

## **Opinion Editorial – Longview News-Journal**

### **A Community Blessing**

By Richard A. Dial, CPA

The holidays are a time to take a break from the daily grind, spend time with family and friends, and reflect before welcoming a new year. It is also a time to be thankful for life's blessings and opportunities. Twenty-eight years ago, I accepted the opportunity to serve on the Good Shepherd Health System's Board of Directors. As a professional accountant, my expectation was that my contribution of time and financial insight would benefit our local hospital. I did not anticipate the many unexpected blessings I would receive in return from serving the hospital and the community.

I now understand that the true measure of a hospital system goes beyond a balance sheet. It involves a community of patients, caregivers, physicians, volunteers, employees, neighbors, businesses, organizations and board members. It is not about profit and loss, but rather to take great care of the health needs of our community.

At Good Shepherd, the mission is to serve the patient, all patients, and our growing community. With this in mind, each and every decision the Board of Directors has made is based on what is best for our community. We are owned by the community, run by the community and all rewards are given back to the community. Our board members live here, work here and raise families here; so we see sickness, care for injuries and experience the heartaches. It is probably easier to make business decisions when you never see the personal impact of the results of what you do, but as board members, we experience firsthand the decisions we make and the impact of our decisions on our community.

Our doctors and staff of 3,200 people care for our community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. They help and improve the health and lives of people throughout the region and their dedication to every patient regardless of their ability to pay is a testimony to their commitment and leadership.

As the outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors, there are many milestones to be proud of at Good Shepherd such as the celebrated cardiac program, the Institute for Healthy Living and the newest designation as an esteemed teaching institution, sponsored by the University of Texas Health Science Center. Over the years, our local leadership has made decisions to invest back into our hospitals and clinics. This has greatly benefited our community economically as well as providing our area residents a first class hospital system, recognizing Good Shepherd in the Top 10% in the nation for

quality care. As I continue to serve on the Board of Directors, I look forward to many more meaningful milestones.

I am proud to be a part of the hospital leadership that has worked so hard over the years to continue to reinvest in Good Shepherd to provide quality and comprehensive medical care and facilities for East Texas residents. What does this mean today for the friends and family who become injured or ill? Our loved ones are able to choose topnotch medical care that is convenient and close to home. It's the small things that can make a difference when one is a patient, such as the comfort and joy of the daily visits by friends, family, ministers, coworkers and personal physicians. It is one of the blessings of being a part of a community that is fortunate to be served by Good Shepherd Health System.