

New CEO to lead hospital

Friel takes promotion

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NEWS EDITOR

WATSONVILLE — A new CEO will lead Watsonville Community Hospital as the current chief, John Friel, takes on a more prominent position in the hospital's parent company, Community Health Systems of Tennessee.

The new CEO, Barry Schneider, came to the hospital six months ago to aid in the transition to CHS. He

has 25 years of executive experience in the hospital industry.

"I'm looking forward to the challenges," he said. "I think the hospital has a tremendous future, tremendous assets and a capable medical staff."

His plans for the Watsonville hospital include making a thorough assessment of current health needs in the community to see what serv-



Schneider

es need to be enhanced or developed. Striving to keep patients in Watsonville is one of his goals. He and his wife, Brenda, live in Capitola.

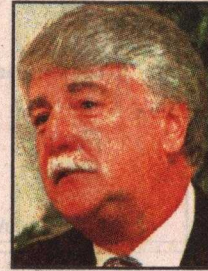
Prior to coming to the area in July to work for CHS, Schneider was a CEO for a Columbia HCA hospital in Chicago.

"Barry brings some skills that are stronger than mine," Friel said. "Barry came through the finance channels and has been on the corporate side of hospital during his career." Friel began his career as a nurse.

Friel will be promoted Feb. 1 to executive director of California op-

erations for CHS. He will assist the chain in planning new acquisitions in California and oversee the chain's four existing hospitals in the state.

"This is an opportunity for me to bring some value to a company that wants to expand in California," Friel said. Over the last two years Friel was actively involved in negotiations with hospital chains interest-



Friel

ed in buying the hospital. He gained experience in working with the board of directors on the issue, complying with the attorney general's office and maintaining community relations.

"He knows the state and related dynamics such as managed care. He will assist CHS's California markets by working closely with CEOs, boards and medical staffs in developing markets more rapidly, responding more quickly to specific needs and issues (and) representing CHS at important meetings," said Michael Portacci, group vice president of CHS, in a press release.

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Friel, who came to the area eight years ago to become the hospital's

CEO, said his major accomplishments include securing federal disaster funds that helped build the new \$70 million facility off Airport Boulevard.

Friel said he will be based out of

Watsonville on his new assignment.

The hospital has 100 beds with half of them filled on an average day. Doctors there see about 8,000 patients per month. There are more than 600 employees.