

# New hospital is exceeding expectations

## New MTMC has reached limit, looks to hire more, expand soon

By ERIN EDGEMON

eedgemon@murfreesboropost.com

In less than two months in operation the new Middle Tennessee Medical Center is already exceeding its capacity, hospital staff said.

MTMC opened with the ability to treat and staff 254 beds but the hospital reached or exceeded this number several times during the month of October, according to the hospital's daily census.

The hospital is slowly ramping up its capacity.

"With the large volumes, however, we're working very fast to hire more clinical staff and open more beds," said Erin Yeldell, public relations coordinator for MTMC.

The new MTMC is licensed for 286 beds. The old facility could only hold up to 225 patients.

MTMC is seeing higher patient volumes partially through increased numbers entering the hospital from the emergency department.

The emergency room is 10-12 percent busier now than this time last year, said Monty Gooch, director of nursing for the MTMC emergency department.

This can be partially explained by an increase of patients coming to the hospital from outlying counties deciding to take advantage of the new amenities and location, he said.

"By far, we are more accessible than we were," Gooch said. "I think we have done a wonderful job of advertising the coming of the new MTMC."

An increase in patients was anticipated before the hospital opened.

"Our planning goes back well over two years not just for the new facility but for the new ER," Gooch said.

The hospital is also seeing more patients from automobile crashes coming to the facility by ambulance.

"The biggest surprise has been the number of seriously acute patients admitted to the hospital through the ER," Gooch said, adding that these numbers are up 25 percent or 300 patients from last October.

Gooch said the hospital is well equipped to handle the additional patients by expanding the coverage of nursing and technical staff. The emergency department has adjusted staff schedules based on what has been the busiest hours.

Gooch didn't disclose what the average wait time has been in the ER except to say that they have improved since the first week.

Roughly, though, the average length of stay in the ER is two and half-hours to two hours and 45 minutes.

Additionally, MTMC opened with 10 operational operating rooms but the hospital is working to get



David Carter, RN, points out something on a patient's chart to Dr. Dexter Woods in the emergency department at MTMC. Photo submitted.

two more operating rooms open by Feb. 1, Yeldell said.

MTMC is actively working to hire more staff to accommodate for the additional patients into the hospital.

"MTMC has many opportunities available for RNs

that we are currently recruiting for in order to staff our remaining beds," said Carol Bragdon, director of human resources. These include a need for experienced critical care, emergency department, operating room, medical and

surgical unit nurses.

The hospital recently held a career fair for area nursing schools to recruit new registered nurse graduates for some of the open positions.

"The largest percentage of our positions currently open are for nursing, allied health

and patient care with a need to cover night shift, weekend day and weekend night shifts," Bragdon said.

Anyone interested in a job at the new MTMC should visit the recruitment website at [www.sths.com/careers](http://www.sths.com/careers).

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