

# Hospital plans to expand revenue streams as new CEO begins

BY GRACE BOATRIGHT JACHIM | FOR THE SUN  
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BENTON — Despite recent financial strains, Marshall County Hospital is moving forward and looking to make positive changes in the future.

The April 7 board meeting marked the conclusion of newly hired CEO Steven Luther's first month in the role, having begun in early March. During his first management report, Luther spoke heavily of the plans he has for the future of the hospital — particularly ways to cut costs and increase revenue.

Luther highlighted a four-piece plan, focusing on the volume of patients at clinics and receiving surgery, the emergency room and ambulance service, the swing bed program, and the hospital foundation.

Luther shared that he believed building trust with the community would lead to increases in clinic and surgery patients, as well as in emergency room patients. He also stated that he believed the swing bed program was not only a way to increase patients and revenue, but also a competitive edge.

In an interview following the meeting, he described the swing bed program as a way to continue caring for patients and reduce readmissions.

"They have been discharged from acute care, and so therefore you may have a patient that still needs some clinical needs, such as speech therapy, OT, physical therapy, still needing a skill," said Luther. "Being a critical access hospital allows our beds to be multiuse, compared to a bigger hospital, so we're able to



The Marshall County Hospital Board discussed a variety of ways to diversify its revenue streams and connect with the community.

continue to have patients in our hospital that would not qualify for other different hospitals. We can keep people close to home, instead of having to either go to a nursing home, or go home and still get a readmission."

The final piece of Luther's plan is to put more focus on the hospital foundation by increasing community support.

"It is evident that people are proud of the community hospital that we have here," said Luther. "We have to build those relationships and give them the opportunity to donate or whatever we need to do on that piece. I will tell you, I have a good friend, his name is Roy Lowdenback, who runs the foundation for all of Baptist [Health]. He will tell you that giving a patient the opportunity to give back is the best thing. Patients want to give back, and we've got to give them the opportunity

to give back. At this moment in time, I don't feel like we have that today. So, we're going to work through that because we have to build more of a relationship and give people opportunities for that."

Luther noted the number of plaques and honorific signage around the hospital signifying donations as evidence of past community support for the organization.

Luther also shared that he would seek input from others in the hospital, particularly department directors, in order to continue finding ways to cut expenses and increase revenue. He shared that at the next directors' meeting, he would present a document for the directors to submit ideas.

"I'm asking every department director to give me revenue-generating ideas or expense reduction," said Luther. "They are all on the ground, knowing what's

going on. And guess what? They have the answers. So we're going to ask them to let us know what [they] think we need to be changing here."

Luther then cited a story about American Airlines, stating that in 1987, the company decided to remove one olive from its salads. Luther said the small change totaled \$40,000 in savings for the company.

The board then approved the purchase of new equipment to be used for the swing bed program. The purchase was approved with the use of foundation funds.

The purchase comes after CFO Janice Kelley shared that while the hospital's revenue is behind what was budgeted for this point in the year, the hospital has received its annual funding from the Joe Tom Haltom fund. For 2026, that total was \$381,370.88, and Kelley said the previous year that fund was \$355,909, noting

that the fund generated more money this year.

The hospital is also amid its annual audit, having had auditors in the building in mid-March. Luther and board chair Lauren Mann both shared that the auditors spoke highly of Kelley and her team.

Amid public conversations and rumors about the hospital's financial situation, some have speculated that the hospital's financial strain may be related to a lawsuit involving a former employee. Kelley and Mann confirmed that the lawsuit was ongoing, but stated that it was not related to the financial situation, as it was covered by the hospital's insurance policy.

In an interview following the meeting, Luther reiterated his excitement at beginning the role, and his belief in the quality of care of the hospital.

"I'm excited to be here," said Luther. "I've only been here 30 days, and I can attest, I mean, I came from Baptist. This hospital is a great hospital. We just need to work on the things that I have outlined, and we are going to be perfectly fine."

He also reiterated that the hospital is in a "fine" financial state, but noted that health care can be an inconsistent business.

"Financially, we're doing fine," said Luther. "Health care is a difficult world, and so you have mountains and valleys. At this point, we are working on some of our streamlining of services that I believe will continue to put us moving into the future."

The meeting also featured the hospital's annual report from Chief Clinical Officer Tiffany Tubbs.

The hospital board regularly meets at noon on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is set for May 5.

## Annual community baby shower offers resources to new parents

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BENTON — A variety of resources for new and expecting parents will be available to the community through the Marshall County Health Department's annual Community Baby Shower.

The event is organized by the department's Health Access Nutrition Development Services program, also known as HANDS. The program is a home visitation program designed to support families with children ages 90 days to 2 years.

While many of the HANDS program events are held only for enrolled families, the community baby shower is open to anyone expecting or with young children. The event will provide access to a variety of resources available in the community.

Lauren Carriere, an AmeriCorps member assisting the health department with organizing the event, said she believes ensuring that people have access to those resources is incredibly important.

"I just think [about] all the resources that a lot of people don't know about, and how beneficial they can be for the community," said Carriere. "So, I think it's really important for events like these because then people, especially the ones who are not in Marshall County... Say you're from Murray, and there's something in Benton that could really help you, but



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The Marshall County Health Department is set to host their annual community baby shower on Monday, April 13.

you don't know about it just because you're not from that area. So I think this is important because this thing can help you with that."

While many people may expect gifts from a baby shower, the event focuses more on resources available to parents, though vendors will offer some giveaways and raffles. Carriere shared that the department will raffle a basket full of burp cloths, breastfeeding equipment, and more.

Vendors attending the event will include Lotus, Ready-Ed, Marshall County Head Start/Early Headstart, Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative Adult Education, Step Stone Youth Services, Baptist Health Calvert City, and more.

Ready-Ed will provide CPR training, while Lotus is set to also raise awareness for sexual assault.

"Lotus, this year we're partnering with them to do a little activity," said Carriere. "It's a pinwheel activity to bring awareness to sexual assault, because it's their month for that. They reached out and asked if we could do that, so we're going to do pinwheels outside, and



Marshall County Health Department

Vendors at last year's community baby shower included area hospitals, government departments and mental health centers.

the guests who come are encouraged, when they stop by Lotus's table, to go outside after, before, whenever they want really, and plant pinwheels outside of the Joe Creason Building."

While the event is organized by the Marshall County Health Department, Carriere is adamant that the event is open to anyone in the Western Kentucky region.

"It's for everyone," said Carriere. "Murray, Paducah, Calvert City, Hardin, anywhere basically. They're all welcome. We want you to come."

Those interested in attending but unable to do so are encouraged to send a friend or family member in their stead. Cupcakes and refreshments will be provided, and coloring sheets will be available for any children in attendance.

The event is set for 4:30-6 p.m. Monday, April 13, at the Joe Creason Community Building at H.H. Lovett Park in Benton.

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