

Health center earns title

Designation a reward for criteria met

- By John Ingle
- Posted June 29, 2013 at 4:50 a.m.



Torin Halsey/Times Record News The Community Healthcare Center in Wichita Falls has met Joint Commission requirements to become the first and only facility in the region to be designated a Patient-Centered Medical Home



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The Community Healthcare Center in Wichita Falls was rewarded Thursday for streamlining services and meeting Joint Commission requirements to become the first and only facility in the region designated as a Patient-Centered Medical Home.

The center, which already has an ambulatory care accreditation from the respected nonprofit focused on improving quality patient care, has worked for about two years to meet the PCMH criteria, CHC compliance officer Vickie McMullen said. She said the work done by the entire staff was validated by the commission's decision.

"I have been glowing ever since I found out," she said. "This is a very proud moment for me and it should be a very proud moment for our staff."

The commission looks at five areas for facilities hoping to attain the PCMH, also called a primary care medical home, designation. Those include patient centeredness; superb access to care; comprehensive evidence-based care; coordination care; and a systems-based approach to quality and safety.

The premise of a PCMH organization is to manage the overall health of patients. McMullen said the focus areas of the commission enables the center and other like-minded organizations to focus on the whole person instead of symptoms they may present when seeing a physician.

She said the concept is to manage each patient's care and navigate them through a health care system that has many moving parts including medical appointments, dental, patient education, mental

behavior and much more.

"The goal isn't just about applying for the program, but helping our patients have a better life and a better quality of life," McMullen said. "It's really taking that whole person into account."

With the PCMH designation, the compliance officer said the center was able to show they are capable of providing 24/7 access for prescription refills or to make appointments, use of best-practice guidelines such as diabetic education and management, continuous tracking and follow up of patient care, self-management goals of patients such as controlling weight or setting up a new diet and including patients in the decision making process of their care.

McMullen said the center already had in place a lot of what the Joint Commission was looking for. She said they had to package it a little differently while maintaining the capability they've had to keep multiple services under one roof.

“When a person establishes care with a provider, they need to go to a provider for all of their needs,” she said. “The (PCMH), that’s exactly what we do.”

According to latest figures, the center sees about 17,000 patients annually.

For more information about the center’s new designation, go to <http://www.jointcommission.org/accreditation/pchi>. Follow John Ingle on Twitter @inglejohn1973.

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