

JMHCC puts decontamination system into place

Due to the generosity of several donors, Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center (JMHCC) now has the capacity to expertly treat patients who have been exposed to hazardous materials.

JMHCC received more than \$13,000 in grant assistance to purchase a decontamination system, including \$3,086 from the Elgin Lions Club and \$5,000 from the N.D. Community Foundation. Other grant funds came from Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, which also provided matching funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and CoBank for a total of \$5,250.

A decontamination tent can be quickly put into place to provide an enclosure where staff in personal protective equipment (PPE) can decontaminate a patient in an enclosed and sheltered shower system before bringing the patient inside the facility for further treatment.

“When a patient presents to the emergency department after exposure to a harmful substance, the patient must be fully decontaminated before the patient can be brought into the emergency department for treatment. Otherwise, the facility will also become contaminated. With the addition of this updated decontamination equipment, we will be able to rapidly deploy and decontaminate these patients in a safe manner, while also keeping our staff and other patients and residents safe,” says JMHCC EMS Director Cary Kehr.

Hospital employees have also recently undergone frontline hazardous material and decontamination training, using specialized PPE, which JMHCC purchased from its general operating funds.

This equipment will allow JMHCC to handle a hazardous material decontamination, such as an anhydrous ammonia leak within the agricultural community or a spill of other materials.

Situated in an agricultural community and at the intersection of two highways, JMHCC saw the need to be prepared for any type of hazardous material contamination, said Director of Nursing Rusette (Rose) Tesani, who is a lead for the hospital’s emergency response team. She led recent training of 46 staff members at JMHCC, along with Kehr.

As the hospital now prepares to accept hazardous material scenarios, Tesani, and Emergency Medical Technician Joey VanderVliet and Paramedic Clifford Black are the hospital emergency response team leads.

“We wanted our facility to have trained staff members, not just the medical professionals, but also the non-medical professionals, because this will help us activate a decontamination system,” Tesani said.

Alongside purchase of the equipment, JMHCC revised its disaster plan as well.

The certification is competed under Federal Emergency Management Agency, with Tesani as an authorized indirect trainer to certify staff members in the eight-hour FEMA training.