

Hopes high for Horton clinic return

(KAIR)--Although a tentative summer date is set to again see a health clinic operating in Horton, there are still numerous steps necessary to make that happen.

A possible full return of the Horton Community Hospital is also set as a goal.

The Hospital, and included clinic, closed in March, with the former ownership, EmpowerHMS, under [investigation](#) and facing [lawsuits](#) related to mismanagement.

Despite the closing, Dr. Richard Brown continues to retain the title of Chief of Staff.

He told MSC News he's hopeful that all pieces will come together to fulfill the current July 1 timeline for reopening the clinic. "Quite frankly, it's been a lot of questions, a lot of issues with what the trustees are going to do, what the court system is going to do, and how they handle things at the money level. Once all this administrative process kind of pans out, then we get to start to decide how this is going to happen, who's going to be the management team, who's going to run it."

Brown's confidence in restoring clinic operations is based in part on what he says is the court's release of money to begin paying wages owed to a select group of employees. "July 1 is what we're targeting. It's a tentative date but I'm fairly confident in it. They've already released funds to start paying the employees' back salaries and I think that is pivotal for this to go forward. It's going to be a piecemeal approach as far as releasing the funds. They can't just get access to all these funds."

Brown added that while a group of employees continue to work voluntarily, many left hospital employment when paychecks stopped coming earlier this year due to the alleged mismanagement. "A core group of people did stick around, and I'm saying hats off to the core group, the preservation team. There's a few people that are continuing going in everyday to do just the background work to keep things running."

Brown stresses, as he did during a March [town hall meeting](#) focused on the hospital's future, that the hospital itself has proven to be a lucrative operation.

A timeline for a full reopening of the hospital is not immediately set, with the clinic restoration the current priority.

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