

Hiawatha Hospital to Add MRI Machine

(KNZA)--A strong enhancement for the Hiawatha Community Hospital, as plans proceed for the addition of an in house state-of-the art MRI machine.

Hospital Administrator John Moore says the machine, which will be leased with an option to buy, should be in place this spring. "We just feel like it's a strong move for the Hiawatha Hospital to have that technology here and have it more than just a couple of days a week," Moore tells MSC News.

Currently, MRI scans are offered through a mobile machine, transported the Hiawatha Hospital by truck, three days a week, and Moore says the hospital wanted to change that. "We wanted to get access to what they call a wide bore MRI, and that accommodates people with maybe claustrophobic conditions or a larger individual [as] it allows them to get into the MRI. The closest ones were St. Joe or Topeka at this point in time, so that was one of the reasons. When you have a mobile service, sometimes scheduling gets to be a problem, so we felt we'll have some control over that, how many we can do each day, and not try to bunch them all up,, trying to get them done on a Sunday or a Thursday."

Chief radiologist Dr. Crosby Gernon says the new machine will provide a better experience for patients. "This would allow patients, most of them, to be scanned feet first, so actually their head and shoulders will be out and they'll be able to look around. That's going to significantly improve the patient experience with MRI's."

Gernon, who says he's excited about the addition of the MRI machine, credits Radiology Department Head Kristen Saylor, Chief of Staff Dr. Steffen Shamburg, and Moore, for making the project a reality.

The machine will be installed in a currently unused area in the basement of the new hospital addition. The area will be renovated to include two dressing rooms, a waiting area, control room and MRI room.

Funding for the renovation will come from the hospital's operating budget.

That work is planned to be completed by the end of May.

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