

The following questions were submitted by a member of the public during the August 2024 Board of Directors meeting. For additional information, please feel free to contact us at community@moco hd.org.

1. When can we expect a new doctor/doctors to be available in the clinic? It is our understanding the remaining P.A. needs a supervising M.D.

MCHD is currently recruiting for one full-time physician at Pioneer Memorial Clinic. Family Physicians are notoriously difficult to recruit, so MCHD has retained Merritt Hawkins and Pacific Companies to assist with the search.

In the State of Oregon, Physician Assistants/Associates no longer work under the direct supervision of a Physician; they now work under a collaboration agreement with an entity or physician. All of the Physician Associates employed by MCHD have an up to date collaboration agreement in place.

Dr. Christine Seals, board certified family physician, is the current Medical Director for all MCHD clinics. She has been employed with the District since 2021 as the Hospice Medical Director and has periodically provided services to the clinics. She will be providing telehealth appointments and limited in person appointments at each clinic. Dr. Seals brings a wealth of clinical and leadership experience and we are excited to have more of her time devoted to our clinics.

2. How much are you paying the fill-in doctors, nurses and techs above the salaries of the resident providers? How many houses are owned or maintained for the visiting, temporary providers?

MCHD has a pool of employed providers that work at the hospital in the Emergency Department and Inpatient/Swing. With the exception of one new provider, the hospital is not staffed by travelers. MCHD currently employs one traveling physician, Dr. Bertman, who may become permanent depending on his level of interest and other commitments. Dr. Bertman was brought on to cover shifts typically worked by a permanent provider who is currently deployed overseas with the United States Army.

Contract rates for traveling staff are typically higher than the hourly rates for full-time employees, however, traveling staff do not receive benefits. These rates vary by contract, by specialty, and by company. When compared to the overtime rates for full-time and occasional part-time staff (time and a half or double time depending on the circumstances), it is generally cost-equivalent. MCHD has contracted with traveling staff for many years and this practice is common at all hospitals, particularly for nurses. MCHD's use of travelers has increased recently in alignment with data presented to the hospital's nurse staffing committee, which showed that rates of absenteeism



seemed to be increasing in proportion to overtime hours worked. Additionally, the rates of absenteeism were well in excess of the national averages. The hospital's nurse staffing committee is made up of an equal number of frontline staff and management staff and routinely discusses staffing plans for Pioneer Memorial Hospital, including the need for traveling nurses.

MCHD owns one house, which was donated to the District and has traditionally been used to house the District's Administrator. This home is not in use by the current Administrator and instead can be used as temporary housing. Additionally, the District owns a duplex and rents three additional units. The District provides housing for the on-call ER provider, occasional part-time employees traveling in for work, EMS staff as needed for local coverage, and travelers (nurses, techs, etc.). In the healthcare industry, it is common practice to maintain properties for traveling and occasional part-time staff. This practice is not new to MCHD and the District has owned the house and duplexes for over 20 years with continual use.

3. How many days has the clinic been seeing patients this month? The census of patients seen in the hospital, clinic, etc. used to be published.

In the month of July 2024, Pioneer Memorial Clinic was open to see patients on 21 days. In the month of August 2024, Pioneer Memorial Clinic was open to see patients on 18 days. This is a standard number of open days as compared to previous months.

The District recently changed electronic medical records and statistics will be presented in a new format in the Board packets.

4. What is the status of the BEO loan you applied for?

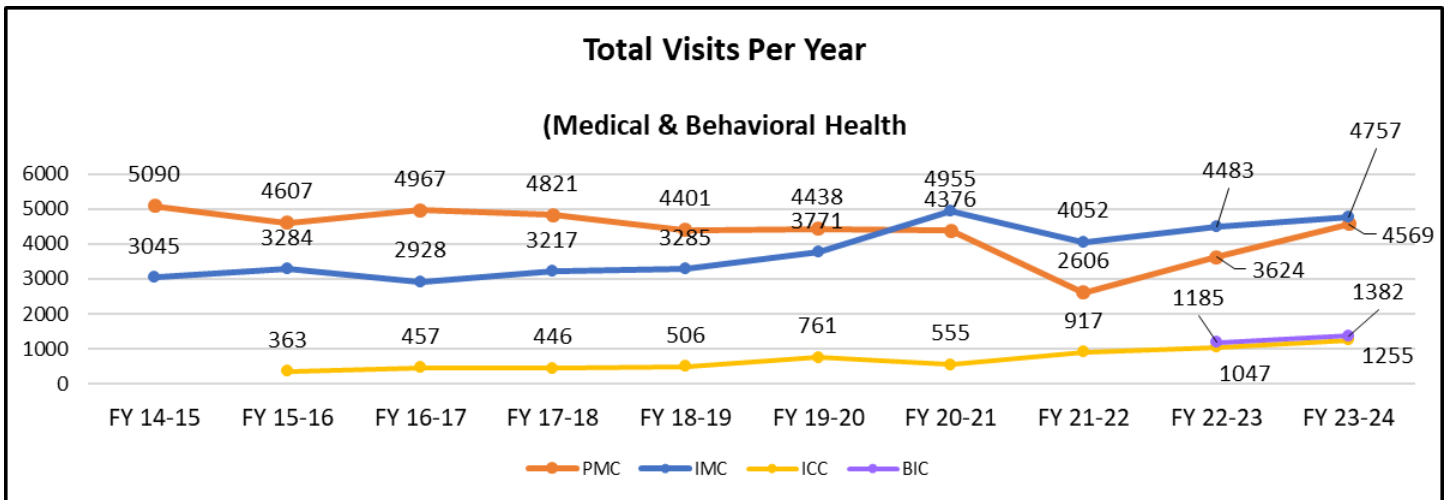
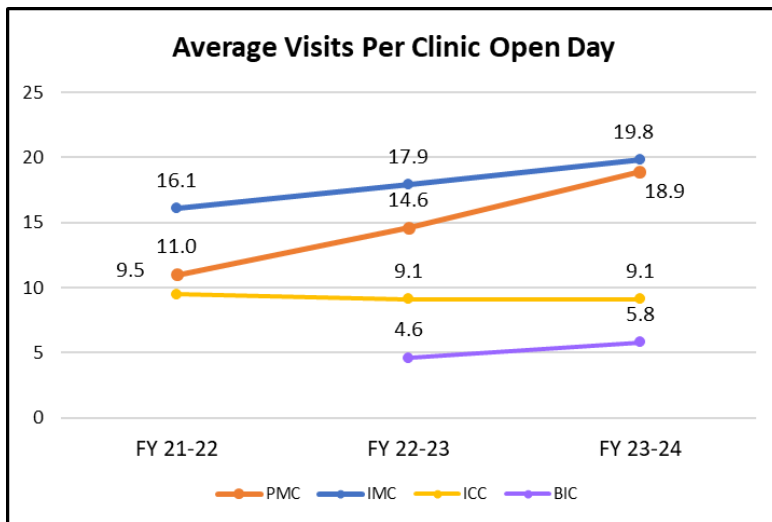
MCHD currently has a \$1,000,000 long-term equipment loan through Bank of Eastern Oregon for a 10-year period. This loan was used to cover equipment and technology investments necessary for operations, such as the District's new electronic health record. This loan is reported on monthly in each Board meeting and information is available on the District's website on a monthly basis in the Board packets.

5. The health needs of the community are seemingly not being met as many people are now having to travel out of town for their health care. Have you considered contacting St. Anthony's or Good Shepherd for administrating help?



MCHD pays close attention to clinic access. Data collected for recent Rural Health Clinic evaluations show that both Pioneer Memorial Clinic and Irrigon Medical Clinic have been steadily increasing the number of patients seen per clinic day and rates of patients served per year have recovered to pre-COVID levels (see attached graphs).

MCHD works with the Hospital Association of Oregon and the Oregon Office of Rural Health as needed for support. There are not currently any plans in place to contract with Good Shepherd or St. Anthony's for support.



- Employee turnover has been an on-going problem. Reading reviews on the internet regarding the working conditions shows an unhealthy working environment.



Turnover is a hot topic in healthcare nationally right now because turnover rates have skyrocketed over the past few years. We recognize that in a small organization and small community turnover has a significant impact on staff and we empathize. It is also important to understand that MCHD's turnover rates are low compared to the rest of the healthcare industry. For the past 3-month rolling period, the District's turnover rate was 10.3%. This included twelve occasional part-time employees that had not worked for a significant period of time and were no longer available for work. Without those twelve employees, the rate was 3.4%. Our turnover rate calculation includes people that leave for any reason, including retirement, relocation, resignation, termination, and unfortunately death. According to NSI Nursing Solutions, the average turnover rate for hospitals in 2022 was 22.7%. The Board monitors employee turnover on a monthly basis and the District's rate has consistently been low compared to industry benchmarks.

Over the last three years, the District has been participating in a culture change program designed by Custom Learning Systems aimed at improving patient and employee satisfaction. The initiative is overseen by the District's Service Excellence Committee, which includes representation from frontline staff and leadership in all departments. Custom Learning Systems has provided this program to hospitals across the nation, including Good Shepherd and other Oregon hospitals.

MCHD initially engaged CLS in 2020 when Bob Houser was Chief Executive Officer in response to an identified need for culture change. The current CEO, Emily Roberts, was promoted to CEO by the Board of Directors in 2021 and was directed to implement change in the workplace environment to emphasize professionalism, teamwork, and placing patients first. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for directing the change that everyone is accountable to the same rules and conduct.

In December of 2023, MCHD conducted an employee engagement survey through Gallup. Improving employee engagement is a regular topic at the District's leadership meetings. The survey was repeated in June of 2024 and showed improvement across multiple areas of engagement. MCHD plans to repeat the survey every 6 months.

Addressing negative reviews and feedback can be difficult because the District is prohibited from discussing the circumstances under which any specific employee left the District due to employee confidentiality laws.