

Lakewood Hospital to focus on geriatrics, neurosciences

By Kevin Kelley

WESTSHORE

In an effort to better direct its resources in the dynamic health care field, Lakewood Hospital has embarked on a plan to focus on four specialties — geriatrics, neurosciences, diabetes treatment and education, and orthopedics.

Inpatient care of pediatrics patients will be handled by Fairview Hospital, also a member of the Cleveland Clinic Health System.

Janice Murphy, president of both Lakewood and Fairview hospitals, spoke on the plan at a luncheon meeting of the West Shore Chamber of Commerce held April 13 at Lakewood Country Club in Westlake.

Murphy said that today hospitals in systems such as the Clinic system must offer complimentary services to create economic synergies.

"We cannot all deliver the same level of care we did 40 years ago, 10 years ago," she said. "The technology, the needs, the demands are so different."

Lakewood Hospital has spent \$24 million in capital

investments since 2006, Murphy said.

In 2009, it added a 16-bed orthopedic unit, which has been attracting many patients from Lorain County, she said. The hospital's staff also added 10 Cleveland Clinic neurology specialists who treat conditions such as multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and chronic headaches. Geriatric care and diabetes education programs have also been expanded, she said.

Lakewood Hospital currently has a 12-bed inpatient pediatric unit, but it cares for only one or two patients on average, Murphy said. In contrast, Fairview Hospital has a 24-bed pediatrics unit which is heavily utilized, she said.

"For all intents and purposes, [the inpatient pediatrics unit] has already moved," Murphy said.

Lakewood Hospital will continue to serve children with services such as outpatient diagnostic tests, outpatient surgery and emergency care, Murphy said.

The Detroit Road hospital will continue to provide childbirth care in low-risk cases, Murphy said. Higher-risk deliveries will be done at Fairview Hospital, which has a neonatal care unit.

Currently certified as a Level II trauma center, Lake-

wood Hospital will lose that status in January, Murphy said only about 15 trauma cases are seen at the hospital's emergency department each year. That's fewer than 1 percent of all cases. The certifying agency said that was not enough volume of trauma cases to justify continuing the certification, Murphy said. Hospitals in the area have begun taking a regional approach to trauma cases, she added.

The decline in drunk driving accidents and the increased use of seat belts have caused a drop in true trauma cases, Murphy said.

The acute rehabilitation programs that provide occupational and physical therapy, now located at Fairview Hospital, will move to Lakewood Hospital, Murphy said. The goal is to have 40 beds dedicated to rehabilitation programs, she said.

But that does not mean that Lakewood Hospital is abandoning its mission as a community hospital, Murphy said.

"We are an acute care hospital," she said. "A lot of people say to me, 'Jane, you're just turning Lakewood into a nursing home.' And that isn't the case at all. We're really just specializing our services."