Mammoth Hospital News & Announcements

By Gary Myers | CEO
Mammoth Hospital

Insured patients accessing primary and specialty care. Outpatient surgery also saw substantial growth at our hospital this past year. Under the Affordable Care Act, California is a Medicaid expansion state so we’ve seen significant growth in the Medi-Cal population as well as patients covered through the insurance exchanges. This has created increased demand for services.

Financial Results: The growth in volume of patient visits resulted in a 10% operating margin. This enabled us to pay off all remaining long term debt owed by the District and contributed to our improved Standard & Poor’s credit rating from BBB+ to A-. Accounts receivable dropped to its lowest point in many years while cash reserves climbed to a healthy 264 days of cash-on-hand. With many new capital needs, strong cash reserves are essential to acquire new technology, expand and develop new facilities, and attract new talent.

Patient Satisfaction: We continually measure our patient satisfaction with our care and service. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services obtains their own survey data and ranks it against more than 3,500 other hospitals across the nation. The latest report ranked us in the top 10% nationwide and we received a 5-star rating on the CMS Hospital Compare website. We strongly believe in our motto, Patients First! We hope to improve your satisfaction with our care even more this next year. We value the loyalty of our patients and understand the importance of providing excellent service and quality care to continue to earn that loyalty.

Employee Satisfaction: Each year, we also engage a company to conduct a survey of how satisfied our employees are with Mammoth Hospital as a workplace. It is an important metric because it is well-documented that highly engaged teams deliver safer, higher quality care. The company that we use for this survey has a database of over 500 hospitals and 240,000 healthcare employees nationwide. This year we increased our overall employee satisfaction to the 93rd percentile of all facilities surveyed. Our team supports our vision of being known for our Meticulous Care, Memorable People and our Majestic Location. We place the highest value on individual and team excellence in the workplace because that translates into better care for our patients.

No Drought in Healthcare | Improving Health on Many Fronts

The lack of snow for the fourth straight year has taken its toll on our beautiful state including our beloved Eastern Sierra region. The effects of the drought can be found everywhere you look and “brown is the new green” is now part of the vocabulary. But as we recently closed the books June 30th on Fiscal Year 2015 at Mammoth Hospital, it seems the drought had little effect on healthcare service demand. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Medical Staff, and all hospital staff, I’m happy to report that your hospital had a great year and improved its health on many fronts as a result of your support!

Patient Volume: Inpatient admissions remained steady while overall patient days declined slightly due to shorter lengths of stay. This is consistent with the rest of the nation. However, volume in our clinics increased sharply (over 20%) as a result of increased numbers of insured patients accessing primary and specialty care. Outpatient surgery also saw substantial growth at our hospital this past year. Under the Affordable Care Act, California is a Medicaid expansion state so we’ve seen significant growth in the Medi-Cal population as well as patients covered through the insurance exchanges. This has created increased demand for services.

Financial Results: The growth in volume of patient visits resulted in a 10% operating margin. This enabled us to pay off all remaining long term debt owed by the District and contributed to our improved Standard & Poor’s credit rating from BBB+ to A-. Accounts receivable dropped to its lowest point in many years while cash reserves climbed to a healthy 264 days of cash-on-hand. With many new capital needs, strong cash reserves are essential to acquire new technology, expand and develop new facilities, and attract new talent.

Patient Satisfaction: We continually measure our patient satisfaction with our care and service. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services obtains their own survey data and ranks it against more than 3,500 other hospitals across the nation. The latest report ranked us in the top 10% nationwide and we received a 5-star rating on the CMS Hospital Compare website. We strongly believe in our motto, Patients First! We hope to improve your satisfaction with our care and service even more this next year. We value the loyalty of our patients and understand the importance of providing excellent service and quality care to continue to earn that loyalty.

Employee Satisfaction: Each year, we also engage a company to conduct a survey of how satisfied our employees are with Mammoth Hospital as a workplace. It is an important metric because it is well-documented that highly engaged teams deliver safer, higher quality care. The company that we use for this survey has a database of over 500 hospitals and 240,000 healthcare employees nationwide. This year we increased our overall employee satisfaction to the 93rd percentile of all facilities surveyed. Our team supports our vision of being known for our Meticulous Care, Memorable People and our Majestic Location. We place the highest value on individual and team excellence in the workplace because that translates into better care for our patients.
One of the great benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the required coverage for most preventative services. Historically health insurance has concentrated on treating individuals for conditions and diseases that they already have rather than emphasizing care to keep people healthy to start. More than four years after this policy began; many people are still unaware of these preventative health benefits and how to take advantage of them. A poll taken in March 2014 indicated that only 43 percent of the population was aware of the change, thus many are avoiding care out of cost concerns.

If you have health insurance you can receive preventative services/tests without paying copays, coinsurance or deductibles. With health insurance you pay nothing for these services. The exception is for health insurance plans that were grandfathered and existed before March 2010 (but very few).

Preventative services are focused on annual screenings and counseling. This differs from an annual physical (in many cases) and a visit to discuss an existing condition or ailment. The services usually include screening for:

- Depression
- Diabetes
- Cholesterol
- Obesity
- Various Cancers
- HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Counseling for Drug and Tobacco Use
- Counseling for Healthy Eating

In addition the services include routine immunizations such as:

- Influenza
- Meningitis
- Tetanus
- HPV
- Hepatitis A and B
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella

Preventative services for women include:

- Well-Woman Visits
- All FDA-Approved Contraceptives
- Mammograms
- Prenatal Care

Other preventative services covered at no cost to you:

- Preventative Colonoscopies (Every 10 Years for Ages 50 and Older)

Unfortunately the rules for billing such services to your insurance company are very strict and care must be taken to avoid other services or tests during these preventative visits or you may be charged. To take advantage of these preventative services covered by your insurance, be sure to clarify when making the appointment that you want the preventative services as allowed by your insurance.

These services do not include:

- Medication Refills or Changes
- Treatment Plans for Existing Conditions or Ailments
- Additional Tests During the Preventative Screening Visit

The regular (annual) preventative screenings can be a very important aspect of your wellbeing. Early detection of disease is vital to implement effective treatment plans. If an issue is identified during a wellness/preventative visit the provider should schedule a separate visit to address that issue.
OB-GYNs and Pediatricians Take Team Approach to Care

To ensure the very best healthcare services for the women and children of our community, the Women’s Health and Pediatric services have teamed up and are working more closely together than ever. This past year saw 17% combined growth in visits to the Mammoth Hospital Pediatric and Women’s Health Clinics. This increased volume has made communication between the two groups more important than ever.

“It made sense to us in our small hospital to take a multi-disciplinary approach to pregnancy, delivery, and the post-partum period,” said Dr. Woody White, OB-GYN. “As a small rural hospital, we have a higher responsibility to screen out high risk moms and connect them to comprehensive services such as can be found at our affiliate tertiary hospital, Loma Linda University Medical Center,” said former Chief of Staff Dr. Audrey Pauly who limits her practice to gynecology. “But for all others our team can provide a very warm, secure, and intimate family birthing experience.”

Dr. Maxine Karimoto, OB-GYN, a recent newcomer from Queen’s Hospital in Honolulu said, “I’ve been so pleased by the level of care from all the staff and the wonderful facilities and technology we have here to care for the women of our community. I’ve been trained in a wide array of minimally invasive procedures and we have all the latest equipment to support that here.” And I’ve been very impressed by the low primary C-section rate which is usually much higher at a small rural hospital.”

“Our philosophy centers around the patient and family and what we as a team can do to promote their well-being and improve their health”, states veteran pediatrician Dr. Amy Conrad. She and colleagues Drs. Kris Wilson and Kristin Collins bring their expertise in neonatal care to the birthing team and then provide a seamless transition to providing care for the developing infant as well as counseling and education to parents.

In the words of Physician Clinics Administrator and Chief Financial Officer, Melanie Van Winkle, “This is an incredibly energetic and talented trio of pediatricians that are simply fun to be around because they obviously love children and love what they do.” The pediatrics clinic sees a wide array of kids from all socioeconomic backgrounds and regardless of insurance coverage. According to Van Winkle, “The busy clinic is a daily scene of controlled chaos with parents and children of all ages presenting for reasons ranging from well-baby checks to management of significant chronic diseases in kids up to 15 years of age. All of our clinics at Mammoth Hospital accept Medi-Cal and all insurances, and many of the staff are bilingual Spanish speaking. We also employ professional medical interpreters to assist the physicians with more complex dialogue with our Spanish speaking patients and families.”

Says Dr. Kris Wilson, “We love all our kiddos and it’s always great fun to run into them with their moms and dads around town and see their big smiles. It’s one of the great joys of practicing in a small community. I can’t think of a better place to practice pediatric medicine!”

Pediatricians Kristin Collins and Amy Conrad collaborate with OB-GYN, Maxine Karimoto in the Labor and Delivery Department.

“CEO Update” continued from cover

Teambuilding: This year also saw some great new additions to our team. You will meet many of them in this issue of Heartbeats. We also welcomed Lynda Salcido, RN, Mono County Public Health Director, back onto our governing board along with local attorney Ryan Wood. Together with veteran board members Maria King, DO, Steve Swisher, MD, and long-time Board Chair Helen Shepherd, we have a great governance team to guide our hospital through the rapidly changing healthcare delivery environment. We’ve also strengthened our bond with Loma Linda University Medical Center to improve our community’s access to specialty care. As the only Level 1 Trauma Center and Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Center in the four county region of Mono, Inyo, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties, our affiliation with Loma Linda provides us with access to a wide array of specialists and the highest level of care available for residents and visitors.

It’s been a great year! But we’re not satisfied. We want to continue the progress we’ve made and we appreciate the enduring and generous support of the community in our efforts to provide you with excellent, compassionate healthcare services. (A 500-inch winter this year would be awfully nice too!)
Dental Clinic Celebrating 15 Years of Children’s Oral Health

Back in 1998, school readiness for low income children in Mono County was a real problem due to poor oral health. A task force of local dentists, Mono County Public Health officials, and Mammoth Hospital worked together to establish access to dental care for this struggling group of children. A lot of teamwork and a few grants later, the Mammoth Hospital Family Dental Clinic opened to the public in 2000.

Now in its 15th year of service, the clinic is bustling at the seams. “It is very hard for private dentists to serve this population as the Medi-Cal program reimburses private dentists below their cost. But because Mammoth Hospital is a federally designated Rural Health Clinic, we are able to take care of these kids for their dental needs and make everything work out financially,” explains Valerie Case, Dental Hygienist, who helped open the clinic many years ago and has been a mainstay ever since. According to Valerie, “We’ve seen tremendous improvements in the oral health of kids in our community as a result of providing basic education to parents and prophylactic care to the kids. What many people don’t realize is the effect on the overall health of a child who is harboring a chronic dental infection. It can be very impactful on their diet, sleep, attention span, and health in general.”

“With California being a Medicaid expansion state under the Affordable Care Act, we’re seeing a lot of new kids covered for dental services that we haven’t seen before,” said Jason Bishop, DDS, pediatric dentist. We had over 3,900 visits to our dental clinic this year and most of those were children who would have no other access to care if it were not for the hospital clinic. When we can get kids in at a young age and provide good, regular prophylactic care, we’re able to really help every other aspect of that child’s growth and development.”

“We’re growing out of our space now,” said Steve Fujimoto, DDS, another of the specially trained pediatric dentists at the clinic. “Medicaid is now paying for adult dentistry as well and with our colleague, Dr. Robert Jungman, providing care to adults and so many more people eligible for care, we’ve grown out of our small clinic. I know the hospital wants to continue to expand this critical service to the community so we are hoping to start the planning process for a new clinic facility later this fall. It’s a really positive program for everyone!”

Mammoth Hospital Cares

With our mission to provide excellent, compassionate health care services for our residents and visitors, it’s a great honor to hear that we are making a difference in the lives of our patients. With that pride we have shared several stories and video testimonials on our website from the patients and families we serve.

Our latest patient story features Brian Jones, a longtime Mammoth local who received his chemotherapy treatment at Mammoth Hospital. To watch his inspiring story of overcoming cancer, go to our website at www.mammothhospital.com.
Providing Local Diabetes Education

Mammoth Hospital is pleased to offer diabetes education to Eastern Sierra residents and guests with the arrival of Registered Dietitian, Casey Piercey.

At Mammoth Hospital, each and every one of our patients has the ability to utilize dietary consultation services to establish a meal plan to meet their individual nutrition needs. Registered Dietitian, Casey Piercey in addition to her role working with patients at Mammoth Hospital will also be providing outreach to the community, collaborating with Mono County Public Health, as well as the Mammoth Unified School District to provide free healthy nutrition consultation and diabetes education. She will also offer diabetes education for the local Hispanic community at quarterly town hall meetings facilitated by the Mammoth Lakes Police Department.

Casey comes to Mammoth Hospital most recently from Michigan State University where she was a Graduate Assistant Sports Dietitian and Exercise Physiologist. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Food Systems Management & Dietetics and Master’s Degree in Kinesiology with a concentration in Exercise Physiology from Michigan State University. Casey has been providing nutrition consultation including diabetes management and education services since 2009.

It is estimated that more than 18 million people in the United States have diabetes which is the sixth-leading cause of death in the country. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower limb amputations, and new cases of blindness among adults, as well as a major cause of heart disease and stroke. While these statistics may sound alarming, it’s important to know that most cases are preventable with the creation of a realistic eating plan as well as regular exercise.

Casey is happy to provide diabetes and nutrition consultation by appointment. If you have a need for consultation or would like a presentation on diabetes prevention or nutrition in a group setting, please call Casey at (760) 924-4214.

A Colonoscopy May Save Your Life

By Dr. Fru Bahiraei, General Surgeon

According to a recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, having a screening Colonoscopy may lead to a lower lifetime incidence of colorectal cancer and death by 50% or more. While there are technologic advances being made in colorectal screening, the Colonoscopy remains the gold-standard procedure for colon-cancer detection. It is a relatively safe and usually painless procedure where a thin, flexible high resolution fiber optic scope with a video camera at its tip is inserted into the rectum and advanced. Air is used to inflate the colon to provide a better view. The doctor is able to capture high resolution images of the colon, and provide these pictures to the patient.

During the procedure, a doctor can remove or biopsy most polyps or growths with high tech tools passed through the scope. In most patients polyps are benign but some can turn into cancer given enough time. With early polyp detection and removal, a colonoscopy can help patients avoid a major operation. The procedure usually takes about 30 minutes depending on findings.

After the exam, patients may feel some cramping or gas, but this usually resolves rapidly. By the next day, patients should feel normal. It is recommended that the patient have a ride home.

Most guidelines suggest that everyone should have a screening colonoscopy by age 50. If the exam is normal, the interval becomes every ten years as long as they have no new symptoms. Patients with a family history of colon cancer or personal history of polyps should see their physician to discuss the recommended intervals for surveillance.

Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies are mandated to provide screening colonoscopies at no cost to the patient. For more information, please call our General Surgery Clinic at (760) 924-4024.
Mammoth Hospital’s Newest DAISY Nurse

Mammoth Hospital nurses were honored at a luncheon held May 11th at Mammoth Hospital as part of the DAISY Foundation Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

Out of 16 nurses nominated in various specialties throughout Mammoth Hospital, the overall winner was Lisa Marusicz, RN, a nurse in the Chemotherapy Services department. Lisa has been a nurse at Mammoth Hospital for the last 11 years. “It’s really an honor to be recognized by this award,” says Lisa. “I really believe it’s the little things that make a difference in the lives of patients and families. I just know I would hope to receive the same type of care if I were in their shoes.”

DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System. The not-for-profit DAISY Foundation was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes. Patrick died at the age of 33 in 1999 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and their families.

Lisa received four nominations for the award, one of which really stood out to award voters. “My brother was a patient at Mammoth Hospital since 2012. Our family was unable to find him,” her nomination read. “I had not seen him in 37 years and had not spoken to him in at least 10 years. My brother passed away 1/2/15 in Renown Medical Center. A nephew had been notified of his passing who notified me in N.C. After numerous phone calls I was given Lisa’s number. Lisa was compassionate and caring to my brother and me. It was with this nurse’s help that I was able to close some of my brother’s affairs. Lisa let me know my long lost brother again. She gave me a piece of my brother that without her help I would have never known. Lisa also made it possible to obtain some of my brother’s belongings that are priceless to me. It was obvious to me the compassionate and professional care Lisa gave my brother. She is an asset to your facility. Lisa was my brother’s angel here and I believe that he is her angel now.”

At a presentation given in front of the nurse’s colleagues, physicians, patients, and visitors, Lisa received a certificate commending her for being an extraordinary nurse. The certificate reads: “In deep appreciation of all you do, who you are, and the incredibly meaningful difference you make in the lives of so many people.” Lisa was also awarded a sculpture called A Healer’s Touch, hand-carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Africa.

“We are proud to be among the hospitals participating in the DAISY Award program,” said Kathleen Alo, Chief Nursing Officer at Mammoth Hospital. “Nurses are heroes every day. It’s important that our nurses know their work is highly valued, and The DAISY Foundation provides a way for us to do that.”
Pleased to Welcome Doctors Kristin Collins and Maxine Karimoto to the Team!

Dr. Maxine Karimoto, OB-GYN is our newest Women’s Health physician coming to Mammoth Hospital from Hawaii where she was part of a private practice OB-GYN group.

Dr. Karimoto grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii. She received her bachelor’s degree from UCLA with Summa Cum Laude Honors and went on to the University of Hawaii for her Medical Degree. She then completed an Obstetrics and Gynecology residency program at the University of Hawaii and became one of the teaching staff throughout her tenure in private practice. While at the University of Hawaii, she received the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons Resident Achievement Award.

Dr. Karimoto specializes in obstetrics and gynecology, comprehensive birth control services, minimally invasive surgery, ultrasound, menstrual disorders, family planning, adolescent medicine, and safe, natural childbirth.

Her hobbies include cooking, running, yoga, Pilates, snorkeling, fishing, travel, fashion, spending time with family, adventuring with her dog, Rigley, and SCUBA diving. Dr. Karimoto also knows rudimentary spoken/written Japanese. She is excited to be a part of the Mammoth community and looks forward to exploring more of the Eastern Sierra and all it has to offer. She is joined by her husband, Robert Hendrickson, RN, a nurse in Mammoth Hospital’s Operating Room.

Dr. Kristin Collins, DO, FAAP, our newest physician in our Pediatric Clinic comes to Mammoth Hospital most recently from Northern Inyo Hospital in Bishop, where she worked as a pediatrician for the last three years.

Dr. Collins grew up in Wheaton, Illinois. She received her bachelor’s degree at the University of California Santa Barbara where she graduated with high honors, then completed her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree at Touro University. Dr. Collins’s residency was done at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford University Medical Center where she was on the honor roll for teaching in 2012. She is Board Certified by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Collins’s specialties include general pediatrics, well visits for newborns to age 18, sick visits, chronic disease management, developmental screening, neonatal resuscitation, and inpatient pediatrics.

Dr. Collins enjoys rock/alpine climbing, road biking, skiing, and running. She has backpacked throughout more than 45 countries on six continents, and has climbed all over the United States and various countries. She has also practiced medicine in various countries including Guatemala, Bolivia, Malawi, and Swaziland. She studied French for 10 years and is fluent in medical Spanish, studying avidly during medical school at various language schools in Central America, South America, and Spain. She and her husband, who is a nurse, are both happy to call the Eastern Sierra home.
Meticulous Care • Memorable People • Majestic Location

We’re social. Come visit.

Physician Clinics & 24-Hour Emergency Services

www.mammothhospital.com | 760.934.3311