

Hospital Readout

A Six-Month Report:

by Michael Mazzarella

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After six months as CEO of *Ellenville Regional Hospital*, I have been impressed with the degree of interest by the community, the Board, the medical staff, and employees to insure the survival of the institution. I'm inclined to tell you that this is a "new beginning." I'm aware you've heard that phrase before and have been disappointed at what followed. I therefore suggest that what we are experiencing now is a "renewal," building upon the positives that have occurred. The positive foundation and potential of the institution is quite real.

In June, the *Family Practice Center of Ellenville* re-established its relationship with the Hospital and began admitting patients to the facility. In addition, Pediatrics has been added to their services.

Nevertheless, the community is generally "underserved" medically, and additional physicians are necessary to address the health needs of the community and increase the use of the Hospital. Efforts are underway to recruit physicians in sub-specialty areas to increase surgical services. Among the physicians joining our staff: Orthopedist, Urologist, Podiatrist, and Ophthalmologist.

Planning strategies are underway. The new Emergency Room wing, talked about for a number of years, is moving forward. This new structure will greatly enhance the Hospital's ability to respond to the community's emergency needs. In addition to typical treatment rooms, there will be areas for isolation, radiological exams, decontamination, casting and a new patient sensitive admitting department.

Architectural drawings and specifications have been completed. As the initial bids exceeded budget and cost estimates, a variety of construction firms are taking a closer look at construction details. We are confident we can align the cost of this needed facility with available resources.

On October 7, the Hospital began a relationship with *Adirondack Emergency Medicine PC*, a new emergency room physician group. Under the direction of Norman Chapin, MD, we expect to elevate the quality of emergency room services provided. Dr. Chapin has begun communicating with rescue squads, fire departments, and other community entities to explain the nature of this new service and its expanded capabilities.

The Hospital has strong physical medicine and physical therapy services. We intend to use portions of the space previously used by the Biochemical Dependency Unit to expand our physical medicine program and achieve new levels of effectiveness in rehabilitation. A physiatrist, Dr. Marc Rosenblatt, has

joined the staff and is now supervising the activity of the department. We are pleased to note that in the last four months, we have increased outpatient volume by forty percent; we've added new equipment to address this.

There are a number of staff changes occurring in the institution. New leadership has been added in the Nursing Service department. We have been fortunate to be able to recruit Ms. Kathleen Guido as Director of Nursing Services. She is a recent master's level graduate from Marist College, with extensive experience in nursing administration.

Ms. Kathryn Hornbeck has been appointed Assistant Administrator on a part-time basis to the institution. Kathryn continues to have a relationship with the Mid-Hudson Family Health Institute; she has been part of that agency for over 20 years.

Fiscal services, under the leadership of Mr. Mark Hammond, Chief Fiscal Officer, implemented a new computer system on June 3rd. This will improve our previously deficient registration and billing performance. We expect revenue will be increased in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. It will also provide additional management information, to strengthen our decision-making process.

Mr. Joseph Stoeckeler, who has been associated with the hospital for a number of years, has been appointed Director of Planning and Plant services. New initiatives are underway in nutrition, food service, and radiology.

This talented management team will move the institution forward. Together we will create a vital productive entity responsive to community needs.

However, we can't ignore that the Hospital has been particularly impacted fiscally.

On August 5, the inpatient detox unit, known as the Biochemical Dependency Unit, was eliminated. After considerable discussion and evaluation, we concluded that the nature of services provided in this department was not at the level required to effectively address the demands of these special patients and the regulatory bodies. However, we continue to provide outpatient services for those in need of rehabilitation.

We must increase inpatient and outpatient services volume to acquire the necessary revenue to continue the Hospital's development.

Our ability to succeed is only possible with the support and efforts of *Westchester Medical Center*. We are extremely fortunate to be part of that system. I can state unequivocally that without *Westchester Medical Center's* presence there would be no hope for success.

Of course we are extremely indebted to you, the community, for your years of support and commitment, in time and money. Your continued participation is necessary to sustain us. We cannot adequately express our gratitude for your personal investment these many years, but we thank you, and will continue to work to earn your faith in us. 