



By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

Gary Bieganski, the new interim chief executive officer at the Chase County Community Hospital (CCCH), said he's felt welcomed by the hospital staff, medical staff and the community.

Bieganski began his interim duties at the hospital Monday, Feb. 4.

With a couple of weeks on the job, Bieganski said he's seeing a lot of positive attitudes at the facility.

He sees his first role as facilitating communication and setting up organizational structure.

By bringing in senior managers from each department to form an administrative council, Bieganski said this helps everyone pull together in the day-to-day operation of the hospital.

He likes to look at the past, present and future. By seeing how things were done in the past, he said it shows how those actions and decisions impacted where the hospital is today.

That helps people better understand the role the hospital plays today and how today's decisions and actions will affect the hospital in the future.

In working with staff, he said he emphasizes the five E's: Excellent care, Excellent service, Every patient, Every employee, Every day.

One of his biggest challenges right now, he said, is just getting to know everyone and getting up to speed on where the hospital's been and where it's going.

He said Chase County has a hospital it can take pride in. He said it's well-equipped and, most importantly, has good people working there.

He said the hospital has been successful in recruiting young people back to the area and looks for this to continue.

One of his priorities will be to address a shortage of nurses at the hospital. He said they may consider some use of temp nurses with the goal of recruiting for the long term.

He also believes there may be some nurses in the area who may not be working now that would want a few shifts.

Looking forward, he sees real opportunity for the hospital.

He sees growth by expanding the specialty clinics offered at the hospital.

He said health care facilities have to adapt to the way medicine is handled today.

When the hospital was built in the 1970's, Bieganski said the emphasis was on in-patient care. Today, that's switched to out-patient care, including day surgery.

Being growth-minded also requires more operational efficiency. He said it's key for a hospital to operate as efficiently as possible.

Looking at efficiencies helps determine how and where to spend money to maximize the results, he noted.

With the change to more out-patient services, he said the hospital also needs some upgrades to become more efficient.

If people of Chase County know the need of these upgrades, Bieganski has no question that

people will support the hospital. People want to maintain health care in their community and area, he added.

Forty years of experience

As interim CEO, Bieganski brings 40 years of hospital administrative experience to CCCH. Of those 40 years, 30 were spent as the president and CEO of Community Hospital in McCook.

After his retirement in 2008, he and his wife, Donna Jean, returned to her family's ranch near Chadron where they built a new home.

After about 18 months, he returned to health care, serving as an interim CEO at Hamburg, Iowa, Ainsworth, Neb., and Newcastle, Wyo.

He said returning to this area feels like home after all his time in McCook.

He and Donna Jean have two grown sons who live on the front range of Colorado. They also have six grandchildren.