

Quincy hospital 'on path to healing'

*By Sarah Kehoe
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QUINCY — Despite anticipated financial losses in March, Quincy Valley Hospital staff is expecting a \$180,000 profit for this year.

"We are well on target to reach our profit goal," said Mehdi Merred, administrator. "Based on the numbers we have seen so far, we have no reason to believe we won't achieve it."

The hospital reached a \$28,000 profit this February, but lost \$38,327 in March and \$10,359 for the first quarter. Administration planned a \$15,000 profit for March in the yearly budget.

"The loss in March is something we did anticipate and we are not very concerned about it," Merred said. "The month of February and the month of January were very good to us and the results in March are similar to what we experience every year."

Hospitals traditionally go through financial losses in March. Quincy Valley Medical Center administrators have noticed the cycle over the last five years, said Michele Wurl, marketing director.

"March is just a slower time," Wurl said. "Every year we have losses in March and the number goes up in April."

Other factors accounting for the March loss this year included utilization of agency doctors because of various circumstances.

"Overall, we are doing very well compared to previous years," Merred said. "In fact, this March we did better than last March by \$100,000."

Last year the hospital lost \$41,798 in March and \$118,694 for their year-to-date. Merred praised the medical center's department heads for helping to keep costs down, resulting in the improvement from last year.

The hospital was in debt, not accumulating interest and relying on the county to help for 25 years. It wasn't until 2008 the hospital began making a profit, Merred reported.

"We are on a financial healing path and are getting back to a healthy level as far as cash flow is concerned," Merred said.

"Are we healthy? Not yet. We still have concerns and things to work on, but our management is paying very close attention to spending and has done a fantastic job managing resources."