

Growth at Parkway Medical Center leads to Emergency Room Expansion

By Deangelo McDaniel
Staff Writer
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After becoming Parkway Medical Center's chief executive officer in September 2008, Tim McGill began monitoring visits through (or to) the emergency room.

"This is the front door to our hospital in so many ways," he said.

For the second consecutive year, the ER showed increased numbers at Parkway.

So did overall admissions, births and surgeries.

The growth Parkway is experiencing is coming at a time when hospitals nationwide are seeing declining patient numbers.

McGill didn't hesitate to put the credit where he thought it should go.

"Our employees," he said.

With more than 30 community, civic and elected leaders present, McGill delivered his second State of the Hospital address Friday.

His remarks ranged from physician recruitment and expansion to the hospital's economic impact on the community.

Before the meeting, McGill talked with *The Daily* about the emergency room and a significant change made in January.

Last year, the hospital initiated what it called a "fast-track" program in the emergency room on weekends.

The goal was to make sure everyone who came through the emergency room saw a physician within 20 to 30 minutes and to streamline the process for patients with critical needs.

"The stays were longer for some patients, but on average they saw a physician between 25 and 27 minutes," McGill said.



Daily photo by Brennen Smith
Parkway Medical Center CEO Tim McGill during the center's annual State of the Hospital Luncheon on Friday.

Because of its success, the fast-track program is available daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The 25,288 visitors to Parkway's ER in 2009 represented a 10 percent increase.

The hospital also experienced a 1 percent increase in overall admissions and 4 percent increase in births, and surgeries were up 2.5 percent.

During Friday's luncheon, Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, questioned McGill about the numbers compared to national figures.

National decline

"Most of these numbers are in decline nationally," McGill said. "Considering the recession last year, we're pleased."

Even with the increased numbers, McGill said, he realizes there are challenges.

He said Parkway wants to increase births to 430 this year. During the next 12 to 24 months, the hospital plans to recruit between seven and 10 physicians.

McGill said as many as three of those doctors may be OB/GYN physicians.

The hospital is looking at constructing a medical complex that will house between eight and 12 physicians.

The speed of this project will be determined by how quickly Parkway recruits physicians and the demand for space from existing doctors.

Last year, Parkway provided 385 jobs and a \$18.3 million payroll. The hospital paid \$720,000 in taxes and had \$11.5 million in charity and uncompensated care.

One of its biggest moments of 2009 came when it was ranked 28th nationally among 4,500 hospitals for quality, efficiency, affordability and patient satisfaction.

A month after the national ranking, Parkway installed the area's first digital mammogram machine.

He said Society of Chest Pain Centers reaccredited the hospital's Chest Pain Center through Feb. 24, 2013, and the Surgical Weight Loss Center was named a center of excellence.

Parkway started as the Baugh Clinic in 1923 and moved to its present location in 1974.

Capella Healthcare Inc. of Franklin, Tenn., acquired the hospital in 2008. Parkway is one of 13 investor-owned hospitals in the Capella network.