

FEATURED

Sidney Health Center's ER modernized for the 21st century

By Greg Hitchcock | The Sidney Herald
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A ribbon cutting for the Emergency Department
Greg Hitchcock



The ambulance bay was cavernous, and within it contained people who came to view, tour and celebrate the grand opening of Sidney Health Center's renovated Emergency Department on Thursday.

The \$4.8 million project, constructed by Corland Construction, completely transformed the Emergency Department, originally built in 1983, into a modern cutting-edge facility.

Among the improvements are larger private soundproof patient rooms, an extended three stall ambulance bay area to accommodate ambulances from outlying towns like Fairview and Savage, and a nurse control station enhancing patient flow.

The ambulance garage serves the Richland County Ambulance Service, which did 538 runs in fiscal year 2023. The garage can accommodate ambulances more efficiently offering better patient flow. There are also ambulance services in Fairview, Lambert, Savage and two in Sidney.

"I am happy that we continued our plan to provide patients and staff a new more efficient facility," said President Robert Burnett of the Sidney Health Center Board of Directors.

Care Flight Nurse Eric Rukstad said the new facility was stunning. Care Flight offers air medical transportation for patients requiring emergent or urgent medical care and averages 32 flights per month.

"It's a lot nicer and better for care and privacy," Rukstad said.

"With it centralized, they can watch and monitor what is going on in the Emergency Department," Care Flight Paramedic John Manley said.

With seven private treatment bays, improved patient monitoring, and a separate waiting room, Sidney Health Center Director Jennifer Doty said this enhances patient experience.

She explained the Emergency Department with the new Cancer Center provides a resource for other medical facilities in the region.

"We are helping not only the community, but the entire region," Doty said. "For some, we can stabilize the patient before transporting them to another facility if needed."

Emergency Department Medical Director O. Pete Council, M.D. said the design project, started in 2022, was a collaboration between Sidney Health Center's medical providers including doctors and nurses working with the architects.

"Critical care in the ER is more needed than ever before," Dr. Council said. "Sidney Health Center is a regional center for medicine serving people from 300 miles away."

"The Emergency Department is staffed 24/7 by board certified doctors backed by skilled nurses with critical care experience," he said.

The public toured the facility during the grand opening viewing the many modern rooms equipped with state of the art medical equipment including a trauma room, waiting room, and testing room. The center sees approximately 500 to 525 patients a month.

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