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Morgan Memorial Brings Billing In-House

June 2, 2008—Madison, GA – Morgan Memorial Hospital administration recently made the decision to bring their billing and collections process in-house. With the change, all functions involving the financial aspects of a patient's visit to MMH can now be handled locally.

"This change will not only be a cost savings for the hospital, but will improve customer service as well," said Craig Strain, Director of Patient Financial Services. "A patient or family member can now speak personally with a representative here in the hospital instead of a stranger employed by an outside vendor."

Previously there was very little hospital staff could do when they received complaints or inquiries regarding a patient's bill as they were handled by an outside vendor. When Darlena Kinnett, MMH Chief Financial Officer, was hired she reviewed financials over a three month time span and it was very apparent to her that the contracted billing company was not performing to its fullest potential.

"Our goal with the transition was to enhance billing in three ways," said Kinnett. "Improve patient flow of information, improve patient communication and improve the timeliness of bills both to the insurance companies and to the patients."

Bringing billing in-house meant numerous changes: *A New Name...A New Look...and A New Way of Doing Things* according to Strain. This included the addition of six staff positions, five of these being filled by Morgan County residents.

The six month process included not only training staff, but also making accommodations on how to house them. With space as a pre-existing concern, the hospital's conference room and employee orientation area (once a physician's office waiting room) had to be converted into workstations. A partnership with the county commissioner's allowed for unused furniture from the acquisition of the new county office building to be put back to use.

"We are truly fortunate to have the support and strong working relationship that we do with the County Commissioners," said Terry Evans, Chairman of the Morgan County Hospital Authority.

With the Patient Financial Services Department now fully operational, individuals needing assistance or having questions concerning their hospital bill should now call 706-752-2290.

“I cannot thank enough the Hospital Authority and administration as well as the county commissioners for their support during this project and for the contributions they have made to the development of the new Patient Financial Services Department,” said Strain.

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