information technology, and other high-cost areas. In the meantime, we need to implement programmatic changes to reduce expenses immediately.

Other areas of the hospital are also making changes in order to maintain services. For example, we recently contracted with Eastern Maine Medical Center to provide staff for Mayo's sleep services so that service can remain local. Our Diagnostic Imaging and Cardiopulmonary departments have experienced staffing challenges that resulted in limiting the hours during which services can be provided. This means that echocardiography (heart ultrasound) is now only offered on certain days of the week. Ultrasound hours have also been reduced, and Cardiopulmonary is no longer able to respond to calls 24-hours a day, which means respiratory care has been shifted to nursing and anesthesia for after regular business hours. These are not choices we wanted to make, and these were not made due to cost, but rather to preserve our quality staff we have from experiencing burn out.

Finally, the laboratory at Mayo is actively working with Affiliated Lab to outsource microbiology. This process will be finalized at the end of this month and will result in significant savings for the hospital.

So yes, these are challenging financial times in healthcare, not only here at Mayo, but across our state and throughout our nation. We continue to collectively hold our breath as we await additional decisions by our legislators in Augusta and in Washington, DC that could negatively affect our finances and the services we are able to deliver.

Despite our challenges, Mayo Regional is a hospital with heart. Our providers, staff, administrators, and others work tirelessly to ensure that the people of our region have access to high quality and affordable healthcare. We remain committed to keeping you informed about changes that affect your hospital and to do so in a current and transparent way, regardless of the difficulty of the message.