

For *Healthwise* Insert
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Cortland Regional Medical Center: A Year Change, Growth, and Improvement

Throughout its long history, Cortland Memorial Hospital maintained a proud tradition of improving upon and expanding the healthcare services available to the community. The administration, medical staff, employees, and volunteers are committed to providing a high level of patient care, and are dedicated to service excellence. The common denominator in their all efforts is the desire to provide quality healthcare with skill and compassion to all citizens of Cortland and the surrounding counties.

Thanks to the efforts of staff, another successful year has drawn to a close. Some of the highlights from 2006 included:

Introducing...Cortland Regional Medical Center

On March 1st, Cortland Memorial Hospital officially introduced its new name to the community: Cortland Regional Medical Center. During recent years, the hospital had constantly evolved to better serve its patients, with more and improved services, enlarged and modernized facilities, and made key healthcare services more accessible by establishing locations outside our walls out in the community. In short, it had “outgrown” the name Cortland Memorial Hospital. After 50 years, the name does not properly reflect the progress we have made, what we have become today...and what we aspire to be in the future.

“The name Cortland Regional Medical Center was chosen,” said Brian Mitteer, CRMC President/CEO, “because it recognizes our roots, acknowledges our responsibility to an increased service area, and better defines our larger scope of healthcare services and the highly skilled professionals who provide them.”

Transition to a Smoke-Free Campus

Also in March, CRMC institute an updated non-smoking policy that prohibits smoking on any property owned by the Medical Center. The ban also extends beyond the campus to its off-site locations, CRMC Home Health Services on Homer 160 Avenue, and the Outpatient Service Center on Route 281.

“The goal of this new policy is to make a clear, bold statement that tobacco use is not appropriate in a healthcare environment,” said Mitteer. “Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and in disability in the world, and more specifically here in Cortland County. As one of the key healthcare organizations in the community, we wanted to assume a leadership role by taking a strong stand against tobacco use.”

Partnering to Enhance Area Healthcare Services

This past summer, construction began to further expand medical services for Cortland and the surrounding communities. CRMC partnered with St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center in Syracuse to open a dialysis center on Route 281 in Cortland.

“CRMC and residents of the greater Cortland community have long recognized the need for dialysis services locally,” noted Mitteer. “The more we looked at meeting this need, the more it made sense to undertake a joint venture with St. Joseph’s. For nearly 40 years, St. Joseph’s has been providing dialysis services, and has a proven track record for providing excellent care to its dialysis patients. We look upon the partnership as an opportunity for two not-for-profit organizations with a similar mission to work together in the best interest of the greater Cortland community.”

Construction of the dialysis center is nearing completion. It is anticipated that patients will begin using the center in early 2007. The dialysis center is an excellent complement to the

nearby CRMC Outpatient Service Center which presently offers X-ray, mammography, CAT scan, bone densitometry, MRI, ultrasound, and physical therapy services. Together these two buildings form the basis for a medical campus on Route 281 that services a variety of needs for our community.

New Innovative Services

One novel way of helping rehab patients return to their daily lives is through interactive therapy at the new Functional Living Apartment located in the Rehabilitation Services Department. The apartment features a kitchen, dining area, bedroom, and living room and serves to help transition patients to becoming fully functional in their own homes. By observing the patient in a setting that is a true replica of a home environment, therapists are able to better determine when a patient is ready to return home, and can even complete a mock “home evaluation” with the patient before he or she actually leaves.

“It is perfect for those individuals who have just had joint reconstruction, like knee or hip surgery,” noted Wendy Kolodziejczyk, Director of Rehabilitation Services. “No other medical facility in the area has an offering this comprehensive.”

In October, the staff of the Cardiac Rehab “Phase II” program welcomed its first patients to the newly renovated area in the Cardiology Department. Cardiac Rehab Phase II is a Medicare-approved 12-week program that aims to ease the patient who experienced a cardiac event, such as a heart attack or heart surgery, back into normalcy through monitored exercise and education. The program sets the patient up with a regular exercise routine -- which typically includes cardiovascular exercise, free weight work and stretching – that is performed under constant ECG monitoring.

Physician assistant Sammy Suriani is pleased that CRMC can again offer Phase II. “The reality is there are not enough programs in Central New York, and they have long waiting lists. I think it’s important that Cortland area residents have access to this program close to home and don’t have to travel outside their community for Cardiac Rehab.”

Recognition for Exceptional Performance

In October, the Joint Commission on Accredited Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) awarded Cortland Regional Medical Center a three-year accreditation and its Gold Seal of Approval. JCAHO standards address the organization’s level of performance in key functional areas, such as patient rights, patient treatment, and infection control.

“We sought accreditation for the Medical Center because we want to demonstrate our commitment to patient safety and quality care,” said Denise Mironti, Vice President-Nursing Services. “We view obtaining JCAHO accreditation as part of our continuous improvement process toward achieving excellence. Receiving a Gold Seal of Approval is a testament to the quality of healthcare our staff provides each and every day.”

The year was capped off with a second award: the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce honored Cortland Regional Medical Center at the chamber’s Annual Award Dinner with the “2006 Large Business of the Year Award”. In describing the reason for the award, Executive Director Garry VanGorder cited the Medical Center’s new branding, recent renovations, the cogeneration project, and the innovative partnership with St. Joseph’s on the dialysis project.

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