

Challenges

David Iverson, Board Commissioner

FCPHD is working to achieve our vision “To be our community’s lifelong partner in health” by providing quality services through hiring and retaining high quality people. This is becoming increasingly difficult for frontier rural critical access hospitals (CAHs) like ours as we compete with other facilities across the nation for talented coworkers.

Among the most difficult staff to find are physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. The physician shortage is expected to remain especially problematic in rural areas, where more than 20 percent of the U.S. population resides but only 10 percent of physicians practice. Since family physicians comprise only 15 percent of the U.S. outpatient physician workforce nationwide, but they provide 42 percent of the care in rural areas, the

shortage is magnified in rural areas. In fact, this shortage is one of the major reasons over 22 CAHs have closed their doors nationwide in recent years (roughly more than 75 hospitals in total since 2010).

Even though we are staffed with providers to meet our needs at this moment, because of expected and unexpected changes, we are constantly working to continue providing quality services and care while expanding our client base to encourage utilization of our services by more clients from our service area. We hope that this article increases understanding of some challenges we face as we move forward on our mission “To strengthen the health and well-being of our community through partnership and trust.”

Prior Hospital Happenings available at <http://www.fcphd.org/news.html>.

Ferry County Public Hospital District
Improving Health – Saving Lives

