

## New CEO for Palm Drive Hospital

By David Abbott

Sonoma West Editor

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Sebastopol — As the election for the Palm Drive Health Care District Board of Directors enters its final few weeks, a bit of good news has come to the hospital with the announcement of a new, more permanent CEO.

Richard Polheber, a health care executive with more than 30 years' experience, has been named Palm Drive Hospital's new chief, with the unanimous support of the District's board on directors.

Polheber will replace Interim CEO Mike Lieb, who replaced former interim CEO Neil Todhunter on May 24. Lieb did not seek the permanent position.

"My impression of Rich is that he has a lot of great experience and will bring a lot of stability to Palm Drive," said District Board president Nancy Dobbs. "He's also a nice person, who reaches out to different constituencies."

Dobbs was also impressed with some of the innovative programs Polheber was involved with in Arizona.

During his time at Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital, Polheber improved the hospital's finances significantly, designed a quality control structure that was later adopted by three hospitals, expanded regional outpatient centers, and created a medical partnership between Carondelet Holy Cross and Hospital Basico in Sonora, Mexico, that improved revenues and patient care at both locations.

"I'm really excited about this. It's the best thing that's happened to this hospital in a long time," Dobbs added.

Although he begins his tenure in December, Polheber will travel to Sonoma County to be involved in the strategic planning process that will begin at the end of October.

"I am truly excited about the opportunity to come to Palm Drive," Polheber said. "I see an engaged board with a commitment to improve the hospital, and there appears to be a great foundation to take it to the next level."

Polheber added that he's not a "status quo" person, and sees a lot of opportunity in Sonoma County to create innovative methods of health care delivery.

He also sees physician recruitment as the highest priority in a very competitive marketplace.

"I don't spend a lot of time thinking about competition," he said. "I want to focus on moving forward."

Polheber, 64, will receive a salary of \$250,000 a year, and is expected to start at Palm Drive on Dec. 1. He most recently served as interim CEO at the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers in Phoenix, AZ. From 1999 to 2009, he was CEO of Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital, a 31-bed hospital in Nogales, AZ.

Under Palm Drive Hospital's management agreement with Health Tech Management Services (formerly Brim Healthcare), Polheber will be an employee of Health Tech, but serves at the will of the Palm Drive Health Care District Board. The hospital reimburses the management company for the cost of the CEO.



Richard Polheber