

Ashley County Medical Center Crossett, Arkansas

Ashley County Medical Center, located in Crossett, Arkansas, is the only hospital in the rural county serving a population of approximately 25,000. The closest hospital in Arkansas is nearly an hour away, with the closest hospital located across the state border in Louisiana. The hospital has 46 inpatient beds including six intensive care beds and eight geriatric psychiatry beds. The hospital provided \$1.75 million in uncompensated care in 2001, with total revenue of only \$13.2 million. Like many rural hospitals, Ashley County Medical Center lacks the resources to recruit and retain specialist physicians forcing many patients to travel the nearly hour trip to the next nearest hospital in Arkansas. Ashley County Medical Center has been running deficits of between \$369,000 and \$483,000 for the last two years.

The loss of Medicaid funding will have a severe impact on the operations of the hospital. Important services including specialized ob-gyn services may be eliminated. Critical facility improvements that had been planned will now be delayed indefinitely, which will hinder the hospital's ability to recruit specialty physicians. Patients could be forced to travel nearly an hour to receive prenatal and other care that Ashley County Medical Center would have otherwise been able to provide locally. A wage increase promised to employees last year likely will not happen. Staff reductions will need to be initiated.

The impact at-a-glance:

- Specialized ob-gyn services, among other services may be eliminated
- Indefinite delay of critical facility improvements and equipment purchases
- Negative impact on ability to recruit new specialty physicians
- Staff reductions in addition to cancellation of planned pay inc reases
- Reduction of services
- Many services only available at remote alternative hospitals

Press Contact for Ashley:

Russ Sword
Tel. 870-364-4111