



Ellen Morris Bishop/For the Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Hospital has been named a Top-100 Critical Access Hospital for the eighth time in 11 years, and a Top-20 CAH for the fourth time in five years.

HOSPITAL

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leadership and councils that assess the hospital's inner workings and where it can continue to improve, even with such a high ranking.

"We internally have identified scores of things we want to get better at. We in no way feel like we have arrived," he said.

He said part of the reason perfection is the ultimate — even if unattainable because of human fallibility — goal is because it "feels unethical" to make the goal anything less.

"You cannot set a goal that 95% of the time we'll get our care right," he said. "... There's not a guilt trip that you don't get perfection. We celebrate success, but how can we edge closer to perfection?"

Pace said the hospital being among the top in the country lets residents know they are in good hands.

"This really assures them they are receiving the best possible care in our rural community that is equal to the care they would receive in larger metro areas," she said. "Because part of the metrics they look at is cost, charge and financial efficiency, (residents) are not only receiving a high quality of care but at a (low cost). They have access to this level of care in our remote corner of the world."

Last year, the hospital received a percentile rating of 99.7 based on a set of data from different sources, including CMS, and Quality Care Director Stacey Karvoski said that score was based on data from 2016 to 2019. A more recent score has not been

made available.

"They look at all the data and compile it into a percentile rating," Karvoski said.

Davy added that it's not only about the care the hospital gives, but how the hospital can better help the community, including focusing resources on preventative care and on what are deemed the top needs by the community.

The data the hospital uses to inform it includes a Community Health Needs Assessment done every three years within the community, as well as federal data.

"We are often amazed at the high levels of tobacco, diabetes, lifestyle-related illnesses. ... By seeing the latest data, it helps us focus our resources. What do we need to focus on the next three years?" Davy said.

"We want to get really good at helping you prevent that from happening."

As for what the distinction means within hospital walls, Pace said the staff is proud of what it has continued to accomplish.

"I think the word that really comes to mind is pride, in not only ourselves but our team, that we continue to deliver the type of care that delivers the best outcomes for our community," she said.

Davy added that the community does play a role in the success of WMH, and should be lauded for it as well.

"It's not just about the hospital, it's about the community. They have been supportive," the CEO said. "This is about 7,000 people working together. They need to share the credit for it."

TELEHEALTH

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The students informed her honey was responsible for the glucose level spike because it contains sugar.

Robin Claudson is a faculty member of the OHSU School of Nursing at EOU and helped run the simulations. She said one of the wonderful things about telehealth is it gives health care providers the chance to prevent patients from unnecessarily coming into clinics and hospitals.

"It reduces emergency room visits," she said.

Lowering hospital and clinic visits today is particularly important due to the COVID-19 pandemic, because patients coming in can spread the virus to others. Claudson said as a result, the popularity of telehealth is increasing during the pandemic.

"It is blossoming," Claudson said.

Beckrich said she hopes this trend continues because telehealth makes it so much easier for patients to see health care professionals

"We underutilize it," she said.

Telehealth is particularly valuable in rural areas, such as Eastern Oregon, where people often have to travel great distances to see doctors. Danielle Patton,

a simulation associate and member of the OHSU School of Nursing at EOU faculty, noted those using telehealth in this region include a family in Keating, 55 miles southeast of La Grande, with a number of young children. The family has telehealth appointments with doctors at Grande Ronde Hospital's pediatric clinic for its children. Grande Ronde Hospital has the only pediatric clinic in Union and Baker counties.

The computers that are a part of the telehealth kits are programmed to be on the lookout for conditions such as rising blood pressure and glucose levels.

"They look for trends," said Jocelyn Brown, a student at the OHSU School of Nursing at EOU.

The telehealth simulation was supported with grant funding from the Health Resources and Series Administration.

The students participating in the simulation will not necessarily be involved in telehealth when they begin their health care careers, Patton said. However, the odds are good they will use telehealth at some point of their careers because of its growing popularity.

"We want them to be prepared for the possibilities of the future," Patton said.

EOU

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their takes on a vaccination requirement.

He said the survey is simple and will be available online at key portals for faculty, staff and students until sometime next week.

"We want to have a good, thorough review before making the call on requiring vaccinations," Seydel said.

Eastern has been taking steps to curtail the spread of the virus all school year, starting with the mass testing of students last fall and again in the spring. EOU on May 4 hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic that drew

almost 100 students, faculty and staff to the La Grande campus to receive their first dose of the Moderna vaccine.

Just how many students are vaccinated is hard to say, though.

"We're not privy to that (personal) health information," Seydel said.

The clinic came about because of the relationship EOU has with the Center for Human Development Inc., the public health arm of Union County. Seydel said he and others have longstanding relationships with the staff and leaders at the center, and working with people you know and trust during a crisis makes a difference.

While there was a good turnout for the vaccination

clinic, Seydel said there is vaccine hesitancy on campus, and the Student Health Center at Eastern stepped up to help students better understand the vaccinations. The center has held Zoom meetings so students could get answers to their questions about the vaccines.

Some of the hesitancy may be coming from misinformation, he said, but students want to know about the vaccines and what getting vaccinated could mean for them.

In addition to the survey, Seydel said the EOU faculty union has discussed vaccinations and vaccination requirements, and the administration is in the process of talking to the Univer-

sity Council, the body that represents all students and staff, as well as to student government.

Seydel said there is a lot to contemplate when determining whether to require a vaccination, and EOU will gather all the feedback and carefully consider the issue before reaching a determination. He said it's possible a decision will be made by the end of the month.

One thing the university knows already, he said, is students want to be in classes and to be able to go to activities.

"Our students have made that clear," he said. "They would like to be on campus."

— The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Library unveils new logo, branding

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Cook Memorial Library in La Grande recently announced a new logo to go along with a revamped website and brand identity.

The new design is set to create a more modern and welcoming feel, while the library will continue to provide the same reliable services and values.

The new branding strives to incorporate the natural surroundings of La Grande into the library's logos. The blue represents rivers, while the yellow stands for fields and the green signifies pines.

"The library really didn't have an identity prior to this logo," said Cook Memorial Library Director Kip Roberson. "I think it makes the library more visible and signals



Cook Memorial Library/Contributed Graphic

The new Cook Memorial Library logo incorporates the Grande Ronde River, wheat fields and ponderosa pines. The library announced the new logo and brand identity the first week of May 2021.

us out if somebody is really interested in what the library is doing."

Francine Brazeau, a Pacific Northwest-based graphic designer, worked with Roberson and the library staff to brainstorm the new brand identity. The team decided on features that represent La Grande rather than spe-

cific aspects of the library.

"We went through the list of things that are readily identifiable with La Grande," Roberson said. "I think there were about four or five design rounds."

The most notable of the changes is the library logo, which includes three side-by-side open books.

Inside the books are the Grande Ronde River, golden wheat fields and ponderosa pines.

Three slogans coincide with the design of the logo: "Growing readers since 1912," "Knowledge grows here" and "Information flows here." The library first began servicing La Grande in 1912.

"We certainly have a presence in the community, but we didn't have something to identify us," Roberson said, adding the new logo makes Cook Memorial "stand apart from the other libraries around us."

Cook Memorial Library users will receive new library cards with updated logos and branding. The library gradually introduced the new branding over the past few months and is phasing out the previous logos.

VACCINES

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rates above 65% meant that cases were unlikely to result in severe illness or death.

On the flip side, if the state reaches a 70% overall vaccination rate, even counties such as Umatilla and Malheur, where vaccination rates are at the low end of the statewide scale, would move out of the restrictions along with all other counties.

Asked if meeting the 70% vaccination goal would mean the Pendleton Round-Up could be held in September, Brown was upbeat.

"Let 'er buck," Brown forecast.

While the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may suggest some mask requirements, most likely the event would go off much closer to normal than previously forecasted. The Round-Up was canceled last year because of COVID-19 concerns.

Brown said the moves were possible because data shows the spike in cases over the past month has begun to fade.

"It looks like we've crossed the tipping point of the fourth surge," Brown said. "Our hospitalization rates have stabilized. Our infection rates are on a downward trajectory. And in the race between vaccines and variants, our efforts to vaccinate Oregonians are taking the lead."

Brown said she was confident the statewide vaccination goal to reopen

the entire state by mid-June was in reach if residents stepped up to get vaccinated and help others get their shots too.

Oregon is increasing walk-in and local clinic efforts in an attempt to achieve what infectious disease officials call "impulse vaccinations" by people who did not want to deal with the burden of online registration.

After achieving 70% statewide vaccination of those age 16 and older, Oregon may continue requiring some use of masks and physical distancing, Brown said, as the CDC and Oregon Health Authority monitor conditions.

All other health and safety requirements for counties under the state's risk level framework would be lifted, and counties would no longer be assigned risk levels.

Oregon public schools would still follow the state's "Ready Schools, Safe Learners" protocols, which will be updated before the return to school in the fall with an eye on removing restrictions where possible.

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