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Turner discusses MCHD du

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Rural hospitals, including Moore County Hospital District, were the focus of guest speaker Jeff Turner during Friday morning's Dumas/Moore County Chamber of Commerce Networking Breakfast.

Turner, who serves as CEO of Moore County Hospital District (MCHD), spoke about the challenges facing rural medicine in the modern era.

"An event happened in 1965 that changed America forever," Turner said. He was referring to the birth of Medicare and Medicaid.

According to Turner, when those programs were born, America's dominant payor for healthcare services became the government. In addition, this brought on numerous requirements, standards and regulations. Simply put, it was an explosion of bureaucracy.

Turner pointed out that the

United States spends tremendously more than any other country for healthcare per capita.

He also spoke about how big a business healthcare is in the state of Texas.

According to statistics presented, there were over 2.6 million admissions, over 13.5 million patients, around 400,000 births and nearly 800,000 surgeries (inpatient). These add up to \$42 billion dollars in net patient revenue.

However, this revenue is offset by nearly \$43 billion in expenses. The gap is made up through other sources, including property taxes.

It was pointed out that there are 580 licensed hospitals in Texas and of those, 183 are rural. Those 183 hospitals cover 85 percent of the geographic area and service 15 percent of the people. The remainder is served by larger metro hospitals.

Turner spoke about the impact Obamacare will have on MCHD and other hospitals.

He also spoke about the 1115 Waiver. This is a requirement by the Health and Human Services department and provides significant funding to hospitals (covering the gap between Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements).

Under the waiver, hospitals are reimbursed based on performance. With the receipt of funds at risk, Turner said MCHD has no option but to participate in the waiver program. Worst case scenario, there could be a potential loss of \$600,000 if no funding was received.

Turner also spoke about the future impact of Obamacare and implications of the Budget Control Act of 2011.

For instance, Medicare reimbursements will be cut by 2 percent to providers in 2013. There was also a section that allows for a 40 percent retrospective cut to reimbursement for non-urgent care rendered to medical patients in an emergency room.

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Facing such reimbursement cuts is what forced MCHD and other hospital districts across the state to re-evaluate their emergency room procedures, including determining what is and what is not an emergency situation.

Turner provided a breakdown of the hospital district's figures for the previous year. There were 1,024 admissions, 9,522 visits to the ER, 1,010 surgeries, 2,018 ambulance calls, 20,322 outpatient registrations and 17,253 nursing home resident days.

Of the hospital's funding, 27.8 percent comes from Medicare and an additional 14.2 percent comes from Medicaid.

Turner also broke down how every healthcare dollar works.

He said for every \$1 charge, the net becomes 64 cents and expenses are 59 cents. There is another 3 cents for other factors, leav-

See Health on 2A

Health from page 1A

ing a net of 2.5 cents per dollar.

MCHD collected \$2,960,561 in taxes in 2011. The district had \$5,479,847 in uncompensated care.

"For every \$1 in taxes, we had \$1.85 in unreimbursed care," Turner pointed out.

He also said that the annual taxes collected provide for 38 days of operations. "The other 327 days we are a business," he added.

While there are struggles facing rural hospitals, MCHD is doing well, especially when it comes to tax rates. The district ranks 102 out of 129 hospital districts with a tax rate of about 10

cents per \$100 evaluation (in 2010). In contrast, Hereford comes in at 42 cents, Spearman at 28 cents and Borger at 22 cents.

Turner did note that MCHD's tax rate was around .11 per \$100 in 2011.

Turner also spoke about the successes at the hospital in respect to recognition received. MCHD is in the 89th National Percentile in patient's perceptions of care and in the 98th National Percentile in home health care. Also, MCHD received in March the Texas Medical Foundation's Health Quality Silver Quality Award.

Prior to Turner's presentation, there were two awards presented.

Leonor Castro was presented the Good Neighbor Award for her efforts in searching out people to help, watching people's homes while they are away and helping the elderly. Also, A&I Parts was recognized with the Customer Service Award.

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