

# QVMC makes a big turnaround

*Clinic transformation leads the way for hospital*

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One year ago, the Quincy Valley Medical Center was just a vote away from closing its clinic.

During the October 2007 hospital board meeting, the issue of what to do about the center's clinic, which was losing healthcare providers, patients and money, was debated among the administration and board members.

The hospital directors eventually decided to close the clinic temporarily in order to renovate the facility and try to recruit new physicians. The clinic closed in late December and reopened on Jan. 24 with a new name, SageView Family Care, a new look with fresh paint, carpet and updated wait-

ing room, and a new physician, Mary Klingner M.D.

Since February, the number of patients visiting the clinic has grown considerably. In each month, the clinic saw more patients than it had the previous month. Through the first 10 months of last year, the clinic had a monthly average of 347 patient visits. That number grew to 459 in 2008.

"We're very thankful and blessed with the community support to the program," said hospital administrator Mehdi Merred. "I think that the community is the main reason why the clinic is successful."

As the number of patient visits grew, so did the need for new providers. The clinic hired two advanced registered

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nurse practitioners, Charlene Brush and Rhonda Ramm, to meet the growing patient pool. The board also approved the hiring of physician Hal Harden, of Wenatchee, to work on Mondays and Tuesdays and another physician, Aida Figueroa, was recently hired. She will start on Jan. 12.

The increase in clinic business has helped the medical center achieve a profit through October.

While the clinic is just about breaking even in operations, it helps bring in additional revenue through ancillary services, including lab work, X-rays, MRIs, CT scans and also surgery services, Merred said.

According to a report by financial director Ken Kiehn, the medical center had a \$30,201 gain in revenue for October and has a \$136,363 profit for the year. The hospital had budgeted for a loss of \$141,020 through the end of October.

"We're \$277,383 stronger than we thought

we would be at the start of this budget," said board chairman Don Condit.

One thing that has helped is reducing the amount of employee turnover. In 2007, the employee turnover rate was 35.5 percent. The rate for 2008 is 13.7 percent.

"We have stabilized the workforce and that's exactly what the community has asked for," said board member Anthony Gonzalez.

Kiehn said he has been asked why a nonprofit hospital should try to have a profit.

"The only way to replace aging equipment and make upgrades is to maintain a profit," Kiehn said. "We need to retain some of our earnings to maintain and acquire equipment and services to serve our community."

The hospital is also making a dent in its credit line with Grant County. In January, the medical center owed the county \$2.25 million. It has cut that amount almost in half.

"Until we get that debt down to zero, we're not going to be completely satisfied," Gonzalez said.

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