

Medical center seeks physician to replace ER chief

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Quincy Valley Medical Center is in the process of attempting to bring a physician on board who will perform a large majority of the duties currently being completed by chief of emergency medicine Peter Himmel.

Himmel is leaving the medical center in June to pursue board certification in emergency medication in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Chief Operating Officer Mehdi Merred told the Grant County Public Hospital District No. 2 board of commissioners at their meeting Tuesday, April 28 that the medical center is going to try to buy out the contract of Dr. Eric Harrington, who is currently working for Vista Recruiting Agency.

Merred said the buyout will cost \$28,000, and he will offer Harrington a one-year contract as an independent contractor of the medical center. Harrington has worked at the medical center several times in the past through Vista.

Merred said his plan is for Harrington to work 84 hours per month in the emergency room and clinic and take a large majority of Himmel's responsibilities, which will be divided between several other employees who are capable of assisting in emergency room coverage.

"There will be plenty of things for him to do," Merred said. "He'll be just more than an ER doctor. In my proposal to Dr. Harrington, I told him that I'd like him to see clinic patients, do some peer review of X-rays and labs, work on the ambulance quality assurance program, assist in scheduling and be a part of the monthly physician-to-physician review process."

Medical staff coordinator Glenda Bishop spoke highly of Harrington's abilities at the board meeting.

"He was in the ER last weekend, and the nursing staff really appreciated working with him, and Dr. Himmel appreciates his clinical skills," she said. "He came here last summer, at the height of the concert season,

with a high volume of patients, and he sailed right through. A lot of people were complimentary about his work. He seemed to be (unfazed) about what he was seeing.

"He's a known entity. If you start bringing in agency doctors, sometimes you win and sometimes you don't."

Merred said a final contract has yet to be negotiated, and there's no set starting date for Harrington, but he hopes to finish the process as soon as possible.

"We'd like to move ahead with him, the sooner the better," he said. "We put a contract proposal out that sounded presentable, and nothing abnormal jumped out at him. We just want to get this finalized. We're confident about his skills, and want the community to know that we hope to have a qualified, board-certified physician replacing Dr. Himmel."

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