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Closed Critical Access Hospital in Marks, MS Slated to Reopen

(MARKS, MS) – The [Quitman County Hospital](#) closed on October 31, 2016, as the county’s largest employer with 99 people. Without healthcare, despondency has grown with in the unemployed. Current acute healthcare situations have worsened due to the length of time it takes to receive critical medical and healthcare services in neighboring counties, which is at minimum a 30-minute drive.

With the county’s resolve to reopen, a partnership has been created with nearby Panola Medical Center. A path has been cleared for the Quitman Community Hospital to reopen by vote of the Quitman County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday morning. The hospital will have the capacity to provide emergency care as well as beds for acute patients, including those with COVID-19.

Manuel Killebrew, President of the Quitman County Board of Supervisors stated that he is “elated that the board, Delta Medical Foundation and Panola Medical Center in Batesville are forming a partnership to reopen the hospital.” Killebrew went on to say, “This means that 75-100 good paying jobs will return to the county, and it goes without saying, we need a hospital close by to provide medical services for our citizens.”

[Panola Medical Center](#) was re-established by its acquisition from a bankrupt estate and has improved its bottom line, grown its services and become a partner with local industrial and government partners. Quentin Whitwell, CEO and Chairman of the Board, made a statement about Panola’s influence and the Quitman re-opening. “Serving our patient populations in the North Delta region is our mission. Providing exceptional care for better health is our driven passion.”

“By reopening this hospital, the loss of jobs in the community will be reversed and the citizens of Marks will have renewed energy to grow the economy in the area,” stated [Senator Robert Jackson](#), who represents the State of Mississippi, District Eleven, which includes Quitman County. “I am pleased to have brought the Panola Med operators to the Board and that this new relationship has been forged.”

“The practical care we give every day needs follow-up and ease of access to specialists that can tend to higher acuity levels. But having a launching point from our own hospital will save lives and create new outcomes for patients,” said Lonnie Moore, a local Nurse Practitioner who also owns the former hospital building, and the president of [Delta Medical Foundation](#).

Quitman County is located in the Mississippi Delta. This is a rural underserved county with the racial makeup of 27.3 % whites, 70.9% blacks and 1.8 % others. It has a median annual household income of \$25,383 and a poverty rate of 35.6%, making it one of the poorest counties in the United States. The [2020 Census data](#) shows Quitman County population declined by -17.40%. This county went from 8,223 to 6,792 residents living in this county, the largest percentage of lost population out of the 82 counties located within the State of Mississippi.

Recent data from the *National Rural Accountable Care Consortium* ranked Quitman County 79th for health outcomes, 79th for health behavior, and 77th for health factors out of the 82 counties in Mississippi. This data also indicates that the county struggles with health issues such as 58% of the adult population dealing with high blood pressure, 45% with high cholesterol, 31% with heart disease, and 17% with diabetes.

In recent years, Quitman County has shown glimmers of promise and resilience. In April 2021, the closed [SuperValu](#) reopened as an independently-owned Jeffcoat's Family Market. In May 2018, the ribbon cutting was held for the opening of the newest Northwest Regional [Amtrak stop](#) in Marks. And, due to the county's rich 1960s [civil rights history](#), ties to four National Historic [Native American Mounds](#), [iconic blues artists and country music late great Charley Pride](#), and a [National Wildlife Refuge](#), Quitman County is becoming a nascent tourism destination.

Having the Quitman Community Hospital back up and running will make a significant difference in the quality of life for its residents, and help change the trajectory of the exodus of the county's population.

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