The North Mississippi Health Services Board of Directors announced recently that John Heer will resign his position as NMHS president and chief executive officer in one year, effective Aug. 31, 2014. NMHS will begin an immediate search for his successor.

"After significant prayer and discussion with my wife, we have decided that now is the time to make this change," Heer said. "It is in the organization's best interest to allow the new CEO to have input in the selection of the next president of NMMC-Tupelo and the NMHS Vice President of Community Hospitals."

"As chairman of the NMHS board, I would like to thank John for his outstanding leadership over the last 9½ years," said Robin McGraw, NMHS Board president. "Under his guidance, we were awarded the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award twice. North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo was a 2006 recipient and NMHS was a 2012 recipient of this prestigious award. We appreciate him being proactive and giving his notice well in advance so we can begin the process to hire a new CEO and to make a smooth transition in leadership."

Filling a position at this level in any health care organization can take up to a year or longer. Mickey Holliman, a member of the NMHS Board of Directors, will serve as chairman of the search committee.

Heer, 54, joined NMHS in May 2004. His accomplishments during his tenure at NMHS include restructuring the corporate board governance to be more transparent, open and responsive to the communities served; reorganizing the leadership structure according to services lines; initiating a Servant Leadership philosophy; reconnecting with the community; improving communication with employees, physicians and the Board; hard wiring several leadership systems to enhance alignment and deployment throughout the organization and leading the organization's efforts in its receipt of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2006 and 2012. Before joining NMHS, he served as president of Baptist Hospital, Inc. in Pensacola, Fla.

"This is a great organization, and I will miss being a part of its success," Heer said.

Heer and his wife Pollyanna reside in Tupelo. They have two grown daughters who live outside of the home. Heer and his wife intend to take a year off after his resignation to plan their next move.
**NMMC Home Health Consolidates Branch Offices**

Recent technological advances have made it possible for North Mississippi Medical Center Home Health to consolidate operations to one centralized location in Tupelo.

“In recent years technology has advanced to the point that small local branch offices aren’t needed,” said Kim Tutor, NMMC Home Health and Hospice director.

In the past, Home Health nurses and therapists had to return to the local branch office to update medical records after their visits. Now, each nurse has a laptop that is enabled with an air card, which provides Internet access no matter where they are.

“This means that records are updated in real time,” Tutor said. “So nurses and therapists have immediate access to anything that is updated from another point of care, and other providers can have access to their documentation from home visits.”

Home Health will continue to care for patients in the affected counties, with no disruption of service.

“I’m excited about the changes,” said Tara Terrell, RN, referral coordinator in the Tupelo office. “This should make care even more accessible and give patients a better continuum of care. There’s no waiting until a nurse or therapist can get back to the office to hear from a physician. We will have immediate access to information we need. The main thing is I want our patients to know we will still be there for them. Nothing changes in terms of when and how we care for them.”

“It’s a win-win for us and most importantly, for our patients,” Tutor said.

A centralized call center will help to reduce wait time on the phone when patients, family members or caregivers speak to staff about questions or concerns. Patients can continue to call the 1-800 number they have always called to reach NMMC Home Health, and the call will automatically roll to the new call center.

“Another positive is that employees will be able to have a better work/life balance,” Tutor said. “Real-time access means there’s no need to synchronize their computers or to drive to the office every day for updates. It will really save time for our employees.”

NMMC Home Health serves 17 counties in northeast Mississippi.

Patients can continue to call the 1-800 number provided by their branch. For more information, call 1-800-626-3557 or (662) 377-3607, or visit www.nmhs.net/home_health.php.

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**Clinic Medical Records Clerk Earns EOM Honor**

North Mississippi Medical Clinics recently named Angela Kelly as the August Employee of the Month.

Kelly is a medical records clerk at IMA-Tupelo Rheumatology and Osteoporosis Center, where she has served since 1999. She is a graduate of Saltillo High School.

“Kelly is always smiling and speaks to everyone she meets,” said a coworker who nominated Kelly. “She is very kind-hearted, always willing to help and always has a smile. When she’s on the phone you can hear the compassion in her voice.”

Kelly says her favorite part of her job is her patients and family of coworkers.

She has two children – 16-year-old Devin and 13-year-old Kelly Ann. The family attends Belden Baptist Church, where she keeps the nursery.

The Employee of the Month honor recognizes employees with exemplary job performance and customer service skills, as well as community involvement.

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**Press Ganey Publication Features NMHS Baldrige Win**

“Partners,” a national publication printed by Press Ganey and distributed to its member organizations, featured a case study on NMHS receiving the 2012 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The July/August 2013 issue included an interview with Rodger Brown, NMHS vice president of human resources, and highlighted the health care organization’s achievements in customer and work force engagement, satisfaction and retention.
Behavioral Health Welcomes New Psychiatrist

The North Mississippi Medical Center Behavioral Health Center is pleased to welcome new psychiatrist Chika Iwueke, M.D.

Dr. Iwueke is moving to Tupelo from Memphis, Tenn., and is originally from Nigeria. He received his medical training from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, where he also completed his residency in the Department of Psychiatry. During his residency, he served as chief resident.

The NMMC Behavioral Health Center provides assessments at no cost. Assessments are conducted and a plan of care is formulated for the patient. Assessments are available by appointment or by walk-in Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

For more information call (662) 377-3161 or 1-800-442-2238.

New Pediatrician Joins West Point Clinic

Children’s Clinic welcomes new pediatrician Archie Del Mundo Cachola, M.D., to West Point.

Dr. Cachola earned a bachelor’s degree in biological science from the University of California Irvine, before pursuing his medical degree at Far Eastern University School in Manila in the Philippines. He completed a residency in pediatrics at Alton Ochsner Hospital in New Orleans. He has been board-certified by the American Board of Pediatrics since 1990.

Dr. Cachola was affiliated with Children’s Hospital of Orange County in Orange, Calif., for 12 years and was then in private practice with Paramount Medical Group in Santa Ana, Calif. He practiced at Harris Medical Clinics in Newport, Ark., before coming to West Point.

He joins Dr. Keith Watson and certified family nurse practitioner Keicia Lynn at the clinic. Children’s Clinic is open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday at 720 Medical Center Drive.

For appointment information, call (662) 494-1620 or 1-800-843-3375.

Subway Opens NMMC-Tupelo Restaurant

Subway recently opened, giving diners at NMMC-Tupelo a new opportunity to “eat fresh.”

Subway is located in the former McAlister’s location on the first floor of NMMC’s East Tower. Stop by for breakfast between 7-10 a.m. daily, and enjoy the rest of their menu anytime between 7 a.m. and midnight. Subway accepts cash, debit/credit cards and badging for payroll deduction. While no employee discount is available, local Subway coupons are welcome.

Chick-fil-A will be located next to Subway and is slated to open in late September. A grand opening for both restaurants is scheduled for this fall.

Live Well Videos From Vim & Vigor

- Watch “Prepping Your Child for a Trip to the Doctor” for tips to help your next visit to the pediatrician go smoothly. Click www.nmhs.net/media/vimandvigoronline.php to watch this informative video.
- “Is it Heartburn or a Heart Attack?” Know the differences between the symptoms by watching the free video at www.nmhs.net/media/vimandvigoronline.php. It could save your life!
- Watch “Senior Spills” to learn the steps you can take to avoid falls and injuries at home. This free video is available at www.nmhs.net/media/vimandvigoronline.php.
Following the tragic death of Weston Reed, a young soccer player in Tupelo who went into full cardiac arrest on the field, Dr. Crossen spearheaded efforts to offer free sports physicals for athletes as young as sixth grade and to add heart screenings to the free sports physicals offered to varsity student-athletes by North Mississippi Medical Center. More than 2,000 children participate in these two events each year, demonstrating the tremendous impact this program has had on his community.

Each child gets an EKG, and those with suspicious results also get a free echocardiogram to rule out potential structural defects which might increase their risk during athletics. Thanks to his efforts, children in northeast Mississippi can take part in extracurricular activities with more assurance of their health and safety.

Dr. Crossen graduated from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in 1981 and is board certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease and clinical cardiac electrophysiology.

Dr. Crossen has practiced with Cardiology Associates of North Mississippi and at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo since 1998.

Founded in 1856 and now headquartered in Ridgeland, the Mississippi State Medical Association (MSMA) is a physician organization serving as an advocate for its 4,600-plus members, their patients, and the public health. For more information about the MSMA and its efforts to promote a healthy Mississippi, please visit the association website at www.MSMAonline.com.

Tupelo pulmonologist Dr. James Rish, president of the Mississippi State Medical Association, presents the 2013 MSMA Community Service Award to Dr. Karl Crossen, a cardiac electrophysiologist in Tupelo.