

Hiawatha Hospital's finances continue to improve
(KNZA)--Hiawatha Community Hospital's finances continue to improve.

That word was delivered to the Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening by Hospital CEO John Broberg.

Broberg said revenue was up during the first five months of this year compared to last year. "Our gross revenue's been up about 14 percent over last year. Our expenses are also under budget from where we were previously, and primarily related to benefits expense. The operating margin for the first five months is better than it was last year and we have a positive operating margin, which is also very important to us. Now, with our increased revenue, and with our decreased expenses, we also anticipate that we'll pay Medicare back, so we've started accruing that money, as well."

Broberg said the hospital was able to make a \$150,000 payment last month on its line of credit with local banks and hope to make another payment this month. Broberg said the hospital plans to meet with the three banks to continue the line of credit because they feel that's an important funding source.

Broberg said the hospital's capital equipment needs continue to be a challenge. "We're putting together our capital equipment list for 2019, 2020 and 2021. The funds, or the request for equipment, well exceeds over \$1 million a year, sometimes \$2 million, and that's really where we need to continue to look at those options for plan B, which includes some version of tax support."

Voters during a special election in May defeated by a narrow margin a half-cent sales tax for health care services in the county.

Broberg also told the Commission the hospital is currently doing a community needs assessment. "That survey's available on our website, under community benefit, and this is a requirement every three years. We've had 125 people so far take that survey, and the survey ends on July 29. We'll be doing a public forum on August 15 at the Fisher Center, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We're asking for people to send us their reservations as we'll have a light meal. We'll be taking about the feedback from the community survey and talk about what our plans will be for addressing the community needs going forward."

Broberg said the Hiawatha hospital continues work closely with Community Medical Center, in Falls City, which plans to close its OB program November 1.

In addition, he said the hospital is working to recruit new providers as some of

their current providers will be retiring in 2 to 5 years.

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