

Emergency Micro-Hospital in Valencia County

This is the final column of three from the Medical Care Advocates of Valencia County (MCAVC) about the 2006 mill levy money and the hospital that has not been built. We want to start with thanking the News-Bulletin for giving us this space to discuss this issue. For this last column we are presenting our last educational piece on micro-hospitals and how they fit into this project and are sharing the recommendation of the MCAVC which we have presented to the Commission.

The primary goal for the MCAVC is to get a 24-hour Emergency Hospital in Valencia County. To this end we have concentrated on gathering critical information on current healthcare deficiencies and statistics from the New Mexico Department of Health and other sources to demonstrate where this need exists. So, a second piece to our goal has been education for both the commissioners and the public. Probably the most important piece of our goal has been to join with the community to push the Commission to get this whole project re-started and it feels like that process has started.

Micro-hospital types: There are two types of micro-hospitals: a "satellite" of an existing hospital system and a "standalone" self-contained independent hospital typically operated by an out of state company. We have compiled some high level pros and cons of each type.

"Satellite" of a hospital in Albuquerque

Advantages:

- 1) A larger "Economy of Scale" (efficiency gains and lower cost of goods and services from partnering with a larger organization) benefit from parent hospital in Albuquerque:
 - a) Local management that understands New Mexico culture, issues, etc.
 - b) Ease of maintaining an active dialog with local hospital management.
 - c) Our micro-hospital will need several resupply and support services that can be more efficiently provided remotely from the parent hospital in Albuquerque:
 - i) Information Technology services such as: Help Desk, Electronic Medical Record, etc.
 - ii) Pharmacy, Central Supply, HR and Administrative services.
- 2) Possible training site for emergency physicians in advanced residency programs, etc.
- 3) More Mill levy money stays in New Mexico.
- 4) The experience gained from setting up and maintaining this micro-hospital stays local and can be used to improve Emergency care in other counties in New Mexico.

Disadvantages/Challenges:

- 1) Additional staffing to cover Valencia County. New Mexico ranked 49th in the nation with a "D" in the 2014 American College of Emergency Physicians' (ACEP) state-by-state report card on America's emergency care environment. The state faces health care workforce shortages and a medical liability environment that serves as a barrier to recruiting and retaining health care professionals. - See more at:
<http://www.emreportcard.org/Content.aspx?id=486#sthash.v93Xd172.dpuf>.

"Standalone" hospital operated by an out-of-state company:

Advantages:

- 1) Although this will be their first micro-hospital in New Mexico they will have a smaller "learning-curve" as they already know how to set up standalone emergency rooms and in some cases micro-hospitals in other states.
- 2) They have access to an out-of-state pool of emergency physicians willing to work in NM by offering higher salary and other benefits. This could be a potential model for physician retention in NM, but may consume the mill levy at a faster rate and may require additional mill levy support.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Mill levy money may leave the state.
- 2) Cost of operating a Kitchen, Pharmacy and Central Supply Departments.
- 3) Remote IT and administrative support in another state by a company that is managing many facilities in a number of states.

MCAVC Recommendations of Essential Services:

Hospital Advisory Board to monitor quality of care, and monitor how the mill levy is spent

Emergency Micro-Hospital with Urgent Care should be a Satellite of ABQ hospital

Nursing Unit (4 rooms, single or double occupancy) for short-stay (less than 96 hours)

Emergency Psychiatric Unit (4 rooms, single occupancy) for short-stay care

Diagnostic Services

- Clinical Laboratory to support emergency services
- CT scan, X-ray, and ultrasound
- EKG

Respiratory Therapist

Recommend central location to support the whole county, but the selected provider will have final say

We will continue to monitor and do whatever we can to help the Commission and the county. Thank you for joining us in this continuing quest to provide 24-hour Emergency Hospital services to Valencia County.