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## Pharmacy News Article

### 2/15/09 - Parkway showed growth in 2008

Feb. 15--When hospitals nationwide were struggling to deal with declining patient visits and physician recruitment, Parkway Medical Center was thriving.

Outpatient and emergency room visits increased 12 percent and inpatient admissions were up 6 percent in 2008, according to Chief Executive Officer Tim McGill.

Births and surgeries increased 18 and 8 percent, respectively, he said. The admission increase is about 5 percent above the national average.

Despite its success with patient numbers, McGill said, Parkway is as concerned about increased uncompensated care and declining reimbursements as other hospitals.

The investor-owned hospital is one of 14 in seven states Capella Healthcare Inc. of Franklin, Tenn., owns. Capella owns four in Alabama, including hospitals in Decatur and Hartselle. Morgan is the only situation where the company owns two hospitals in the same county.

With elected, civic and community leaders present Friday, Parkway held its first ever State of the Hospital Luncheon.

Parkway invited more than 30 people to hear McGill talk about the hospital's successes and plans.

McGill said Parkway delivered its first report to the community because "we have an important message to get out to the community."

He wants people to know that, in addition to providing quality health care, Parkway pays more than \$635,000 in local taxes and has an annual payroll of more than \$16.3 million.

"As a successful, full-service community hospital, Parkway does much more than care for our patients," McGill said.

Health care, however, is primarily why the hospital is there, and Parkway's rankings for overall employee, patient and physician satisfaction are No. 1 among the 14 Capella-owned sites, McGill said.

"We're proud of that," he said.

Compared to hospitals nationally, Parkway's overall scores for treating heart attacks, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical infection rate were above the 97 percent average.

McGill, who has been Parkway's CEO since September, said he's not resting on the hospital's past success.

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One of his goals this year is to create a fast-track emergency room program that will open three days when emergency rooms are usually the busiest. This will allow patients with minor injuries such as a sprained ankle to get through the emergency room faster.

McGill calls the emergency room the front door to the hospital. In 2008, the average time for patients in the emergency room at Parkway was less than two hours, which is significantly below the national average.

"We track what goes on in our emergency room daily," McGill said. "If it's not the first thing I do every day, it's the second."

Another 2009 goal is to centralize outpatient surgery adjacent to the emergency room. This will allow patients to get all the services they need in one area of the hospital.

Parkway, which has the only 64-slice CT scanner in Morgan County, also plans to expand its sleep center, which will allow pediatric sleep studies on the weekend, upgrade its wound care center and cardiac services.

The 64-slice scanner allows doctors to collect high resolution images of the brain, heart and lungs in less than 10 seconds. It also gives Parkway the capacity to scan the entire body in search of a blood clot, for example, in about 30 seconds.

"We're real proud of this technology," McGill said.

In addition to continuing to meet consumer and government demand for quality health care, the two other significant challenges this year for Parkway are physician recruitment and the rapidly growing uninsured population.

The hospital's charity and uncompensated care in 2008 was 21 percent of patient revenues or \$9.1 million.

To combat this, McGill said, the hospital, when possible, is asking patients to make financial arrangements in advance. He said it is also focusing on collecting co-pays and deductibles up front.

As for physician recruitment, he said, Parkway hopes to recruit between eight and 12 doctors over the next year.

"We recruited four new physicians last year and are about to add a fifth," he said.

McGill said the American Medical Association predicts there will be a 200,000-doctor shortage by 2020.

"It's always been our position to bring the best doctors to Decatur," he said. "We're going to lean on Capella's vast resources to help in this process."

McGill said Parkway's biggest competitor is not Decatur General.

He said both hospitals have to stop the out-migration of patients to Huntsville.

McGill said doctors and the medical services they provide in Decatur are as good as anywhere in the nation.

"Sometimes people think bigger is better, but that is not the case," he said.

The 60-bed facility Huntsville Hospital is planning to construct in Madison brings the threat closer.

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"There is a perception issue," McGill said. "Our doctors train in the same place as doctors in Huntsville."

One solution to this problem may be a combined venture between Parkway, Decatur General and Hartselle Medical Center.

Capella owns Parkway and Hartselle, and has broached the idea to Decatur General.

Tom Anderson, Capella founder and president, said the three hospitals exploring opportunities would be a great deed for Morgan County.

"We should collectively pool our strengths so patients won't go to Huntsville," he said. "We want to encourage conversation about the opportunity that exists."

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