

# *Notes from our CEO*

*Monday, July 18, 2016*

CMS published notice that it is terminating our Medicare agreement because we do not satisfy the federal definition of a hospital. We have not yet received official notice from CMS. We assume we will receive that notice sometime this week. We had been working through the process with CMS to provide evidence that we did satisfy the definition of a hospital since late last year. We thought we were going to be okay.

I am angry. What CMS has done is not right. It is not ethical. There has been no allegation that we are providing substandard care. The issue is whether we are doing enough inpatient volume. OCH Springfield has had more inpatient admissions in 2016 than at least 25 other Missouri hospitals. CMS is picking on us because we decided, as a small hospital, that we could provide primary care for at risk patients. Everyone in healthcare understands that primary care for at risk patients is the largest unmet need we have in this nation. We did the right thing and nothing CMS says is going to change that fact.

We have no choice but to preserve as much of our mission as we can. Effective immediately, we will no longer admit to the inpatient unit. We will file notice with the State of Missouri that we are suspending the hospital license July 29, 2016. We will close the surgery department and the emergency department on July 29. We will keep the hospital ancillary services open to support the clinics and we will keep the clinics open. We are now a one-hospital system but we are still a healthcare system and we will continue to provide excellent care to our patients.

I am appealing the CMS decision and I feel strongly we will win but that will provide little solace to the 200 people who will be losing their jobs and it is doubtful that we will be able to reopen the hospital after prevailing on appeal.



Paul Taylor, CEO  
Ozarks Community Hospital