

## **PRESS RELEASE - RICE MEDICAL CENTER SERVICE ALIGNMENT**

June 26, 2018

Following three years of evaluation and consideration, Rice Medical Center will discontinue inpatient Obstetrical services, including the delivery of newborns. The Rice Medical Center and Rice Medical Associates will continue to provide outpatient obstetrical services and other Women's Health Services as appropriate. RMA doctors with scheduled deliveries have made arrangement to perform those deliveries at Columbus Community Hospital.

This decision, made by the Operating Board of Rice Medical Center is one faced by many Texas rural hospitals as stated in a recent Texas Tribune article, "Across Texas, rural hospitals are facing a difficult decision: Whether to continue delivering babies as the number of births falls and the cost of providing the service rises." In the same article, The Texas Tribune reported, "just 69 of Texas' 163 rural hospitals will still deliver babies."

The Rice Hospital District has experienced an aging population and strives to match hospital services with resident health care needs. The hospital has experienced low birth volumes under conditions of shrinking reimbursement and additional regulatory pressures making the continuation of inpatient obstetrical services ill-advised. The hospital and associated clinics continue to strengthen their service lines to align with patient needs. The elimination of the inpatient obstetrical services will allow for the hospital to repurpose the existing floor space for much needed services of our population.

Rice is not alone in facing this challenge and making this difficult decision as the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals reports identical decisions recently in La Grange, Yoakum, Graham and Lamesa. Additionally, recently the Dallas Morning News reported a similar case for Baylor Scott & White - Carrollton.

Rice Medical Center remains a strong health care organization and the leading healthcare resource for the citizens of the Rice Hospital District. As our community's health care needs evolve and change we will continue to align our services to insure we are a strong health care provider for years to come. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact Administration at 979-234-5571. We will gladly listen and work with you for a positive outcome and healthy future.

Thank you,

Rice Medical Center

