

Saint Al's neighborhood hospital awaits accreditation

NAMPA — The new Saint Alphonsus Neighborhood Hospital on 12th Avenue Road in south Nampa, which opened Sept. 27, is still waiting on a survey to receive accreditation, according to spokesman Josh Schlaich.

The new hospital is able to treat patients because it's licensed by Southwest District Health and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. However, it won't be reimbursed by Medicaid, Medicare or Tricare until an accreditation survey is completed.

These surveys are done at random by an accrediting agency after a new hospital opens. A hospital must treat a certain number of patients and meet requirements before it can apply for a random accreditation survey, Schlaich said.

Until its survey is done, Saint Al's will absorb the costs to treat patients with Medicaid, Medicare or Tricare, Schlaich said. That way, these patients won't see increased costs during the gap between Saint Al's opening date and the survey date.

"We believe that the absorption of unreimbursed costs during this period showcases our continued commitment to Nampa and Canyon County," Schlaich said.

After the neighborhood hospital is accredited, it can seek retroactive reimbursement from government health care plans back to the date of the survey, but not all the way back to the date of the opening.

This is the second time an issue over accreditation has arisen for a new hospital in Nampa.

St. Luke's new Nampa hospital also was awaiting an accreditation survey so it could be reimbursed for patients on government health care, the Idaho Press-Tribune reported last month. The hospital opened Oct. 30. St. Luke's officials mistakenly thought they could get retroactive reimbursements back to the hospital's open date, rather than back to the survey date, according to the Idaho Statesman. St. Luke's officials said they expected its accreditation survey to take place this month.

Applying for a survey

Schlaich said the Saint Alphonsus Neighborhood Hospital could not apply for an accreditation survey until recently because the facility had not yet completed the needed requirements listed by its accrediting agency, DNV GL. An accreditation survey ensures every hospital complies with set standards by examining the records and treatments of patients during the survey period.

There are many requirements hospitals must meet to apply for the survey, including having completed treatment for at least 30 inpatients or 20 inpatients for smaller facilities, Schlaich said.

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While he is not sure if the neighborhood hospital has submitted an application to receive the survey yet, Schlaich said he expects it to be submitted soon if it hasn't already. He could not say when he expects the survey to take place, because the accrediting body does not announce the survey date beforehand.

Saint Alphonsus closed its hospital on 12th Avenue Road, replacing it with a new hospital at Garrity Boulevard and Interstate 84 earlier this year. That hospital is accredited, according to Schlaich. In September, Saint Al's opened the smaller, neighborhood hospital in front of the old Saint Al's hospital on 12th Avenue Road. The neighborhood hospital is 40,000 square feet and offers emergency services, short-stay inpatient care and radiology services.

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