New eatery options available at OMC

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Since the hospital is a place to go and get healthy, it made perfect sense to organizers at Oconee Medical Center to build an eatery that served as a retreat filled with wholesome and healthful food options.

Following months of renovations and menu blueprints, the Fresh Inspirations Café is now open inside the new Patient Tower.

"Since we closed our cafeteria two years ago, we have not been able to offer traditional plated meals. We've also been concerned about the nutritional value of the food we were serving in the grill, which was mostly fast food, like hamburgers, French fries and chicken fingers," said Hunter Kome, chief operating officer at Oconee Medical Center. "The food in the new café will be much more consistent with our mission to help people feel better and live more fully. We welcome everyone in the community to come eat with us any time."

The grand opening of the grill will be celebrated Thursday throughout the day.

The fresh look of the café not only adds a touch of modern style, it provides plenty of serene seating.

However, those craving fried foods need to look elsewhere.

Only healthful options will be provided inside the new digs, such as salads, fruits, hot meals, soups, sandwiches, made to order entrees and other health-conscious choices.

Don't plan on seeing vending machines packed with sugar-filled drinks, either. There will only be water, milk, juices and diet drinks available for those wanting to quench their thirst.



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The Fresh Inspirations Café at Oconee Medical Center is now open and will offer a variety of healthy meal options for staff and visitors to OMC.

"Several studies show the impact sugary sodas have had on the soaring rate of obesity in our country," Kome said. "With the help of our employee Fitness and Nutrition Committee, we decided that it was not consistent with our mission to make money selling a product that not only has limited nutritional value, but has a negative impact on many people's health. We are not banning these beverages on our campus, we simply chose not to sell them."

According to Oconee Medical Center, it is one of only a few hospitals in the country that has chosen to make the groundbreaking decision to remove fryers and sugary beverages.

Molly Chardin, Seneca resident who was visiting her aunt after surgery, said the new café sends a very important message.

"It is irony at its worst when a hospital serves nothing but fried foods and other junk food," Chardin said. "My aunt had surgery due to diabetes complications. I'm sure a lot of people take it personally when the place they are supposed to get better is serving food items that can hinder your recovery and ability to enjoy life. I think it's a great thing and it sends a very loud and clear message."

The new café will be open from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

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