There’s a lot to admire about healthcare in America. For the most part, our healthcare facilities are up-to-date and well-equipped. Our physicians are highly trained. Technology is widely available. Access to outpatient care is growing rapidly. Safeguards help ensure quality. We take pride in our hospitals and the people who choose healthcare as their profession. Medical miracles happen nearly every day.

All of that is true throughout our great country – and it’s all true here, in Eastern Connecticut, as well.

There’s a lot wrong with American healthcare, too. Mainly, it costs too much. Health spending totals $2.8 trillion a year nationwide. Think about this: if U.S. healthcare were its own economy, it would be the fifth largest in the world. That’s just staggering.

The list of woes goes on: Our whole health system is geared to fix folks up rather than keep them well. Access to routine care, though getting better, is still a problem. We need to focus more on helping people stay healthier and rely less on costly emergency and acute care services. We still make it way too complicated for most people (including those of us who work in Healthcare) to understand how the parts of the health system can actually work together to keep us well.

We need to focus on keeping the doors of Windham Hospital open. It has been struggling for too many years, on too many fronts, and there’s too much at stake to risk losing this cornerstone of community care.

So we’ll explore how our “cornerstone services” model can better serve our community, and create a more sustainable foundation for Windham Hospital. That’s why this series of columns will be called “Cornerstone of Care.”

We’ll take a look at how we need to turn the tide of negative numbers: not just the declining number of people who are hospitalized, but also the challenges in attracting and retaining providers.

We’ll review how we intend to invest in, and continue to support, a broad array of healthcare services – in the hospital, at our health centers, in the community and throughout our system – for Windham.

No one denies that change is needed everywhere in American healthcare. But we all know that change is more challenging when it hits close to home. That’s why I feel obligated to explain, and explore, what’s happening and why – and how my colleagues and I are listening.

Together, we can create a sustainable system of care to fix what’s ailing Windham Hospital – so it’s sound tomorrow and its service to the community can be secure for years to come. In so doing, we can also help address some of the problems facing healthcare in general.

Dave Whitehead
President,
Windham Community Memorial Hospital

Cornerstone of Care
A continuing community conversation about creating a sustainable future for Windham Hospital

Think about this:
if U.S. healthcare were its own economy, it would be the fifth largest in the world.
That’s just staggering.

All of that is true in Eastern Connecticut, too.
Addressing these problems – creating access to high-quality, safe and more affordable care – will require change. It will be hard, and sometimes it will feel uncomfortable.

Periodically over the next several months, I want to provide updates on what’s changing, and why, as we work on creating a more sustainable model of care for our region – for the people who rely on our hospitals and health centers.

It’s about transformation – and that’s especially needed for Windham Hospital.

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