Area hospitals explore partnership

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Prinevilleâ€™s Pioneer Memorial Hospital may form a new partnership with Cascade Healthcare Community, parent company of St. Charles Medical Centers in Bend and Redmond

The Board of Directors for Pioneer Memorial Hospital (PMH) in Prineville announced plans this week to consider signing a letter of intent to begin analyzing a possible business arrangement with Cascade Healthcare Community. For the last year, the PMH board has been weighing a variety of options to strengthen the organization financially and operationally in the face of many of the challenges facing small, independent hospitals across the nation. After much consideration, the board determined that the best option is to partner with a larger organization.â€œExploring the possibility of a partnership with a larger organization requires a lot of careful thought, analysis and community input,â€• explained Don Wee, CEO of Pioneer Memorial Hospital. â€œBy signing this letter of intent, weâ€™re committing to do a thorough exploration of the risks, benefits and opportunities that would result from a partnership with Cascade Healthcare Community.â€•The letter of intent is not a contract, but merely an agreement between parties that they both have an interest in entering into an agreement in the future. The PMH board plans to sign the letter in February and immediately begin the analysis. The tentative plan currently under discussion is for PMH to lease their land, buildings and equipment to CHC and allow CHC to manage hospital operations as part of the regional healthcare delivery network. PMH would retain full ownership of the land, buildings and equipment. After the analysis is completed, the process can be terminated if either party feels the arrangement is not in everyoneâ€™s best interest.â€œWeâ€™ve always had a close working relationship with Pioneer Memorial Hospital and the community of Prineville, and we look forward to exploring the possibility of expanding that relationship to continue meeting the healthcare needs of our region,â€• explained Jim Diegel, President and CEO of Cascade Healthcare Community. Cascade Healthcare Community, Inc. is the parent company of St. Charles Redmond and St. Charles Bend.