



Media Release

Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center

Public Affairs Office

36000 Darnall Loop

Fort Hood, Texas, 76544

mikaela.t.cade.civ@mail.mil Email

Telephone (254) 288-8005

Web site: www.crdamc.amedd.army.mil

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CRDAMC Commander discusses Direct-In, UCCs, and the new hospital at town hall

By Mikaela Cade, CRDAMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas— An engaged and enthusiastic group gathered at a town hall hosted by Col. Mark Thompson, commander of Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center (CRDAMC) on Jan. 28.

Thompson opened the town hall by welcoming the group and sharing that he was looking forward to answering any and all questions regarding healthcare at CRDAMC.

“It’s 6 p.m. now, but I’m free all evening. So I can stay all night if you want to,” Thompson joked.

Thompson’s discussion was centered on a few key topics impacting the community right now: the Direct-In campaign, the need for an Urgent Care Center (UCC), expanded Pharmacy Services, the Intrepid Spirit center, and the new hospital opening.

When asked why some active duty family members are receiving letters stating they must now obtain primary care services at Darnall instead of with an outside provider Thompson explained, “While there are several reasons this is happening, it primarily comes down to readiness.”

“It is my responsibility to ensure that our providers have the depth and breadth of experiences that keep them ready for their Army mission,” Thompson said.

“By directing beneficiaries to CRDAMC primary care providers, their experiences are deepened, and it keeps them ready to support any medical mission they are called to complete,” he explained.

Most people don't realize that during deployments physicians, regardless of their specialty, also address the primary care needs of deployed personnel, making it important for them to have those experiences in the medical treatment facility.

"Right now, CRDAMC has the capacity to take care of all our beneficiaries within a 30-mile radius of the facility and we have a responsibility to do it," Thompson said. "So, I guess when it comes to why we're having beneficiaries obtain primary care at our facility, it really is all about military readiness, access, and responsibility."

The hospital commander went on to discuss that medical center leadership is exploring the possibility of an urgent care center within the medical footprint. However, the topic won't be fully explored until after the move to the new facility.

"We are going to have an urgent care capability at Fort Hood, but we need time after the big move to thoroughly explore the where and when of it," Thompson stated.

When asked if you can only get refills at Clear Creek Pharmacy, Thompson discussed the expanded pharmacy services and encouraged community members to use the new pharmacy.

Expanded Pharmacy services at Clear Creek PX include being able to fill new handwritten and electronic prescriptions as well as providing text and voice alert services when customers drop-off prescriptions.

"It really is the best in terms of automation and equipment that we have, plus the other nice features make it a great option for pharmacy services," Thompson shared. "Once you are registered in the system, you can actually drop off your prescription and go shop in the PX until your prescription it is ready."

Thompson also discussed the opening of the Intrepid Spirit center and its value to the community. "The Intrepid Spirit's primary focus is to take care of Soldiers with TBI along with co-existing conditions, like pain or PTSD.

This satellite center serves this entire region and co-locates multiple disciplines under one roof to provide a more comprehensive, intensive approach to care.

Finally, the commander discussed the new hospital.

The new Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center is set to open for patient care on Sunday, April 3.

"We actually begin to move into the new facility on March 21," Thompson shared. And if you've ever moved you know it's a process."

CRDAMC will share clinic opening times in the next few weeks.

“For most people the move should be pretty seamless because much of our primary care occurs at outlying clinics,” Thompson said.

CRDAMC will continue to provide the full-range of services for beneficiaries during the move to the new hospital. One exception to note early is that while elective surgeries will not be scheduled during the move, the surgical team remains prepared to take care of any emergencies that arise.

Additionally, the emergency department will remain fully operational. The team plans to leverage Thomas Moore Health Clinic on April 3 to support acute, but not emergency situations.

In addition to signs around the current facility and information sharing through various media channels, the community can expect to see teams outside the facility on the actual move day to direct beneficiaries to the new facility.

Right now, community members need to know that at 7:00 a.m. on April 3 you can get care, deliver your baby, or even visit patients at the new hospital.

“All the information will be put out through various media outlets as we get a bit closer,” Thompson promised.

But for now, the CRDAMC team is focused on the Day in the Life event this Saturday.