

Delta Memorial Hospital

Dumas, Arkansas

Delta Memorial Hospital is a 50-bed general acute medical and surgical hospital located in rural Arkansas. Delta Memorial Hospital is the principal safety net hospital in Desha County serving a population of 10,000, with the next closest hospital located 35 miles away. The hospital has recently undergone significant cost cutting measures, including cutting physician staff from eleven generalists and specialists to a staff of only six including two general practitioners, a psychiatrist, two family physicians and a rural health physician. Recruiting physicians in this rural area is extremely difficult, made more so by these reductions in staff. Delta Memorial is currently running a projected deficit for the year of \$100,000, representing a negative five percent margin.

Delta expects to lose \$385,000 with the loss of the Medicaid supplemental funds. With losses this high, cash reserves will be spent and survival beyond the next two years is doubtful. Severe cuts that will drastically impact access in our community will be necessary in a number of areas. One possibility is obstetrics services, which would leave the community with no OB care for 90 miles. Other services considered for elimination are the nuclear medicine program and inpatient and/or outpatient surgical services. Closure of these programs would force patients to travel 45 miles to receive treatment. The reduction in services may eventually force the hospital to downgrade its status from a full-service hospital to a Critical Access Hospital providing a far more limited range of services.

The impact at-a-glance:

- Doubtful survival of facility beyond two years
- Reduced services including possibly elimination of obstetric services leaving vacuum of care within a 90 mile distance
- Elimination of nuclear medicine program or elimination of surgical services
- Possible downgrade from full-service status to Critical Access Hospital status

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