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New E.R. staff at CVMC sets its priorities

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by MATT QUILLEN

SYLACAUGA — The new staff of doctors at Coosa Valley Medical Center's Emergency Department have promised a commitment to timely patient care.

Dr. Jason Begue took over as medical director for the CVMC Emergency Department in the fall. He said wait times and keeping patients informed will be top priorities.

"We want to make sure the system is set up so people are seen in an appropriate, timely manner," Begue said. "Nobody comes to the E.R. for a check-up. They come because there is something wrong, either they're scared or they're in pain or sick. They want and deserve to be taken care of as quickly as possible."

Begue and his team of doctors are part of the Pegasus Emergency Group. According to the group's Web site, physician-led teams reduce wait times, decrease medical errors and improve patient satisfaction through "superior management and proven systems."

Amy Price, vice president of Patient Care Services at CVMC, said one of the upcoming improvements will be the transfer of medical records to computer.

She said the electronic medical records will be a great tool for the E.R., providing faster access to doctors for testing.

"We're making significant changes in our E.R. so when patients come here they get the care they need," Price said. "Also, we're working to expedite treatment, so that patients get in and out and to the right facility, whether that's back home, whether that's (being admitted) or whether that's transferred out."

Price also said treatment begins with the hospital doctors.

"We have 26,000 patients a year that come into our Emergency Department," Price said, "so we're busy for a community hospital. And working on processes and ways to get patients in and out at that high of a volume in a community hospital is challenging. So much of that is led from a physician's perspective."

Begue graduated from medical school at the University of Mississippi in 2000. He then completed his residency in New Jersey in 2003.

He served as a member of the faculty at the UAB Departments of Emergency Medicine and Anesthesiology before coming to CVMC. He is also certified as a Diplomate by the American Board of Emergency Physicians.

Begue said part of the job he and his doctors must do is take care of the immediate problems and get people where they need to go.

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“The Emergency Department is there to take care of emergencies,” Begue said. “Once that emergency is taken care of, we don’t really need to do much else. We don’t need to spend a lot of time doing big evaluations on people. We need to take care of their emergency.”

“That emergency could be fear or pain. Once we decide this emergency is no longer there, that this is what needs to be done down the road, we can transfer that care to somebody else.”

Vanessa Green, vice president of Senior and Support Services, said Begue would be a speaker in an upcoming Community Links symposium, as well as other public forums. Price and Begue said it was important for the new doctors to do more than work in the city.

“We’re going to have a group of doctors show up here every day who are invested in the practice and who are known in the community,” Begue said.

For more information on Pegasus Emergency, visit www.pegasus.md.