

Hospital CEO reviews progress under Commission

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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‘Drastic improvement’ in fiscal state of RMCHCS

David Conejo, CEO of Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services, was present at the McKinley County Board of Commissioners regular meeting Dec. 18 to discuss the progress RMCHCS has made in the past four years.

“We are very much in debt to [the Commission],” Conejo said during the meeting.

During those four years, Conejo said the hospital initiated a substance-abuse program, with improvements to the rehab services and upgrades to the facility’s labs.

Conejo said the cost of the facility’s renovation, which has been paid, was \$1.5 million.

In addition, another \$500,000 was spent to repair part of the roof of the facility, allowing RMCHCS to become the first rural hospital in New Mexico to receive a helipad.

Other upgrades to the hospital included X-ray equipment and around 400 computers, which cost about \$600,000, Conejo said.

In all, Conejo said the amount spent on improvements to the facility have increased in the past four years: \$1.2 million in 2014; \$1.1 million in 2015; \$1.94 million in 2016; \$2.7 million in 2017; with the total cost for improvements to RMCHCS from 2014 to 2018 tallying up to about \$7.5

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million.

Conejo said on a given day in 2014, RMCHCS had around two days of cash on hand — that amount increased to nearly 42 days of cash on hand in 2018.

The total operating costs of the facility during seven days is about \$400,000, he said.

At one point in 2014, the amount of short-term debt the facility carried was about \$7 million. In 2018, that number decreased to \$2.2 million.

Likewise, additional debts for RMCHCS have decreased from \$19 million in 2014 to about \$4.7 million in 2018, Conejo said.

The upward trend in revenue means the facility will begin to increase employee salaries in January 2019, and stabilize the average wage of employees to around \$25 an hour in 2019.

Canejo said in the past four years, RMCHCS has gone from employing around 400 full-time employees to over 500.

Commissioner Bill Lee expressed his appreciation for the work done by Conejo and others — he said the financial state of RMCHCS is a drastic improvement from years past.

Chairperson Genevieve Jackson also expressed her appreciation for the RMCHCS staff, recalling how the hospital almost went bankrupt at one point, but has since overcome challenges to provide its services to the community.

“[The hospital] is here for the people,” she said during the meeting.

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