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Merred turns down Idaho job, to stay at QVMC

Chuck Allen/Post-Register
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Quincy Valley Medical Center administrator Mehdi Merred is staying.

Merred confirmed on Thursday, Dec. 17 that he declined the offer to become the chief executive officer for Teton Valley Health Care in Driggs, Idaho.

Merred, who came to QVMC in January 2006, had previously withdrawn his name from consideration for the Teton Valley job. However, Merred was still named the top candidate for the job by the Teton Valley's board of directors on Dec. 9.

ADVERTISEMENT Merred said he turned down the job offer because he felt he had unfinished business in Quincy.

"My heart is here — my commitment is here," Merred said. "This is a period of challenges and opportunities. Strong and stable leadership is crucial for the long-term viability of the hospital."

Merred was identified as a candidate for the Teton Valley position by a recruiting firm. The firm contacted him this fall and asked him to apply for the position.

"There were some attractive things about the job," Merred said. "We would be closer to family, and there were some other attractive features. I applied for the job, but I did it with the intention of exploring the open position and community. I did not do it with the intention of relocating there."

In the end, Merred said he wanted to stay because he felt he still had unfinished business in Quincy. "There are still things I want to accomplish and see through here," he said.

Merred said he is proud of what he has already been able to accomplish during his tenure.

Under his watch, QVMC has added surgery services, MRI services, upgraded its clinic, reduced employee turnover, and in 2008 had its first profitable year in at least 20 years.

"He's the guy we need to finish the job right now," said Glenda Bishop, QVMC's medical staff coordinator and risk manager. "What he's done in the past three years — the list is huge."

She said when the QVMC staff was told Merred would be staying during an all-staff meeting, there was thunderous applause.

The support from the community, the medical center staff and hospital board all factored into the decision to stay, Merred said.

"The support from the staff, board and community have been tremendous," he said. "It was certainly a factor."

In November, QVMC made the decision to fire surgeon Gaston Cornu-Labat after he refused to go through a mandated evaluation program by the Washington Physicians Health Program, a nonprofit corporation that helps to identify healthcare practitioners who have a mental or physical condition which could affect their ability to practice with reasonable skill and safety. The program was mandated after concerns were raised about Cornu-Labat's behavior. Cornu-Labat is protesting his firing.

While he declined to comment specifically about Cornu-Labat, Merred did say he wanted to help the hospital make it through the challenges it currently faces.

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