Natividad Continues Outreach as Trauma Center Decision Nears

A final decision regarding the designation of Natividad Medical Center as a Level II Trauma is still weeks away, but as the hospital continues with the designation process, it has been partnering in a series of informative town halls and tours to educate the community about what a trauma center is all about as well as showcase key hospital services.

To give interested residents a glimpse inside the hospital as well the chance to ask questions about the trauma center progress, 4th District Supervisor Jane Parker organized a community information session and tour on November 6th. Approximately 20
people attended the evening meeting and tour.

After an introduction by Supervisor Parker, interim CEO Dr. Kelly O’Keefe told attendees about some of the unique programs at Natividad then turned over the microphone to Dr. Gary Gray, NMC’s Chief Medical Officer, who explained the need for increased trauma care in Monterey County and the hospital’s decision to work towards earning a Level II Trauma Center designation. Over the last year, the hospital has hired nearly 70 additional staff members to meet the staffing needs of a trauma center, and in fact, has been treating trauma patients (more than 200!) since early October.

Dr. Peter Chandler, Medical Director of the Obstetrics/Gynecology Department, spoke to the group about Women’s and Children’s services. Of course, Natividad is well known for its Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, but did you know that NMC considered a ‘baby-friendly’ hospital and working to become one of the only ‘mother-friendly’ hospitals in the nation? Natividad is also the only county hospital with a certified nurse midwife on staff.

After a lively question and answer session, the group divided for tours of either the Emergency Room area to better understand how trauma patients are received at the facility or Maternity where the group was able to walk through a delivery room without having to experience any labor pains!

Dr. Kelly O’Keefe was appreciative of Supervisor Parker organizing and hosting the tour.

“We were able to highlight hospital services that exemplify our commitment to the people of our community to provide safe, effective, accessible, and quality health care,” says O’Keefe. “We welcomed the opportunity to share our progress in becoming the designated Level II Trauma Center for Monterey County.”

Supervisor Jane Parker was pleased with the community response to the event and the hospital staff’s participation.

“The feedback from those who attended has been very positive, and I am also hearing from many who were not able to attend who are so pleased that the opportunity was made available,” says Parker. “We are indeed lucky to have such a dedicated and mission driven team in place.”

Following the community tour, Natividad continued its informational outreach by taking part in a series of three Healthcare Town Hall meetings in November and December in Salinas, Seaside and Greenfield.
Health Department Community Flu Shot Clinic Results

It has been a successful year for the Health Department’s community flu vaccination clinics. This year, 3,603 flu vaccines were given compared to 2,074 last season and 1,381 in 2012.

Cases of flu are increasing but it is not too late to get a flu vaccination. It takes two weeks for the vaccine to take full effect so now is a very good time to get it and there is plenty of flu vaccine still available. Individuals can get a flu shot from their healthcare provider or one of the many pharmacies that are offering flu shots.

The CDC recommends everyone six months and older get a yearly flu vaccination. There are documented benefits from flu vaccination, including reductions in illnesses, related doctors' visits and missed work or school. Vaccination also prevents flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. While some of the viruses spreading this season are different from what is in the vaccine, vaccination can still provide protection and might reduce severe outcomes such as hospitalization and death.

The Health Department also encourages everyone to take simple disease fighting steps during flu season and year-round. Wash your hands frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes and if you do get sick, stay home.

County Staffers Share the Holiday Spirit

The holidays bring out the fun and creative side of county employees, as well as being a time when departments celebrate the season as well as year’s end. Here are some ways county departments and staff are marking this holiday season.

Clerk of the Board - Annual Gingerbread House Contest

This annual event shows us just how far the lowly gingerbread house can go in the hands of creative builders! Here are this year’s winners.
1st Place Department Submission:
Monterey County Free Libraries (Robin Cauntay) – “Reading this Holiday and Everyday”

1st Place Custom Design:
Laura Lawrence, RMA Planning – “Tiki Bar Holiday”

1st Place Extreme Design:
Margarita Arista & Claudia Link – “Up, Up and Away…”

2nd Place Extreme Design:
Denise Hancock, COB – “The Sky’s the Limit”

1st Place House Kits:
Gail T. Borkowski, COB – “Godzilla v. The Giant Nutcracker”
Child Support Services - Holiday Lunch

On December 10th, the Department of Child Support Services held its annual holiday party.

Thanks to the department’s Hospitality Committee, a dedicated group of fundraisers and event organizing volunteers, the break room was beautifully decorated with a simple winter and nature theme. Everyone enjoyed a catered feast of tacos, with all the fixings, and a dessert potluck.

Just before the party, the department held its semi-annual recognition event to acknowledge staff for a job well done as well as recognizing one individual from each of the department’s five units for top honors.

Emergency Communications (9-1-1) - Celebrating While On the Job

For those who will spend some of the holiday time at work, creating a festive atmosphere helps keep staff in the holiday spirit. During this time of year, the red lights in the 9-1-1 center don’t mean ‘emergency vehicles en route’ - they are there to help the dispatchers keep that holiday feeling.

Emergency Communications is one of those county departments that ‘never sleeps,’ and often there is more staff on duty during some holidays (like New Year’s Eve) than normal days.