

Shoulders New Role at LCMH

LAWRENCEVILLE - In December, long-time Lawrence County Memorial Hospital employee Christy Shoulders was promoted to the position of Director of Infection Control, Emergency Preparedness and Employee Health.

The first and third parts are challenging enough, but it's the Emergency Preparedness part that Shoulders is finding the most time-consuming, so far.

"There's so much to learn," said Shoulders, a native of Olney who still lives in Richland County. "The Infection Control and the Employee Health, they are what they are. But the Emergency Preparedness part is what I've dealt with most. A lot of it has to do with not knowing what's going to happen, and making sure that the hospital is prepared to do the appropriate response."

Already, Shoulders has traveled to Springfield to participate in "table top exercises," small group discussions that dealt with a wide variety of emergency preparedness situations.

"I was the only nurse at my table," she said. "It was very interesting. I didn't have any idea how much others were involved in all of this stuff."

On the county level, Shoulders works with Janelle Adams, the Lawrence County 9-1-1 Administrator, and a number of other officials.

Future plans call for a large-scale drill within the county. Two years ago, a chemical spill was staged, with first responders and many others from Lawrence County taking part.

"It's a lot of learning, a lot of new information," said Shoulders. "I'm expanding on things that are totally different from what I've dealt with previously."

Don Robbins, Chief Executive Officer of LCMH, says Shoulders has an "integral role" in implementing the hospital's strategic plan.

"Her role is going to be very important in our tracking of various key metrics related to health and wellness that tie into our strategic plan" Robbins said.

In regard to Infection Control, Shoulders says she must make sure that patients are ordered the right antibiotics, and following up is an important part of the process. From time to time, she says, she'll work closely with Amy Marley, Communicable Disease Nurse at the Lawrence County Health Department.

"We'll keep an eye on illnesses within the community and how they affect us," Shoulders said. "For example, if we're dealing with the flu, we'll keep track of the flu numbers that have come through the hospital."

Shoulders started working at the hospital in 2000, on the psychiatric ward. She continued to work there until the department was closed in 2007, and since then has served the hospital's patients on the medical floor. Prior to working at LCMH, she spent five years in Olney, working in same-day surgery and pediatrics.

After graduating from Richland County High School in 1990, Shoulders earned an Associated Nursing Degree from Olney Central College. Later, she completed work on a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville,

Shoulders and her husband, Dave, have three sons. Zachary, 21, attends Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. Joshua, 16, is a sophomore at East Richland High School, while Alex, 13, is in eighth grade.

"We're very excited to have Christy in her new role as we look to the future of Lawrence County Memorial Hospital," said Robbins.