

WHAT IF THERE WASN'T A HOSPITAL IN OSBORNE COUNTY...

This article is the third in our series as Osborne County Memorial Hospital (OCMH) is communicating the necessity of building a new replacement hospital and rural health clinic. In reality, if the vote does not pass for the new facility to be constructed at the election on November 7th the existing hospital will not be able to continue to meet the state and federal regulations or high costs of maintenance and would eventually close. There is no scientific measurement that can predict when this will occur in the future....but it will happen. Since the current hospital is nearing 60 years old next year it has well outlived the life expectancy of 50 years and the regulations for infection control, safety and quality are very challenging to meet. Without construction of a new facility OCMH will not be able to expand services or keep up with the rapid and ever-changing delivery of healthcare services to accommodate our patient's needs.

So, what if there wasn't a hospital in Osborne County and/or Osborne:

- We would not be able to meet the health care needs for future generations
- An increase in the local unemployment rate could be expected
- A reduction in per-capita income could be expected ranging from 1.5% to 4%
- Retirees may choose to move to another community where healthcare is provided
- New industries may not be attracted to the community without emergency services being available
- Ambulance and EMT/Paramedic services would need to increase and be funded by increased taxes
- You may have difficulty in finding transportation back to your home if you rode to another hospital in the ambulance
- Less family and friends visiting you in the hospital due to travel costs and restrictions. Family members may also experience loss in wages having to stay at hospital with loved ones since they can't stop by on their way to work, lunch hours, etc.
- Increase in travel time to receive care with the closest two health care facilities to Osborne being 26 and 38 miles away. Timeliness of treatment for life-threatening emergencies may be fatal.
- Local economic conditions may decline placing it in a downward cycle that may be difficult to recover from
- Job loss for employees causing them to leave the community to find employment or change professions
- Potentially neglected properties or decrease in property values as people leaving community to pursue employment making the community less appealing to reside in
- Hospital would not be purchasers of goods and services within the county and community affecting these businesses
- Nonresidents that receive care at OCMH would no longer be traveling to Osborne and purchasing goods while they are in the community

The mission of Osborne County Memorial Hospital is *"to achieve excellence in rural healthcare in partnership with the communities we serve"*. In 1958 the vision of healthcare in Osborne County for the future was established and it is our goal to continue this vision and mission for another 60 years. According to a letter to the editor to the Osborne County Farmer in July, 1986, this was a similar discussion being held at that time. However, the community supported the mill tax increase at that time and the hospital remains open today. Please vote "YES" for the construction of a new hospital and clinic on November 7th so current and future generations of the communities in Osborne County will continue to receive health care services.