

# Introducing the vision for health care delivery at St. Andrews

## Lincoln County Healthcare MaineHealth

In our last communication that was posted to area websites – including [www.lchcare.org](http://www.lchcare.org) – and mailed to homes in Lincoln County, we answered a number of questions about the future of St. Andrews Hospital and Healthcare Center. We wrote about the local, volunteer board of trustees, the value of MaineHealth membership, honoring local charitable donations, and challenging finances.

In this communication, we wish to present our forward thinking efforts and vision to ensure fulfillment of St. Andrews' core mission of providing quality care to the people of the Boothbay region. This vision is compelling, clear, community and family centered, and based on the current needs of the region.

From its very beginning, St. Andrews has continually evolved to meet the community's healthcare needs and adjusted often to challenging market conditions, and our efforts today are no different.

### *This vision does NOT close St. Andrews – 94% of Current Services Will Remain*

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*St. Andrews' services will remain open to serve the Boothbay community for many years to come.*

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First and foremost, **St. Andrews' services will remain open to serve the Boothbay community for many years to come.** The primary objective of this new vision is to ensure the vast majority of services provided today will continue to be available to patients close to home. And these services will be enhanced to meet the ever-changing healthcare needs of the community.

These services include:

- **Primary Care through the Family Care Center**
  - Your relationship with your family doctor is extremely important. The vision for St. Andrews builds and strengthens this bond to improve overall health.
- **Social Services**
  - Connecting the community with needed support services including local and state government assistance and community-based outreach programs is a vitally important component of care.
- **Mental Health Services**
  - A large portion of clinical care in the family physician's office today is linked to behavioral health and this new vision preserves and enhances the access to this important clinical service.
- **Pharmacy Consulting**
  - Helping to ensure a clear understanding of your prescriptions, the reasons for their use, and even the availability of low cost (or no cost) prescriptions.
- **Wellness**
  - Providing the community education classes and resources necessary to promote an emphasis on good health maintenance and disease prevention.
- **Urgent Care**
  - Available on a walk-in basis, emergency medicine trained physicians ready to care for those with an injury or illness that requires immediate care.
- **Diagnostic Imaging**
  - Ensuring you and your physician have access to the medical imaging needed to properly diagnose and care for you and your family.

- **Laboratory Services**

- Ensuring you and your physician have access to specialized outpatient testing.

- **Occupational Therapy**

- Delivering treatments to develop, recover, or maintain the daily living and work skills of patients with a physical, mental or developmental condition.

- **Physical Therapy**

- Promoting mobility and functional ability to improve the quality of life for those with physical impairments or disabilities.

- **Rehabilitation Care**

- Skilled care for those recovering from injuries or surgery.

- **Long-Term Care**

- Care for those residents who need 24-hour nursing care.

- **Home Health and Hospice**

- For those who wish to stay home, yet require health care services to remain there safely and comfortably.

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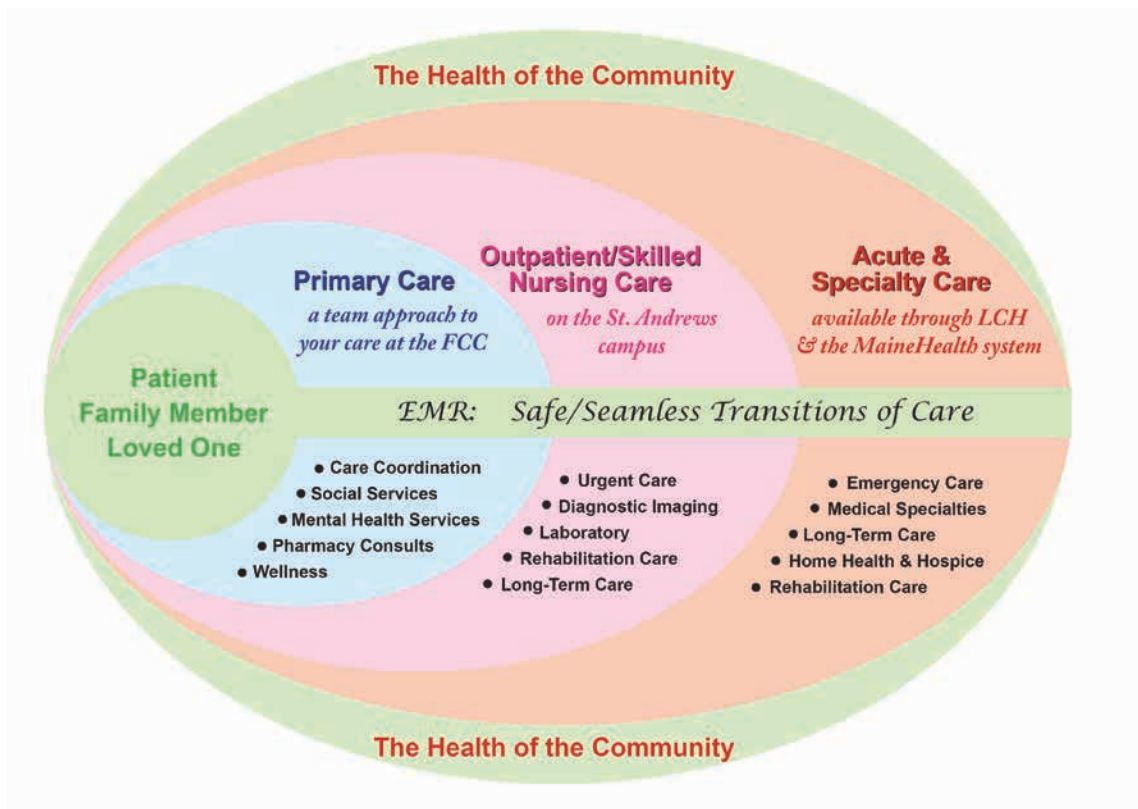
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## A New Vision for the Boothbay Region

Lincoln County Healthcare trustees, management, and clinical staff have worked for many months to develop a vision that maintains and enhances a high level of quality and affordable care for the patients we serve. Not just a model to survive in the near term, but a model to thrive, serve and care for families throughout Lincoln County for years to come.

This shared vision centers on the idea of working together to ensure Lincoln County has the healthiest communities in Maine. As shown in the diagram below, **we begin with you, your family and loved ones. From there, we apply a team approach to primary care that forms a strong, lifelong bond between patients and primary care physicians and other caregivers** – all close to home. Outpatient (or ambulatory) care at St. Andrews will continue to support preventive and primary care with a range of services, including urgent care, diagnostic imaging, laboratory, as well as occupational and physical therapy.



When patients need acute or specialty care, our new, integrated model provides a full range of emergency care, medical specialties, long-term care, home health, and rehabilitation care. Organizing around a unified model for community-based healthcare in Lincoln County offers a safe and seamless transition for care, ensuring a positive community health profile for decades to come.

Additional resources will be added to the Family Care Center to insure that patients will have their care better coordinated through the help of a Nurse Care Manager. Pharmacists will be available to help sort through medications and make certain you are taking the correct medication and dose.

**A new electronic medical record system helps to make sure your vitally important medical information is readily available, where and when clinicians need it, to care for you and your loved ones.** This system helps to make the clinical connections required to ensure quality of care while reducing the need for duplicate tests (and the expense that comes with repeating medical images and laboratory tests).

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This new model will help lead the change for rural healthcare delivery in Maine. The vision places a premium on quality, affordability, accessibility and sustainability. Over the next few weeks, Lincoln County Healthcare will unveil this new approach and engage the community in a conversation about the future of healthcare in the region.

### *A Challenging Environment for Healthcare Delivery*

Hospitals across the U.S. and throughout Maine face an unprecedented convergence of economic, clinical and regulatory pressures. These developments directly influence the delivery of care here in Lincoln County. Here are just a few trends that have lead us to rethink our approach and reinvent St. Andrews for the next generation.

- **Inpatient volumes are dropping while outpatient services are expanding at an explosive rate.** In the past two decades, national inpatient volume has declined by 15 percent and outpatient visits have increased by 125 percent. St. Andrews continues to experience a steady decline in volume, with more patients selecting to receive care at a variety of hospitals throughout the Midcoast region.
- **The cost of providing care continues to rise while revenues and margins decline each year.** Since 2001 and based on audited financial statements, St. Andrews has had operating losses totaling more than \$7 million. Even after considering the Critical Access Hospital subsidy, charitable donations, community support and investment returns, the 12-year accumulated loss was nearly \$2 million.
- **A dramatic shift in patient demographics places undue strain on the system.** Our community is aging, which means a greater shift from private insurance plans to Medicare and drastically lower reimbursements. This will continue to compound the financial strain on St. Andrews.
- **The standard of care has advanced as the community has evolved.** The practice of medicine has changed greatly over the past twenty years. Care has become more complex and highly technical leading to specialization in all areas of medicine. This requires physicians to undergo years of specialty training and multiple examinations to demonstrate they are able to meet this new higher standard of care. Because of the complexity and scope of this care, physicians are now trained to work in highly coordinated teams to deliver the best possible care. Simply said, the way we provide care must adjust to ensure high-quality care and patient safety.

The Boothbay Region and St. Andrews are not immune from these pressures. Over time, decreasing patient volumes pose much more than just an economic challenge; they present a serious impact on overall quality and patient safety.

## Changes and Service Enhancements at St. Andrews

The major change in service at St. Andrews will be the conversion of the Emergency Department to an urgent care center, and there are strong clinical reasons for this decision.

The number of patients who turn to St. Andrews for emergency care has been steadily declining for years. Today, at St. Andrews, that number is approximately one patient every other night. Given this figure, maintaining two Emergency Departments in Lincoln County is unsustainable and not a clinical best practice.

After analyzing these trends, **our own board-certified emergency physicians, believe that an urgent care model at St. Andrews coupled with an enhanced EMS response and definitive care at a larger, busier ED will provide better, safer care for our patients.** This is not a trend unique to St. Andrews, but one that hospitals throughout the country are implementing.

For serious emergencies, the Boothbay Region Ambulance Service and LifeFlight are staffed by highly trained, professional EMS personnel who can quickly and efficiently transport patients to the facility with the most appropriate level of emergency care. Every critically ill or injured patient currently seen in the St. Andrews ED requires transportation to another facility for definitive care. This new arrangement will have the patient immediately going to the most appropriate level of care without an intermediate stop. And we're using the simple accessibility and flexibility of an iPad to ensure a better standard of care for those transports as EMS personnel can easily connect with an emergency medicine physician.

Patients who do not have life threatening emergencies can be readily treated at the urgent care center on the St Andrew's campus. This latter group comprises the vast majority of patients who are currently seen in the St Andrew's Emergency Department today.

**The trustees understand the community's concerns about the next chapter at St. Andrews, but it is important to point out that the changes are designed to protect patient safety, enhance quality, and respond to clinical concerns raised by our doctors.** Because the vast majority of Emergency Department visits occur during the day, and 82 percent of all these visits do not require emergency care, our medical staff believes an urgent care center along with a highly coordinated emergency response system will meet the needs of the community in a safe, high-quality manner.

Lincoln County Healthcare is committed to partnering with the Boothbay Region Ambulance Service to continue to enhance the excellent emergency medical response system. In fact, **we have committed to provide a total of \$250,000 in unrestricted gifts to the three communities in the Boothbay Region. This money could be used to reduce the need for a tax increase to these residents based on reported changes in the Boothbay Region Ambulance Service budget.**

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## Our Continued Discussion

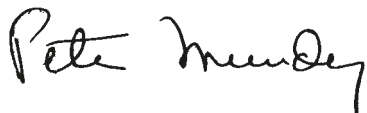
**The vision for the Boothbay Region is a healthcare model that focuses on community need, is family centered and enhances and strengthens the bond between patients and their physicians; empowering patients to take greater control of their health.** Our primary care model will follow recognized clinical best practices, elevating the St. Andrews Family Care Center to a new level of care tailored to meet individual patient needs and whole-life care.

This approach will serve the diverse needs of the Boothbay Region while maintaining an affordable, high-quality and sustainable model for the future. These are the services that the residents of the Boothbay region are choosing; services that are meeting a need close to home.

The Trustees of St. Andrews Hospital and Lincoln County Healthcare look forward to continued, constructive discussions about healthcare in our community and how St. Andrews will continue to serve the Boothbay Region for many years to come. This will depend upon a model that emphasizes quality, affordability, accessibility and sustainability.

In the spirit of working together for a safe and healthy future for Lincoln County, we welcome the community to join us on **March 20 for a special presentation of this vision at the Opera House in Boothbay Harbor from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**  
**We hope to see you there!**

Sincerely,



Peter Mundy, Chair  
St. Andrews Hospital & Health Care Center  
Lincoln County Healthcare  
Board of Trustees



James Donovan, FACHE  
President & CEO  
St. Andrews Hospital & Health Care Center  
Lincoln County Healthcare

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**Lincoln County Healthcare**  
MaineHealth