New management for Adult Day Health

Local nonprofit Circles of Caring to assume program from Gritman at beginning of year

By Brandon Macz, Daily News staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, December 19, 2012 12:00 am

Editor's Note: Additional information has been added to this story since it was originally printed.

A recently formed local nonprofit corporation plans to replace Gritman Medical Center as operator of Moscow's adult day health center when the hospital ends its service at the end of the month.

A grassroots group spearheaded in part by Kris Prieur decided to take up the charge when Gritman announced in late September it would end the program after 11 years of subsidizing it to the tune of $3.8 million.

Adult Day Health provides social and therapeutic services for those with chronic illnesses and developmental disabilities while allowing caregivers time off to work, do chores and rest, with the overall goal of letting people age in their homes.

The Circles of Caring Adult Day Health Foundation was established as an Idaho nonprofit in November, and a tax exempt request form will be submitted to the IRS on Friday. Prieur said the group has raised $83,500 in a short time frame. Donors will be able to release their funds to the organization once the tax form is mailed, so they can write it off for their 2012 taxes, board member Cynthia Hosick said.

With Gritman ending ADH on Dec. 31, Circles of Caring plans to reopen Jan. 2 in the same location on East Palouse River Drive with the hospital's support.

Gritman spokeswoman Kelly O'Neill said the hospital will continue to pay rent on the property through March 31 for a cost savings to the organization of $10,000 and is donating more than $50,000 in furniture and equipment already in the facility.

"We're just very pleased that Circles of Caring is actively working to build relationships and identify partners," O'Neill said. "They have a lot of passionate people working with them, so we wish them all the success that they can maintain Adult Day Health services in our community."

Pullman Regional Hospital has committed $15,000 to Circles of Caring to be paid by the end of the year, and has a group working with the organization to track its progress, said Megan Guido, PRH director of strategic initiatives and marketing.

"And then, going forward, we plan to make an annual contribution of $15,000 to assist with the operating expense of Adult Day Health," Guido said. "It's an important local service, and we're committed to supporting the transition to this Circles of Caring group."

Hosick credits Bob Grunewald for his work getting PRH involved by contacting CEO Scott Adams, which is credit the 90-year-old Pullman resident only partially accepts.
"I had known him from our work with the regional hospital," he said. "People have given me more credit for making this link than I think I deserve."

Grunewald's wife attends ADH, and he said he had worried about the short timeline Gritman left for another organization to take over the program.

"One of the things that Adult Day Health does, it both benefits Marjorie in giving her new activities, stimulation, recreation and so on, but it also gives me a break," he said. "At 90, I do the best I can, but Adult Day Health really does help a lot."

Prieur said Gritman provided financial reports along with ADH policy and protocol documents that will help in the process.

An annual fundraising goal of about $200,000 has been set, and she said Circles of Caring hopes to raise $45,000 by the end of the month.

"Part of the biggest problem was figuring out what our budget was, because (Gritman) didn't raise the rates until September," Prieur said, adding the rate will stay the same at $25 per hour. "That's the actual cost of the care."

O'Neill said a majority of the 25 daily ADH participants have already signed a release of information form to transfer from Gritman's program.

"We've been working behind the scenes to prepare the patient records for transferring and making sure that records are in order for Circles of Caring," she said.

Prieur said ADH director Barb Mahoney has offered to work with the program part time and a part-time medical director candidate has offered their services. As an adult day health center, she said the organization is required to have a full-time social worker, and Moscow Mountain Sports and Physical Therapy is offering to do physical therapy.

"The generosity has just been awesome and very humbling and very gratifying," Prieur said.

Circles of Caring President Nancy Tribble said as ADH progresses, she plans to address the Idaho Legislature about increasing Medicaid reimbursements.

"It just needs to be brought up to standards, especially with health care reform moving in," she said, adding ADH saves Medicaid costs that would otherwise be increased when patients are forced into assisted living facilities. "It complements a lot of other programs."

Circles of Caring board added on Tuesday retiring Moscow lawmaker Tom Trail to its board.

To get involved or donate to the cause, go to circlesofcaring.org.

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