

1st Annual NMH Careers Fair Attended by 100+ Juniors & Seniors from Ellis County

On Friday, December 2nd, 2016, over 100 students descended on Newman Memorial Hospital for the First Annual Newman Memorial Health Careers Fair. The students were comprised of juniors and seniors from Shattuck, Fargo-Gage, Arnett and Higgins High Schools. This event was a collaborative effort put on by the Ellis County Health Coalition and Newman Memorial Hospital. There were 16 speaker stations set up throughout the hospital, each representing a different health career. "I could not be happier with the support we had for this event throughout the community," said Joey Burgtorf, Community Liaison & Marketing Director for Newman Memorial Hospital. "We had excellent participation from our county schools, but what really blew me away was the eagerness of the healthcare professionals, both inside the hospital and from the community, who were willing to give their time and effort to support this endeavor."

Last year, the Ellis County Health Coalition began investigating the interest of our young people in the community concerning healthcare careers. What they found was that there was little to no interest. The graduating seniors were not looking toward healthcare career options and school administrators from around the county agreed that this was not a direction in which our youth seemed to be heading. Healthcare definitely goes through transitions, but the bottom line is that careers in healthcare are always needed. No matter what happens with the economy, people still get sick or injured and we will always need healthcare and people to provide it. The simple fact of the matter is, it is easier to "grow" healthcare workers than it is to recruit them to rural areas in western Oklahoma. This became our mantra as we went forward in planning a health career fair that would expose our local youth to some of the many possibilities in healthcare.

The goal was to demonstrate not only the wide variety of careers available, but also the differing levels of education required. Most of the students, when asked, stated that healthcare careers included doctors and nurses. We really tried to expose them to the multitude of options available to them with all the different levels of education needed to obtain them. Inside the hospital, we had stations set up for Laboratory and Toxicology, Radiological Technology and Nursing. Dr. Stuart, M.D. spoke with the students about being a family practice physician, Darla Orr did a presentation on becoming a Certified Allergy Specialist and Ruth Ann Givens, MS, RD/LD spoke about Registered Dieticians, diet tech registered and Certified Dietary Management.

From the community, speakers included Dr. Kylene Rehder, LCSW Associate Professor & Social Work Program Director at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Tim Abbott presenting for Ellis County EMS paramedics, Dr. David Jones, O.D. spoke about Optometry, Dr. Garrett Olive, D.D.S presented on both dentistry and dental hygienist and Greg Huenergardt, D.Ph. spoke about a career in Pharmacy. We also had Glenna Catoe representing Domestic Violence Advocacy, Natalie Laverty, M.S., CCC-SLP spoke about medical Speech-Language Pathology, Emily Moore presented about Occupational Therapy and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants, Michelle Woods,PT spoke about Physical Therapy, Behavioral Health was also represented by Western Plains Youth and Family Services.

"The feedback received so far from the schools, the students and the professionals has all been very positive." Stated Joey Burgtorf of NMH, "My hope is that there were some students out there who were inspired by the possibilities presented to them right here in our community and maybe even one or two who will pursue healthcare because of what they learned. This was an opportunity for Newman Memorial to invest both in the community and in the future of healthcare!"