

Baker City Herald, Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2011 – by Terri Harber (2 pages)

St. Alphonsus buys Baker Clinic

The Baker Clinic has been acquired by the St. Alphonsus Medical Group and is now officially known as St. Alphonsus Medical Group-Baker City.

A large white-and-red sign erected next to the smaller Baker Clinic sign announces the change to passersby in the 3100 block of Pocahontas Road, just east of St. Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City.

Sept. 1 was the official changeover date for the family and acute care clinic.

The acquisition of Baker Clinic is just “one step” toward creating a “clinical integration model of care” to best serve the community, said Ray Gibbons, CEO of Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City.

“When we look at the pillars of health care — access, quality, effectiveness and cost — it’s balancing those pillars in a new future as we’re being paid under an old system,” he said.

Dr. Jon Petterson has left the clinic to pursue global medicine.

Dr. Robert McKim, who has been practicing in Baker City since 1965, will continue work at the renamed clinic.

In a St. Alphonsus press release, McKim publicly thanked Petterson for his service to the community and wished him “the best of luck as he goes on to his next adventure.”

McKim also offered assurance that the clinic “will continue to offer quality medical service to the community in a timely fashion.”

He, Petterson and two family nurse practitioners have been caring for patients at the clinic.

A physician’s assistant is scheduled to start at the clinic next week. This health professional is licensed to provide care with supervision by a physician.

Among services offered at the clinic: walk-in urgent care, well child exams, dermatologic procedures, fracture and wound care and annual physicals for those covered by the Oregon Health Plan.

There also is an on-site lab.

Petterson, along with seeing patients on weekdays, was the acute care physician on Monday nights and Saturdays.

There will be no weekend hours during September, but Saint Alphonsus expects to resume weekend operation in October.

It's unknown whether operations and services at the clinic eventually could change.

"If we keep our focus on providing services that make sense and provide pluralistic services for the region, then we'll be on track," Gibbons said.

The interior of the clinic building also will be refurbished, he said.

Gibbons was named as the CEO of St. Alphonsus' Medical Center-Baker City almost a year ago.

The local hospital was known as St. Elizabeth Health Services until last year when it merged with St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise.

The Baker Clinic first opened in 1919 and was the city's first primary care practice.