

Hospital financial concerns lead to meeting

(KNZA)--Hiawatha Community Hospital officials will meet with city and county leaders during a special joint meeting next week to discuss the hospital's current financial crisis and possible financial assistance.

The meeting has been scheduled for 12 noon Monday, January 28 in the main courtroom on the 3rd floor of the Brown County Courthouse.

The Brown County Commission and Hiawatha City Commission each approved holding the joint meeting during their respective meetings Tuesday.

Hospital officials were initially scheduled to meet with each government entity separately this week but it was decided instead to hold the joint meeting.

Hospital CEO Jeff Shelton earlier this month announced about one million in cost cutting measures in an attempt to bring the hospital back into financial security. That included a reduction in employee fringe benefits, two percent pay cut for all employees and additional compensation cuts by providers.

In addition to the cuts, Shelton said the hospital will need to find a way to make up another almost \$2 million this year.

The hospital's financial problems are being blamed on mandates related to the Affordable Care Act, sequestration by the federal government in 2013 that reduced Medicare payments by two percent and issues that resulted from the electronic health records system from 2013-18 that led to a more than \$1.4 million reimbursement penalty from Medicare.

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