

TO MEDIA:

CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings

Director, Communications

Excelsa Health

724-837-1781 TEL

724-516-4483 CELL

**EXCELA HEALTH FOCUSES JEANNETTE CAMPUS
ON OUTPATIENT SERVICES, CONSOLIDATES INPATIENT CARE**

GREENSBURG, PA, January 26, 2010 ... Excelsa Health will consolidate inpatient services at Westmoreland Hospital because of declining admissions at its Jeannette campus. The transition will be complete by March 15 at which time outpatient diagnostic and imaging services will become a primary focus at the Jeannette campus. These services complement the previously announced conversion of Jeannette's emergency department to a full service urgent care center.

Licensed for 113 beds, the Jeannette campus has had an average census of less than 20 and average daily admissions below four. The consolidation to Westmoreland's main campus in Greensburg will be possible because of ongoing construction which will add 60 acute care beds by this spring.

In making the announcement, hospital president Ron Ott said the health system is continuing to adapt to demonstrated patient need and service utilization.

"We have seen a steady decline in admissions at Jeannette, with patients and physicians choosing services at our other campuses," Ott said. "Knowing Excelsa Health is meeting community need is gratifying, but we are disappointed that the fixed costs associated with operating an inpatient facility round-the-clock continue to outpace the revenue necessary to sustain that level of service."

"The ongoing shortage of physician specialists and their availability to support two emergency departments less than 4 miles apart has contributed to the consolidation of services at Westmoreland," said Carol Fox, MD, Excelsa's interim chief medical officer. "With 90 percent of all Jeannette admissions

currently coming through the emergency department, we expect the decline in daily census to accelerate once emergency care is available solely at the Greensburg campus.”

“Consolidating inpatient services reduces the stress placed on our medical staff already challenged to do more when they themselves are a limited resource,” added Ott. “It makes sense to bring our clinical and support staff together where they can function effectively to deliver high-quality patient-centered care to those who require a hospital stay.”

Staffing will be adjusted as the transition progresses. Westmoreland Hospital employs nearly 2,000 between Greensburg and Jeannette, with staff assigned where they are needed.

“Given the employee movement that will naturally occur between now and March 15 we expect job loss to be minimized,” added Ott.

Dr. Fox said patients who are admitted to Westmoreland Hospital in the coming weeks can expect no disruption in service. “We will be working with our physicians who currently admit to Jeannette to ensure there is continuity of care and reacquainting them with the many services still available on that campus.”

Excelsa Health continues to see a shift in service delivery that mirrors national trends. Last year, Excelsa logged 32,000 inpatient admissions across its four campuses. At the same time, 675,000 outpatient visits occurred throughout the system.

“Patients are using outpatient centers for many health care services, including surgery, diagnostic testing and imaging,” noted Ott.

Westmoreland’s outpatient center in Norwin Medical Commons offers surgery, therapy, cardiac rehabilitation and sports medicine in addition to diagnostic testing. At Jeannette, patients and ordering physicians will continue to have same day service for most diagnostic testing, including laboratory, X-ray, ultrasound, MRI, CT and cardiac diagnostics.

These diagnostic services will support Excelsa’s newest urgent care center. One of several in the health system, the Jeannette QuikCare will offer a valuable customer service alternative for conditions that are not true medical emergencies, saving patients time and money over emergency department visits when the health needs are for non-emergent care.