

Lewiston Tribune, Friday, Feb. 25, 2011 – by Elaine Williams

Gritman has no trouble picking CEO

Interim chief executive officer of Moscow hospital is hired for permanent position

The interim has been dropped from the title of the chief executive officer of Gritman Medical Center in Moscow.

Kara Besst, 40, has been selected as the top executive of the hospital. She replaces Jeffrey W. Martin, 47, who died in a single-vehicle accident in October. No one else was hurt.

Until being named interim CEO in October, Besst was Gritman's chief financial officer, a position she held for 10 of the 16 years she has worked at the hospital.



Besst was the only person interviewed, meeting with Gritman's board, Quorum Health Resources - a Tennessee company that provides management services for the hospital - physicians who have privileges at the hospital, hospital staff and the public.

"Kara is the best choice to run Gritman Medical Center," said B.J. Swanson, chair of the Gritman board in a prepared statement. "She has helped create the vision and the culture of the hospital. She knows the staff. She is committed to the community. With her leadership, we can immediately move forward to continue our mission of providing excellent health care."

One of her priorities is maintaining the collaborative relationship with Pullman Regional Hospital and Whitman Hospital and Medical Center, Besst said.

The cooperation recently succeeded in attracting Juan Parra, a general surgeon, who will serve all three hospitals, Besst said. He is moving to the Palouse in July from the Seattle area, where he is an acting instructor at the University of Washington Medical School. Right now the Palouse hospitals are served by two general surgeons and some itinerant help, Besst said.

The compensation package of Besst is still being negotiated with Quorum Health, Swanson said. That company has been the employer of Gritman's chief executive officers as part of the contract it has with the board to provide management services for a number of years, Swanson said. Besst is the only person working at Gritman who is a Quorum Health employee, Swanson said.