



# THE TAOS NEWS

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## My Turn

### What is good about our hospital largely overlooked

#### Holy Cross Medical Executive Committee

*The Taos News, 11/14/2013*

Holy Cross Hospital has been in the news a lot recently, and we thought it was time for some of the doctors to speak up publically about our hospital. It is a positive development that our community, this newspaper, and our local city and county governments have taken an interest in the future of the hospital. It's important for all of us to be well informed, and to keep things in perspective.

Holy Cross benefits from being in such a beautiful place as Taos. Just as Taos has attracted artists, outdoorsmen, adventurers and retirees from all over the globe, so too has it attracted exceptional doctors and nurses.

The hospital clinical staff is highly qualified, and truly cares about the patients and the community. The doctors at Holy Cross stay here because we like where we live, and because we are part of a great team of nurses, technicians, aids and other staff who make working here enjoyable. The administration and medical staff listen to each other. The hospital board takes input from the medical staff, as well as from the administration.

We don't always agree, as it should be in a democratic process. This is in contrast to corporately owned hospitals that do not have independent medical staffs.

What is good about our hospital has been largely overlooked in recent discussions.

Holy Cross is ranked at the same level or better than most hospitals in the state on quality control and patient satisfaction measures tracked by the federal government. We have 24-hour inpatient physicians, resulting in better care and shorter hospital stays.

Holy Cross is accredited by DNV and was the first hospital in the state to become ISO9001 certified (an international quality standard). It was also recently named one of the top 25 places in the United States for ACL repair (a type of knee surgery) because of low cost and great results. That sort of good news doesn't make the front page, but it is something to be proud of.

Times are tough. Many of our friends and co-workers have been laid off recently.

Unlike other businesses a hospital doesn't turn away customers that can't pay. In a rural community, that means giving away a lot of care. Even Medicare and Medicaid pay less than it costs to deliver the care.

Until now, government programs have helped hospitals in underserved areas stay afloat, but many of those programs have been cut. This is a national problem, and many small hospitals are closing because of the funding cuts.

Holy Cross administration and board responded to this challenge by making cuts and layoffs. The medical staff recognizes that cuts were necessary though we disagreed with where some of those cuts were made.

For example, Holy Cross now has fewer ICU beds to care for the very sick in our community. We are gratified that the board listened to this concern and is addressing it.

The community and the medical staff have a common interest in maintaining a high quality hospital in Taos. To accomplish this, we need the support of the community we serve. As we negotiate the economic and health care challenges of today, it is important to maintain an independent, not for profit hospital and an independent medical staff.

What can you do to support your hospital? First of all, stay engaged. If you have the time, consider volunteering.

If you can afford it, consider a donation to help offset the cost of caring for all of our community.

If you are in local government, pressure the state government to restore the funding that rural hospitals depend on.

Support the hospital with taxes. Many other counties do.

Recent cuts have raised concerns about how the hospital is being managed. That scrutiny is good. Right now the hospital board, administration, medical staff, employees, union, local government, and community as a whole, must work together to find creative solutions to keep high quality hospital care in Taos.

Holy Cross is here for you.

Let's keep it that way.

*Medical Executive Committee: Dr. Foster, Director of Hospital Service, Dr. Garland, Chief of Staff; Dr. M. Kaufman, President of Taos County Medical Society; Dr. Moore, Chief of Staff Elect; Dr. Ismail, Secretary/Treasurer; Dr. Mohling, Chair, Surgical and Anesthesia Department; Dr. Villarreal, Chair, Perinatal Department; Dr. Jaramillo, Chair, Pediatric and Adult Medicine Department; Dr. Bjorkman, Chair, Emergency Department; and Dr. J.*

*Kaufman, Chair, Credentials Committee.*