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Uniontown Hospital Media Release

Hospital announces transition of Obstetrical Services

Uniontown Hospital officials announced today that they are moving to a regional care solution to provide Obstetrical Services for area patients. The move, which will result in the closing of the Family Beginnings Birthing Center on June 30, comes during an organizational reevaluation of services as the hospital begins to transition away from partnerships with UPMC.

Hospital CEO Steve Handy said that while services are being reevaluated and realigned, hospital leadership remains committed to continuing to provide care needed on the local level while working to better coordinate services and care from a regional perspective.

“These changes are about what is best for our patients and for the community we serve,” Handy said. “Our decisions are never just about the bottom line or the short-term, but what options are available to us to provide the best care and sustain that level of care long-term.”

Handy added that the FBBC transition will not result in layoffs, as all impacted Uniontown Hospital employees will have an opportunity to move to another role within the organization if they should so choose.

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Additionally, he noted that Uniontown Hospital employees that wish to continue their career in their chosen specialty “will receive our support and assistance in seeking other opportunities to continue their passion.”

Hospital administrators will work with WVU Health System, Jefferson Hospital and Magee-Womens Hospital to provide obstetrical care for area patients.

The move to a regional care model for obstetrics is not exclusive to Uniontown Hospital, as community hospitals across the state have faced the same hard decisions with insurance payment limitations, unfunded government mandates for testing and care, and physician recruitment all proving challenging.

According to the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, more than 50 obstetric units have closed across the state since 2000 – with the highest rate of closures in the western part where nearly 50 percent of all obstetric units have shuttered. Those closures include obstetrical services at neighboring hospitals like Monongahela Valley Hospital in Washington County and the old Frick Hospital – now Excelsior Health Frick Hospital – in Mount Pleasant.

“We are joining a host of other community hospitals facing these difficult realities,” Handy said.

In conjunction with the obstetrical changes, the hospital will also discontinue their inpatient Pediatric Department.

Handy said that overwhelming majority of pediatric patients treated at the hospital are either released following treatment or stabilized in the

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Emergency Department and moved to Children's Hospital for inpatient care. He added that the closure will allow the hospital to shuffle some inpatient departments on the first and second floors of the hospital and will result in an expanded area for Med-Surg patient care on the Second Floor. While the changes and transitions are challenging, Handy said that hospital leadership is continuing to foster its relationship with WVU Health System to ensure that Fayette County continues to receive the care they need. "Our hospital truly does make a difference in the lives of our patients and we are committed to finding the best ways to make that healthy difference," Handy said. "We may face challenges, but our path is clear – to continue to provide for the health care needs of our community."