

Rural Medicine Breakthrough: Sutton County EMS Expands Services to Patients at Home

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Sutton County EMS paramedics are now able to provide health care to patients in their home. The groundbreaking program is only one of a handful of such programs in the United States. The community paramedicine program is designed to reduce emergency room visits and hospital readmissions. It will provide health monitoring and screenings for a variety of conditions including diabetes, hypertension, immunizations, safety assessments and fall prevention, as well as medication reconciliation.

"In rural environments, we have to look for innovative ways to deliver quality health care to our citizens while maximizing our limited resources," according to Sutton County Hospital District CEO Keith L. Butler. "The Community Paramedic Program integrates all aspects of health care in Sonora and Sutton County, fulfilling the mission and vision of the district."

The community paramedicine program is part of an integrated monitoring system developed by the Sutton County Hospital District, which includes Lillian M. Hudspeth Memorial Hospital, Sonora Medical Clinic, and the Sutton County EMS. Patients will be referred from a variety of sources; all services will be monitored for quality through a multidisciplinary committee.

Instead of having to set-up an appointment at a doctor's office, paramedics will schedule home visits with patients. Studies show face-to-face contact improves compliance with treatment regimens and improves safety in the home. In addition to the paramedics, a community benefits counselor will be available to assist with other social needs. There is no cost to the patient for these services and no additional cost to local taxpayers. Vehicle and equipment costs are provided through a grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture and Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement Fund.

For more information regarding this program, please call (325) 387-5132 or by e-mail at [dnichols\(at\)suttoncountyems.org](mailto:dnichols@suttoncountyems.org).

For more information about Hudspeth Memorial Hospital, please visit:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HudspethMemorial>

Twitter: [@SonoraTexasHosp](#)

or

Online: <http://www.sonora-hospital.org>

Release Issued by Hudspeth Memorial

Lillian M. Hudspeth Memorial Hospital opened its doors on July 1, 1951. Over the years, the hospital served the community well. In September of 1970, a one story 39 bed Nursing Home was added to the original building. An active Women's Auxiliary furnished many amenities for hospital patients and nursing home residents.

In 2001, faced with an aging physical plant, the Board of Directors began to develop the plans to replace the hospital with a new state-of-the-art hospital. Construction was complete in summer of 2005 and patients and staff moved into the new facility with amenities and technology never before available in Sonora. The new facility included complete digital imaging, multi-slice helical scanner, ultrasound and PACS. The laboratory was tripled in size and included state-of-the-science analyzers. The emergency department has five beds with bedside monitoring connected through a wireless telemetry system that also monitors the twelve private acute-care beds. In addition to the acute hospital, The Health and Wellness Center opened. The Health and Wellness Center includes fitness facilities, in-door swimming pool, aerobic facilities and member showers and locker facilities. In addition to the fitness areas, the Center includes a physical therapy department with dedicated wound care and a cardiac and pulmonary rehab department. Construction of a 6.2 million dollar 8200 sq/ft facility to house MRI, GI lab/procedure space and mammogram was

Contact

Keith Butler

[Lillian M. Hudspeth Memorial](#)

[Hospital](#)

1-325-387-1200

[Email](#)

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completed in October 2010. The Diagnostic Center provides for specialty clinics including cardiology, neurosurgical, nephrology and orthopedics. The facility includes women's imaging and a GI suite. Womens' imaging suites includes digital mammography, ultrasound and breast capable MRI.

In August 2011 the Sutton County EMS transitioned from a mostly volunteer service to a full time advanced life support service. The partnership between Sutton County and The Hospital District allows for this leap in EMS service. The operations will be managed by the Hospital District and both 911 and non-emergency transportation is available.

In 2012 two new programs were added to our every growing service line. In April Sports Medicine was added to our rehabilitation services. Two athletic trainers provide care and prevention to the Sonora ISD and surrounding county schools. This program integrates the local medical staff, visiting orthopedic surgeons, Wellness Center and the physical therapy staff to reduce and minimize athletic injuries. In addition to school activities the staff are available for consultation to weekend warriors as well.

On August 1, 2012, the Sutton County EMS, Hospital and Sonora Medical Clinic began offering services through the Community Paramedic Program. The Community Paramedic Programs offers services to our patients in their home that range from safety and preventive services to health monitoring and medication reconciliation. These services are provided free to the community and utilize the EMS personnel through a multidisciplinary quality program. The goal of the program is to improve compliance with health issues like diabetes and heart disease and to prevent falls, unnecessary emergency visits and readmissions.

Administration and staff continue to plan the future by providing the latest medical technology to the citizens and travelers in this region of Texas.







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