

New doctors join MCHD

Interim Morrow County Health District CEO Emily Roberts announced at the MCHD board meeting Monday night that Dr. Rio Lion will join the district under a one-year contract. She said he began to see patients at Pioneer Memorial Clinic and began providing emergency call coverage three days a week beginning September 27.

She also noted Dr. Josh Sirucek is joining the district in a three-year contract starting around January 21 and would be onsite for 12-day blocks once per month during which he will be scheduled to see patients at Pioneer Memorial Clinic and provide emergency coverage. "During the weeks he is offsite, he will be available to provide telemedicine services," said Roberts. "His ultimate goal is to move to Heppner and be available onsite every week."

Roberts added that Dr. Michael Rossi is interviewing in Heppner and Irrigon on October 4.

Also at the meeting, the board approved a three-year contract between the district and Jon Watson, Physician's Assistant, to provide patient care services 40 hours per week, primarily at the Irrigon Clinic, and also to cover the Heppner and Ione clinics on a rotating basis if needed, within the 40-hour week. In the contract he will be entitled to 16 days a year paid vacation, 12 days sick leave per year, seven days paid for continuing ed and up to \$2,000 per year for continuing ed expenses, among other benefits.

EMS Director Rusty Estes has given notice of his retirement from the Morrow County Health District, effective January 6, Human Resources Director Patti Allstott, who was not present at the meeting, announced.

Allstott also reported six new people have been hired for the district: Samantha Van Laer, com-

pliance/HIPPA/security officer, Kayly Abercrombie, Pioneer Memorial Hospital Certified Nursing Assistant II, Richard Hernandez, Boardman Ambulance Station EMT basic, Mark Keith, Boardman Ambulance Station paramedic, Jason Atchley, maintenance technician, and Leslie Cross, PMH dietary director.

She also noted the following positions remain open: chief operating officer, now held by interim CEO Emily Roberts, Pioneer Memorial Clinic director, community relations and communications director, PMH RN, Home Health and Hospice RN, information technology technician, one EMT intermediate and two EMT basics for the Boardman Ambulance Station.

Dr. Betsy Anderson, chief of staff, reported via telecom that the district has found some issues with narcotic prescriptions, that they are starting to decrease with patient care in mind.

Also, at the meeting, Boardman Fire Chief Michael Hughes presented a plan to the board in which Boardman Fire Rescue would take over emergency response for Boardman and Irrigon. Hughes said the plan would "improve pre-hospital emergency medical services with 24-hour onsite staffing" and reduce medical transport "get out" and "on-scene times."

Under the plan, MCHD would hire two additional employees at a cost of \$198,974 and an additional four employees for Irrigon at a cost of approximately \$397,948. The plan entails MCHD "contract with the (Boardman) Fire District to manage personnel; health district maintains ownership of all equipment; the MCHD logo remains on all transport vehicles; MCHD retains all billing responsibilities", but the Boardman "Fire District would provide management

and oversight of shift personnel."

Concerning COVID-19 state mandates, Roberts assured the board, "The district is working closely with employees and volunteers to comply with the Governor's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for health-care workers, ensuring that all employees and volunteers are vaccinated or have received an appropriate religious or medical accommodation by October 18."

The board learned from Chief Nursing Officer Kathleen Greenup, RN, that the district currently has an opening for a full-time RN. Greenup also reported, "Savannah Moreno-Hernandez finished her certified medication aide course, which will make nearly 100 percent of our nurse's aides certified to pass medication-this is a huge asset." She said 100 percent of the nurse's aides have their CNA 2 certification.

Greenup also reported that Maria Romero, Irrigon Clinic referral coordinator, moved to discharge coordinator; Brittany Clark moved from a medical assistant position to referral coordinator; Irrigon Clinic conducted interviews for a medical assistant position and "had some great candidates that will hopefully result in hiring." She said Mark Kearns, "in addition to coming to Heppner weekly, is also performing ultrasounds at the Irrigon Clinic on a regular basis and has completed a number of echocardiograms."

Greenup also assured the board personal protective equipment and testing supplies remain adequate.

In other business, the board:

-approved a contract renewal with Coverys insurance, which had a "slight increase" in premiums, but came in as the lowest bid. Coverys presented "a very competitive bid," commented Chief Financial Officer Nichole Mahoney.

-delegated, in an

amended resolution, authority for the CEO to authorize contracts involving expenditures in excess of \$10,000 and authorize payment of expenses by administrative officers.

-received the following profit/loss statement through August: the district received \$1,333,904 in gross patient revenue, \$234,181 in total revenue reductions, \$197,710 in tax revenue, \$12,603 in other operating revenue for \$1,310,036 in total operating revenue; \$1,404,888 in total operating expenses, plus \$40,488 for a non-operating gain for a \$54,364 loss for the month and a \$100,979 average year-to-date monthly loss.

-received the following report for August: PMH had four inpatient admissions, three swing bed admissions, four admissions for observation, 739 total outpatient admissions, 110 emergency room encounters, 1,665 lab tests, 122 x-ray/ultrasound tests, 44 CT scans, four MRI scans, 32 EKG tests, eight respiratory therapy sessions; Home Health had 174 patient visits; Hospice had three admissions and four deaths; pharmacy had 2,431 drug doses for the month for \$110,214 in drug revenue.

-approved the following medical staff appointments: Hospital/Clinic-Katie Mencos, PA-C, Pater Vivant, MD, William Everts, DO, Jon Watson, PA-C, Eileen McElligott, FNP; Pathology-Tomas King, MC; Radiology-Christopher Malcom, MD, John Gambino, MD; Telestroke-Stephen Burton, Abdelrahman Beltagy, Aixa Espinosa Morales, Amit Kansara, Andrew Rontal, Achit Bhatt, Genjamin Atkinson, Biggya Sapkota, Gruce Geryk, Chris Fanale, Corey White, Elizabeth Walz, James Giles, James Jordan, James Wang, Jeffrey Wagner, John Zurasky, Joseph Freeburg, Kinjal Desai, Kishan Patel, Kyle Ogami, Lilith Judd, Lindsey Frishmann, Lisa Yanase, Margarita Oveian, Michael Marvi, Minal Bhanushali, Muhammad Farooq, Neha Mirchandani, Nicholas Okon, Pawani Sachar, Pratik Bhattacharya, Ravi Menon, Robert Jackson, Robert Lada, Ruth Treat (formerly Thomson), Sarabjit Atwal, Sergey Ako-

A View from the Hill

By Doris Brosnan

Last month everyone at Willow Creek Terrace welcomed back two previous employees, Tiffany Akers and Josie Long. They also welcomed new staff interns, Hailey Wenberg and Dusty Robinson. (Several past teen interns have continued their work in health care, some continuing work at the Terrace after high school graduation.) And everyone welcomed fall, the season of changing colors, changing slant of sunshine and changing daytime temperatures.

The community on the hill will also welcome trick-or-treaters at the end of this month. With Halloween in mind, on the 15th the residents will be creating Halloween-themed decorations for their doors and apartments; playing trick or treat bingo on the 25th; and preparing trick-or-treat bags of goodies on the 29th, the same day they will be having a chuckle over lunch on that "Frankenstein Friday."

Fridays always include an activity of some sort, ranging from card games to Wii games. The Wii bowling and golf seem to be favorites for some residents, and surely for the resident who recently beat a staff member at bowling.

October seems to feature several special-recognition days that celebrate foods, so through the month, everyone will probably enjoy at least one special feature, whether it

be tacos (5th), salmon (8th), M&Ms (13th), chocolate cupcakes (18th), pumpkin cheesecake (23rd), or oatmeal (29th). On M&Ms 81st birthday, everyone will be invited to taste test the large variety of the present-day candy that first was simply small, round chocolate, covered in a thin hard shell of candy.

On the National Candy Corn Day, will participants be allowed to eat the candy once everyone has had a chance to guess the number of the tri-colored candy held in a large clear jar?

After a brief delay, the Terrace's Facebook page has returned. One of its first features contained pictures and comments about Grandparents Day (Sept. 12), which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

And everyone was able to enjoy Rita Dezoete's birthday last month, as well as Dorothy Green's 98th birthday on the 30th.

They will also enjoy seeing the costumes of little trick-or-treaters on the 31st, who are encouraged to come before 6 p.m., to self-serve from the bags of treats in the entry area while residents and staff tremble at the sight of ghosts and goblins and sigh at the sight of princesses and heroes.

Everyone views the closer-to-normal activities with relief, though caution and prevention continue to be watchwords. And everyone will view the rental of three available apartments with pleasure.

pov, Shelia Smith, Travinder Singh, Theodore Lowenkopf, Tod Czartoski, Yi Mao and George Arthur Lopez.

-received the following clinic report: Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 249 patient visits, eight new patients, 96 seen by a nurse and 23 no-shows; Irrigon Clinic had 425 patient visits, 25 new patients, 202 seen by a nurse and 37 no-

shows; Ione Clinic had 60 patient visits, 22 seen by a nurse and zero no-shows.

-received the following EMS report: Heppner had 46 total page-outs with 26 transports, Boardman had 63 page-outs with 35 transports; Irrigon had 42 page-outs with 29 transports; Ione had three page-outs; for a total of 154 page-outs and 90 transfers; with eight flight page-outs.

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SUBMIT NEWS, ADVERTISING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
SEND US PHOTOS
START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION

Morrow County Health Department
Flu & Covid Clinic
September 29
Ione Clinic
Drive Thru
4:00 - 7:00 PM
Heppner & Stricks Senior Center
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Flu and Covid-19 vaccines


CANCELED!
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative
Utility Pole Testing Underway

Columbia Basin Electric Co-op will be starting their annual utility pole checking and treatment work for 2021 on Monday, September 27th. CBEC will be checking poles out of the Sandhollow and Snipion substations. This will include: Bombing Range, Alpine Ln., Sandhollow Rd., Spur Loop Rd., Richmond Rd, Pattee Rd., Ferry Canyon and surrounding areas.

National Wood Treating Company has been contracted to perform this work for CBEC. The pole checking will be conducted with a pick-up and ATV and all NWT vehicles will be marked with CBEC signage. The annual pole checking process is necessary to stay in compliance with Oregon Public Utility Commission and National Electric Safety Code regulations. CBEC thanks you in advance for your cooperation.



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WEEKLY SHOPPER

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Friday, October 1st

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The Loop is looking for Members for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Advisory Committee

The Committee shall assist the Commissioners in tasks and duties supporting local and regional transportation services funded through the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and allocated to Morrow County, for distribution to Public Transportation Service Providers within and adjacent to Morrow County.

If you are interested in serving in this committee, please contact:
Katie Imes at The Loop: 541.676.5667
or kimes@co.morrow.or.us

