

Hospital moves on without management company

District pays fee to retain CEO Daly

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Blue Mountain Hospital District became an independent hospital two months ago after the board voted to cut ties with its longtime management company.

The contract with the company — which provided various services ranging from financial audits to a group purchasing organization to reduce costs for supplies — expired March 31.

Hospital district board chair Amy Kreger said the board hired Derek Daly, the hospital's CEO, who was an employee of the management company Health TechS3 until April 1.

Kreger said Daly's new two-year agreement costs \$273,000 per year. She said his "Health Tech-provided" annual salary was roughly \$273,000.

She said the board negotiated essentially a one-time fee to retain Daly and any other Health TechS3 employees.

Under the terms of the contract, the hospital could retain Daly for a cost comparable to 33% of his salary, and Kreger said the district paid a flat fee of \$90,000 to hire Daly away from Health TechS3.

Daly said he became invested in the community over the last couple of years and did not want to leave the county.

"I bought a home here last year, I brought my wife here, I got married here and I've formed relationships," he said.

Kreger said it is crucial for the county's organizations to be made up of people who have a stake in the community.

"I think it's vital to our county and for the success of all entities that people are vested and invested, which are two very different words," she said. "That's their time and their effort and their interest."

Kreger said continuity in leadership positions is key in building and maintaining trust in organizations.

"People get uneasy when change comes at a rapid pace," Kreger said.

In October, Daly said parting ways with Health TechS3 would mean it would lose access to its group purchasing organization.

Daly said a GPO, much like a big-box retailer, derives buying power from a large pool and spreads it across its network.

"It's like when you buy at Costco and you buy in bulk," he said. "You get the ability to get at better prices."

Daly said on April 8 that their vendor Vizient, a not-for-profit health system, is looking for a GPO with pricing levels on par with the previous costs.

Kreger said the hospital still gets access to Vizient's GPO, but at a different level of access.

Daly added that, with the hospital not committed to its contract with Health TechS3, they have the freedom to create those partnerships elsewhere.

"We have those dollars, and we can utilize them when we need to on an as-needed basis rather than an all-inclusive basis," he said.

Daly said March 31 did not look much different than April 1. He said in the months leading up to the transition he gave the board "early intention" to stay and continue to ensure that April 1 looked like March 31.

Daly said this consisted of "leveraging relationships and creating partnerships — from an accounting firm with knowledge of critical access financial reports to experts in survey compliance regulations.

Kreger said a common misconception people had about the management company is that they made the day-to-day decisions. She said that was not the case.

Kreger said they provided information, resources and made recommendations.

"The board, along with the CEO, governed and made decisions for Blue Mountain Hospital, prior to April 1," she said. "And we're not going to do anything different."

Vaccinations replace infections as key to lower COVID-19 limits

By Gary A. Warner
Oregon Capital Bureau

The Medford area has less than half the number of COVID-19 cases than the Bend area.

But restaurants in Deschutes County can have twice as many customers as Jackson County's in their dining rooms starting Thursday.

The virus is spreading at twice the rate in Portland than in La Grande.

But last call will be about a half hour before lights out at 11 p.m. in Union County bars while down at the Moda Center in Multnomah County, people packed together without masks at an NBA playoff game. Afterward, they can party until midnight.

The comparisons underline the new reality in Oregon this week: COVID-19 cases are no longer the only measuring stick for how tight restrictions are placed on counties.

The new key to opening up: vaccination rates. Get a shot of vaccine into the arms of 65% of eligible residents age 16 and up and any county could be dropped to the least restrictive level of rules.

"This disease remains dangerous for those in communities with high rates of unvaccinated individuals," Gov. Kate Brown said Tuesday. "That's why I'm encouraging all Oregonians to roll up your sleeves, take your shot, and get a chance to change your life."

The new format explained why some counties with high vaccination rates but less than stellar marks on COVID-19 cases could be in the lower risk group while counties with lower numbers might find themselves still facing moderate or high risk levels of restrictions.

From Thursday, May 27, through Thursday, June 3, the Oregon Health Agency has placed 15 counties in the high risk level, three at moderate risk and 18 at lower risk.

Twelve of the lower risk counties show smaller numbers

of COVID-19 cases and lower percentages of positive cases.

But six of the counties are on the lower risk level because of Brown's waiver for counties that have put vaccine in just under two out of three adults.

Deschutes, Multnomah, Washington, Lincoln, Hood River and Benton counties have passed the mark and will move to the lower level restrictions as of Thursday.

The "one shot" rule was put in place because most Oregon residents have been inoculated with either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, which requires two shots given about a month apart.

A smaller number of residents have received the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Normally, the risk level changes go into effect the Friday after the levels are announced. But the levels announced Tuesday will go into effect Thursday.

The early start is to allow the Moda Center in Multnomah County to implement another new Brown plan tied to hosting the NBA playoff game on Thursday night between the Portland Trailblazers and Denver Nuggets.

Fans who have been fully vaccinated — two Moderna or Pfizer shots, or one Johnson & Johnson shot — can buy tickets for the game to sit in "vaccination sections." Fans in those seats will not have to wear masks or keep physically distanced.

Proof of vaccination is required. To sit in the seats, fans must show their state CDC-approved vaccination card, or a digital or photocopy of the document.

The card must show that the last shot was given more than two weeks prior to the game — the amount of time health officials say it takes for the vaccine to have full effect against the virus.

Fans with tickets but who do not show a vaccine card will be directed to seats where masks, physical distancing and other restrictions will be in place.



Blue Mountain Hospital District

Community Health Beat



What's new at BMHD?

Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic recognized as Tier 4 Patient Centered Primary Care Home

SWCC has been recognized by the Oregon Health Authority as a Tier 4 Patient Centered Primary Care Home. What does this mean for you? Your primary care provider will work with you to improve care coordination that results in higher quality care to you and your family.

If you have a special health concern or condition, you will be connected with other health professionals to help you get the care you need. For example, your primary care provider can connect you with a pharmacist, mental health specialist, or a nutritionist, etc. — whatever your health needs call for.

Same Day Appointments

The clinic maintains open schedule slots during business hours to attend to your urgent needs without an advance appointment. We know life can throw the unexpected at you, and we're available to help you immediately for those medical emergencies not requiring emergency room treatment.

Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic

Friday June 18th 9am-3pm
Call for an appointment
541-575-0404



Dr. John Nguyen
General Surgeon

Dermatology

Full spectrum Dermatology now available for both adult and pediatric patients. Contact your primary care provider for a referral or call 541-575-2060 for an appointment.

Surgery

Blue Mountain Surgery Clinic provides high-quality professional surgery services locally to spare you travel and time away from home. Dr. John Nguyen specializes in advanced laparoscopic surgery, utilizing minimally-invasive procedures that speed your recovery to an active lifestyle.

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The 14th Annual Blue Mountain Healthcare Foundation Fundraiser Golf Scramble is July 17th, 2021. Entries are open and can be found on the BMH website, at the John Day Golf Club, and the downstairs screening desk at BMH. All proceeds from this year's fundraiser will go toward the purchase of a 3D mammography machine for the Radiology Department at BMH.

- Teams of 4 - \$300 per team
- Cash prizes

Questions? Contact: Jena Knowles
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