By Lola Jones
Administrator, Chase County
Community Hospital/Clinic

Caring for our friends and neighbors is more than a motto at Chase County Community Hospital and Clinic. It is what we do every day to the best of our ability. Our services are provided by dedicated staff that is committed to patient safety and quality care.

We have made incredible progress and intend to continue on this route.

This past year was particularly significant as we were blessed with the addition of Dr. Doug Nicholson and his wife Rita. Dr. Nicholson joined our staff after a long physician recruitment process and has committed his services to help keep our community healthy and strong.

His wife, Rita, brought us a new specialty service, Women's Health and Aesthetics, which is a service that is unique to southwest Nebraska. With the addition of Dr. Nicholson, there is now provider coverage in Wauneta four days a week versus two.

Many changes have taken place in the obstetrical area of the hospital. First of all, the labor and delivery room and nursery were repainted and decorated. A new bed was purchased. Dr. Richman and Dr. Nicholson are available for routine and emergency cesarean sections. The hospital has a contract with CRNA's to provide epidurals for expectant mothers during their labor. A new infant warming and stabilizing station was purchased with grant money, as well as funds from the hospital foundation.

The hospital foundation and administration recognized the need for good leadership and created an executive director position and hired Randy Vlasin. He started in November and has begun work on various projects that will benefit the foundation and hospital, as well as the community.

In the hospital's quest to provide quality care, the staff implemented and underwent training in communication and team work. TeamSTEPPS™ is an evidence-based teamwork system aimed at optimizing patient outcomes by improving communication and teamwork skills among health care professionals.

Keeping up-to-date equipment and community education are priorities for Chase County Community Hospital. This year, 22 patient beds were replaced and a new laboratory analyzer was approved.

The hospital held its annual health fair and lab screenings, where they analyzed a record number of blood samples.

The hospital also sponsored a Heart Healthy Tea and Breast Cancer Walk, which were attended well by community members. From ideas generated at the Breast Cancer walk, a fund was started to help cover the cost of a mammography for those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Through our free colorectal screening, 26 specimens were tested and two were found to be positive.

Health care in Chase County will continue to grow and thrive in 2009. Two new specialty doctors as well as a nurse practitioner will be added to our growing list of staff and services.

Dr. Scott Caroll will be starting his services as a hand and wrist specialist. He will be treating patients with disorders such as carpel tunnel syndrome, arthritis of the hand, trigger fingers, plus many other procedures. He will be holding a bi-monthly clinic.

Alfred Cretella, M.D., will begin seeing patients monthly at the Chase County Hospital in Imperial, beginning Wednesday, Jan. 14. Dr. Cretella is board certified in internal medicine,

hematology and medical oncology.

Dr. Schmidt, Urologist, has extended his clinic days in Imperial.

Brandi Hanes will begin work at the Chase County Clinic Jan. 6. She is a nurse practitioner in family practice with an interest in women's health. She will be seeing patients on Tuesdays in Imperial and on Thursdays in Wauneta.

We look forward to an exciting health care year in 2009! Our caring staff will continue to provide the compassionate care you have come to expect because we are your community hospital.