

Hospital corporate structure update

Background

Lincoln County Healthcare was created (in 2007) to share and coordinate healthcare resources within Lincoln County, Maine with the goal of providing high-quality, accessible and affordable to our region. Once the October conversion from Emergency Care to Urgent Care is complete at St. Andrews Hospital in Boothbay Harbor, it will no longer be a licensed hospital. When this occurs, Lincoln County Healthcare will have one licensed hospital serving Lincoln County.

To fund its vision to provide high-quality, affordable healthcare, Lincoln County Healthcare has been working with state and federal agencies to form a single licensed hospital providing services on both the St. Andrews and Miles campuses. This new arrangement would preserve Critical Access Hospital funding in the Boothbay Region while expanding the subsidy to the rest of the county.

What's the latest news on this front? After reviewing the plan with state agencies and with the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) regional office in Boston, CMS has granted preliminary approval for Lincoln County Healthcare to proceed with their plans.

What is Critical Access Funding? Medicare provides a subsidy to certain hospitals that are in rural areas and small towns. Hospitals must meet specific criteria to be eligible for this funding. The subsidy more closely reimburses the costs a rural hospital incurs when it treats Medicare patients.

Is CAH Funding being taken from St. Andrews? No. This plan maintains CAH funding for the services that will remain at St. Andrews while also expanding the subsidy to Miles.

Why is this plan important? For our organization to remain financially viable, we must reduce our costs and be more affordable. The ability to maintain Critical Access Hospital status for a single hospital serving two campuses means we will be able to reduce our overall charges by approximately 15%.

Will this new arrangement keep the Emergency Department open in Boothbay? No. The decision to convert the St. Andrews Emergency Department to an Urgent Care Center was based on quality and patient safety issues associated with low patient volume.

If this idea becomes a reality, what will change at Miles? There will be no changes in healthcare services at Miles. Miles will need to reduce its number of inpatient beds from 38 to 25. It must also maintain an average inpatient length of stay of no more than 96 hours (4 days). With a current average daily census of 20 inpatients, Miles will be able to accommodate patients needing inpatient care with 25 beds. Our current average length of stay is in line with the 96 hours requirement.

What are the next steps? There are still a few legal and procedural steps to be completed before both The Lincoln County Healthcare Board of Trustees and the MaineHealth Board of Trustees review the final plans. Once their review is complete they will vote to approve or not to approve the plan. This vote will take place before the October.