

For immediate release

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Elizabethtown Community Hospital Breaks Records in 2009

Radiology, emergency department and laboratory experience record numbers

Elizabethtown, N.Y. (December 31, 2009) – The Elizabethtown Community Hospital has had a very busy year. The hospital’s radiology department, emergency room and lab have performed more studies, seen more patients and completed more lab tests than ever before.

The radiology department has completed 9,700 studies in 2009, an increase of 6.6% over last year’s record. This number represents an even higher number of actual images, as each study can be comprised of many individual images.

According to Molly Thompson, director of the hospital’s all-digital radiology department, this represents an incredible amount of work. “There’s no doubt that we’ve been busy”, she commented. “We’ve added so many new services in recent years and when you consider that the radiology department handles both inpatient and ER patients as well as referrals for non-emergency procedures, it is definitely a very busy area of the hospital.”

This year’s record signifies an increase in all forms of digital imaging – CT scans, mammograms, x-rays, echocardiograms, ultrasound, bone densitometry, and MRI. Six full-time technologists, along with two per diem employees work in the radiology department; and each holds a particular level of expertise with the various types of imaging.

With the recent addition of MRI, the department is poised to break the 10,000-mark in 2010. “There’s not a doubt in my mind that we’ll surpass 10,000”, said Thompson.

The hospital’s emergency room has seen over 5,050 patients in 2009 – setting another record for the hospital (a 9.8% increase). In 2008, it treated 4,600 patients. The ECH emergency department offers state-of-the-art equipment, along with a highly skilled staff, accustomed to dealing with a variety of serious injuries and life-threatening situations.

“Our department is always one of the busiest areas of the hospital”, said Meredith King, nurse manager of the ER. “Whether it’s a trauma situation, major accident, heart attack, broken bone or a sick child in the middle of the night, our staff is well-trained and poised to handle it all – and sometimes, simultaneously.”

The hospital's lab, which is able to perform over 92% of all physician-ordered tests on-site, has also experienced record volume this year, performing well over 83,500 tests. The lab sees over 200 walk-in patients a week, not counting ER patients or those staying in the hospital. The 24-hour lab typically handles over 80,000 tests annually, offering vital information to doctors and nurses. Its automated communication system forwards test results to doctors' offices every few hours.

An ongoing investment in advanced technology contributes to the hospital's overall efficiency. ECH has invested in many technological initiatives, improving capabilities within and among its departments. The Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) allows the ER to access a patient's x-rays, CT scan, ultrasound or other study from radiology in a split second; and much of the lab's equipment offers rapid analysis of a patient's health status, which can be easily forwarded to the emergency staff. "Obviously, the ER needs to have this information as quickly as possible", said King. "It's incredibly beneficial to have technology like this in place throughout the facility."

About Elizabethtown Community Hospital

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital providing healthcare to residents of communities throughout Essex County. The hospital offers advanced technology, access to specialists, a variety of healthcare services, and highly skilled medical staff. It boasts an all-digital radiology department, newly-renovated emergency room, lab, physical therapy services and inpatient unit offering both acute and sub-acute care.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is the only critical access hospital in Essex County accredited by the Joint Commission. It received its critical access hospital status in 1997.