

BUSINESSMONTHLY

River Park Hospital adapting to Warren County

River Park Hospital is located at 1559 Sparta Street in McMinnville. It is one of 13 non-urban hospitals owned by Capella Health Care headquartered in Coolsprings (near Nashville).

River Park is the fourth largest employer in Warren County with 375 employees and an annual payroll of \$16 million. River Park must adapt to changing needs of the aging adult population of the U.S. and keep up with mandated health care reform from our federal government. As this column will report, River Park Hospital is meeting these challenges head-on with a well-thought-out strategy.

CEO John McLain has been with Capella and River Park almost three years. John holds a bachelor's degree from Emory University in Atlanta in biology and religion and a master's degree in health administration and MBA from Georgia State University also of Atlanta.

John married his high school sweetheart from Chattanooga where they were born and raised. He was previously employed by Life Point where he was CEO of a hospital in Wytheville, Va.

John was attracted to Capella due to its committed growth plans and management style of letting local markets drive future planning with each hospital. Capella had four hospitals three years ago when John joined them to move to Tennessee. Capella has since acquired non-urban hospitals in Sparta, one in Muskogee, Okla., two in Arkansas, one in Missouri and Oregon, and three in Alabama. John reports to a division president at Capella Corporate who oversees 10 of the 13 hospitals.



River Park is licensed to operate with 125 beds. It averages slightly over 50 patients assigned to these beds. There are eight ICU beds and six OB beds (babies), and 15 inpatient rehab beds.

Most hospitals accept margin loss on Medicare reimbursement. The current federal government health care reform bills in Congress would likely reduce reimbursement further. The government is seeking more "value."

At the state level, the newly announced cuts for TennCare reimbursement would cause River Park to experience a drop of \$833,000 in annual net revenue. John reports River Park will probably have to deal with these changes, but patients will also lose access and certain benefits, including being limited to a maximum of eight doctor visits per year and eight outpatient hospital visits per year. Outpatient rehab therapy will no longer be covered. Hospitals are advocating for a self-imposed tax as a result of these TennCare changes which will allow relief from these cuts and retain federal matching funds access.

I asked John about catering to the growing Spanish-speaking population. He said River Park utilizes signage in Spanish and offers language services in Spanish. This market sector rates River Park Hospital services high.



Dr. Robert Benson joined the River Park staff in March 2009.

John advised the new and expanded services that have been part of River Park's effort to better adapt to the changing needs of the community since he has been there over the past three years. This impressive list includes the following:

1. River Park recruited a full-time cardiologist, Dr. Robert Benson, who came on board in March 2009. This has led to expanded services including pacemakers and AICD implants.

2. A \$1 million CT scanner was added in October 2009 that can do cardiology studies, brain scans,

full body scans, etc. River Park plans to offer a special priced cardiac screening day in late March to showcase this technology to Warren County citizens.

3. River Park added Dr. Michael Questell (2008) and Dr. Susan Harlow (2009) to expand its primary care staff – internal medicine and family practice.

4. River Park added Dr. Dawn Marie Riley-Cavner in July 2009 to the OB-GYN doctors in town, increasing that specialty by 33 percent.



River Park Hospital has a spacious, two-story lobby.

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River Park

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5. River Park will be adding a general surgeon, Dr. Andrew Kastello, and an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Jeffrey Peterson, this summer which will increase those specialties by 33 percent.

6. River Park doctors have expanded their services offered through new training and technology. Drs. del Valle, Riley-Cavner and Spivey obtained training for urinary incontinence procedures and the two general surgeons received training with single port laparoscopic surgeries, which have all led to new local services.

7. Cappella has averaged over \$1 million in annual capital spending during John's three years at River Park. The budget for 2010 is \$750,000 which includes \$160,000 for new surgical equipment during the first quarter and \$50,000 for a new infant security system. The latter involves bands that are placed on babies that will automatically lock adjacent access doors as babies are carried through an area.

8. River Park plans to start a cardiac rehab service in 2010. Also on the horizon is digital mammography imaging for breast cancer screens.

Services for women will be a major element in River Park's services strategy. In concert with WCPI, River Park

applied for and received a Susan B. Komen Foundation grant in 2009 to do free breast cancer screens of which they performed 54. In partnership with WCPI, River Park is re-applying for this grant in 2010.

Currently River Park has limited services dealing with cancer therapy. Beginning in 2008, Dr. Spivey began to offer prostate seed implant (radiation) therapy at River Park. Chemotherapy is available through a part-time medical group, Tennessee Oncology, which comes to McMinnville four days a week. River Park will continue to review oncology as an area where additional future services may be offered.

I asked John about colonoscopies which are routinely given to the aging adult population. John said general surgeons, Dr. Brock and Dr. Lawhon, perform 1,200 colonoscopies a year which is River Park's No. 1 surgical procedure offered. They also have two gastroenterologists on staff part time – Drs. Dopp and Alexander – who perform approximately 600 cases per year.

Another high service area is physical therapy. River Park has an inpatient rehab therapy unit where intensive rehab is offered for patients for two to three weeks, two to three times a day and includes physical, occupational, and speech therapy. This caters to patients who have suffered a stroke or have MS, Parkinson's, or recent orthopedic sur-



There were 4,489 surgeries performed at River Park Hospital in 2009.

gery.

There is also an outpatient unit that offers the physical, occupational, and speech therapy. This treatment area is located on the first floor with a rear, separate entrance. There is an open gym area with weights, bikes, mat tables and exam rooms. There are 15 employees with the physical therapy program.

There are currently 10 open positions where River Park would like to hire new employees. These include the need for more RNs and another in occupational therapy. Deeann Johnson is the HR manager. Her direct phone number is 815-4103. River Park hired 10 RNs in 2007, five in 2008, two in 2009, and expects to add five to seven more in 2010. RN graduates from Motlow Community College are welcomed.

John McLain is the chair of the McMinnville-Warren County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for 2010. His top priority is the service and quality of River Park Hospital. His second priority is expanding and developing the services rendered by the hospital. John is committed to building public trust and confidence in this mission.

Capella utilizes a professional survey firm in Nashville to track the satisfaction of employees, patients, and doctors associated with River Park. Each of the three years John has led River Park, the satisfaction ratings have improved. It is truly exciting to learn what River Park has and is doing for everyone in Warren County. The hospital is adapting to our changing needs and is a highly welcomed corporate citizen.



River Park has enjoyed better patient satisfaction ratings under CEO John McLain.



With the addition of Dr. Dawn Marie Riley-Cavner, there are now three practicing OB-GYN doctors in McMinnville. She joined the River Park staff in July 2009.

FACTS

- 60 percent of River Park revenues come from Medicare.
- 15 percent of River Park revenues come from TennCare.
- In 2009, there were 21,494 patients using emergency room services, up 4 percent from 2008.
- In 2009, 542 babies were delivered, which was down slightly from 2008.
- Of the 4,489 surgeries, 85 percent were outpatient.
- Inpatients and outpatients each account for 50 percent of revenue.
- River Park averages 2,300 outpatient visits per month.
- River Park provides \$5.5 million per year in uncompensated care.