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HRRMC completes ventilation system upgrade to intensive care unit

Negative pressure functionality provides increased protection from airborne diseases

SALIDA, Colo.— Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center (HRRMC) recently completed an upgrade to its intensive care unit (ICU) by creating patient rooms that function with a ventilation system known as negative pressure. Negative pressure rooms support infection control and isolation for patients who have highly contagious airborne illnesses including COVID, tuberculosis, SARS and MERS. This system, beneficial to both patients and staff, has become the standard of care since the hospital was built in 2008.

With support from a grant awarded to the HRRMC Foundation by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) in 2021, the project was completed within a two-week window this past December. The grant funding covered more than 50 percent of the total project expense.

“This is an important project for our patients and for our community,” explained Lezlie Burkley, HRRMC Foundation Director. “The addition of negative pressure functionality means that our ICU staff, patients and visitors are that much more protected from airborne diseases.” Burkley added, “Due to the impact of COVID, the timeframe for this remodel was intensified. DOLA was instrumental in supporting this project financially. They have been an important partner on several HRRMC expansion projects in the past two years.”

In addition to two ICU rooms, HRRMC also has an adjacent inpatient room outfitted with negative pressure functionality. The adjacent room will support ICU overflow, as well as isolation of a non-ICU patient. Each of the negative pressure rooms has access to its own bathroom, helping to further mitigate the risk of exposure for staff and other patients.

According to Bob Morasko, HRRMC CEO, “This negative pressure system was a necessary change that provides a higher standard of care and allows our inpatient healthcare services to be adaptable and responsive to current and future needs.”

The HRRMC Foundation provides the hospital with financial support to facilitate innovative programs and provide state-of-the-art healthcare services to the Salida Hospital District. For more information about the Foundation's initiatives, contact Lezlie Burkley at 719-530-2218 or visit HRRMC.com/Foundation.

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