

**Health** from 1A

According to Yecny, there are two reasons for the shift from physicians to PAs and NPs — a nationwide doctor shortage and the medical center's transition to a team approach to medical services.

Peace Harbor Medical Group Director of Operations Nena Harvey reported on how the new hires were affecting the nearly 6,000 patients that were left without a primary care provider due to the shortages.

"We have placed around 3,000 patients. It takes about six months to get the provider the full panel of patients. With the last provider coming in

February, it will probably be early summer before everyone gets placed."

According to Yecny, Each provider receives a panel of 1,000 to 1,200 patients.

Peace Health Chief Medical Officer Mark Adams explained some of the recruiting tactics the group was using to attract new providers.

He said, "We try to focus on candidates that have ties to the northwest. People who were either born and raised in Oregon or have family that lives here. We have been very successful at that."

A member from the audience asked, "My husband was told he would have a new primary care doctor in December. When will

he actually be able to see that doctor? Would it be January, February, would it be March? Would it depend upon how sick he is?"

Harvey said, "When certain physicians left, we had projected how long we thought it would take to get those patients back in with a new provider. We put those projections in a letter and sent that out to the patient. It has taken longer than we thought it would, so not everyone that had letters stating they would get a new provider by December is going to get that by December. People that are more ill, we are getting them higher to the top of the list."

PeaceHealth Primary Care System Medical Director Dr.

Robin Virgin talked about the medical center's transition to primary care team based medicine.

Yecny said, "We are one person ahead of the staffing projections we made at the August town hall meeting. We have hired one additional PA."

He added, "By the end of February we will be pretty functional as far as getting back to where we were at least a year ago."

According to Yecny, PAs, like doctors, are able to diagnose and treat patients, prescribe medicine and order tests.

"Patients will be taken care of by a team. Each team member will work at the top of their license to take care of patients' needs," Yecny said.

**WLAD** from 1A

"We did that because there is such a demand on the transfers we do between hospitals. These patients are sometimes critically ill," House added.

Langborg said critical care training is the level of training given to Life Flight air ambulance paramedics.

According to Webb, very few districts have critical care paramedics.

WLAD has also signed an intergovernmental agreement

(IGA) with Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue to better coordinate services and information sharing, and save money.

"Sometimes when you blend different mindsets, fire can be different than paramedics, Webb said. "We didn't want to disrupt that. We wanted to maintain that integrity."

"Jim Langborg has been open minded and accepting of our culture. Putting Matt House in charge of the operation maintains that continuity, but we can still take advantage of the experience that the

administration can provide."

The agreement, signed in June, is already demonstrating positive tangible results.

In addition to creating a fiber optic connection between the two districts and sharing secure information, the IGA has the two districts communicating more closely to help with emergency situations.

"There was a situation a few months ago," Webb said. "I was listening to the scanner and just happened to hear when multiple calls happened

simultaneously. There was a car wreck, a fall, a heart attack, a breathing problem and a transport out of the airport, and a bomb threat all at once.

"To have one centrally located command that knew where all the resources were and began allocating people and directing where they should go quickly was crucial."

Langborg said, "The goal (of the IGA) is to continue to improve services. That is the crux of what this is about."

**Baskets** from 1A

"Each box costs about \$50, and that includes turkey and all the food to have a Christmas dinner, but also eggs and peanut butter and other staples so that people have enough food to have more than one meal during the holidays," Bennett said.

She also pointed out that another component to the Soroptimists' effort is a toy collection. The need for toys remains critical but not as pressing as the need for cash donations to fill

the food baskets.

Coordinator for the toy distribution, Michelle Fraley, added that although toys are not essential they are important in other ways.

"Ultimately, the toy portion of the basket project is for families that cannot provide any toys for their children on Christmas. We do this so that when these young people wake up on Christmas morning, there will be something under their tree," she said.

Fraley expects more than 400 kids will request toys this year

Linda's Christmas Trees at

37th Street and Highway 101 is hosting a food drive to help fill the Community Baskets today from 3 to 7 p.m..

Food can be dropped at the house behind the laundromat on 37th Street.

Toys can be dropped off at all local banks, Coastal Fitness, Hoberg Auto Repair, Shippin' Shack, Coldwell Banker, West Coast Auto, Florence Eye Clinic, Fred Meyer, Sherwin Tire and Automotive, Three Rivers Casino Resort, Abel Insurance, Berkshire Hathaway Realty, Bi-Mart and Holloway and Associates.

Toys that are donated will be

distributed at the Church of the Nazarene on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Food baskets will be distributed on a first come, first served basis at the Siuslaw Middle School, at 2525 Oak St, the same day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To make a financial contribution to help the Soroptimists Food Basket Program, call Bennett at 541-991-3455.

**Request free native plants**

River, creek and lakeside landowners may be eligible to receive free native plants.

Trees planted along streams help reduce erosion, filter nutrients and keep the water cool for salmon and trout.

Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) will once again provide free native plants for waterside planting in the Siuslaw Basin and coastal lakes area.

Call the SWC office to receive a brochure with more information on each available plant or visit [www.siuslaw.org](http://www.siuslaw.org)

/native-plant-distribution. Then determine which plants will work best for your site conditions and let SWC know which of these plants are on your wish list.

SWC can also help advise landowners on plant selection and placement. Send requests early because supplies are limited. Priority is given to requests placed prior to Dec. 18. The distribution date will be Feb. 11.

For more information, call 541-268-3044 or email [nativeplants@siuslaw.org](mailto:nativeplants@siuslaw.org).

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