

PRMC President Responds to Editor

I am proud to say that I have been an employee of PRMC for the past 26 years, and have had the opportunity to lead this great organization the past 13 years. My employees have asked me why I haven't responded to the negative reaction to the recent Rural Health Clinic decision. We have tried to respond one on one to those who have called or written us regarding their concerns, but with Mr. Easterday's recent attack of the integrity and decision making of PRMC's Board of Directors, it is time to respond. Through the vision and strategic planning of PRMC's Board, we have experienced phenomenal growth the past 13 years. We have doubled our employee base and have brought to our community services such as cancer care, orthopedics, rheumatology, podiatry, home care, nursing home management, rehab services, and state of the art family

birth suites and diagnostic imaging services, in addition to doubling our primary care base. I think it is an affront the Editor thinks PRMC's board isn't attempting to meet its community's needs. Does our community want PRMC to continue operating an outpatient clinic staffed by mid-level practitioners at the expense of losing a strong primary care base? A hospital can't survive without physicians. Without our physicians ordering services within this hospital and admitting patients to this hospital, we wouldn't need the 400 plus employees of PRMC. Without our physicians, we wouldn't have more than half the patients we care for coming from outside the Pratt community. PRMC spends in excess of \$100,000 for each physician recruited. Retention is critical.

PRMC is an acute care hospital that 13 years ago

tried to meet a huge community need by opening the Pratt Rural Health Clinic when we only had three primary care physicians. For 13 years PRMC has subsidized the Clinic. In just the past three years, that subsidization totals \$532,000. PRMC's Board and Administration is very sorry for the patient/healthcare provider relationships that have been affected. Working alongside Dr. Freeman, Chris Gardiner has done a wonderful job. We also try to be very sensitive to our employee needs. Brad Hill was not "fired". He was offered a position within PRMC's Bone and Joint Center, and when he chose not to take that, he was given 30 days on PRMC's payroll to find other employment. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made, and trying to involve several hundred to a thousand people in a decision will yield zero results. We also have to make deci-

sions at times that appear to be "corporate". We are a hospital that receives no tax support for operations. Last year we wrote off 22 million dollars in charity, bad debt and uncompensated care, of the 52 million dollars billed. It is my strong belief that we are meeting community need. Journalists shouldn't shoot from the hip without doing their proper research. I have an open door policy, Mr. Easterday.

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