

# Park Clinic status as Rural Health Clinic renewed by LMH

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Livingston HealthCare has renewed Park Clinic's status as a Rural Health Clinic, the organization announced this week.

The designation ensures that the organization, which also operates Livingston Memorial Hospital, complies with federal standards required by the federal Medicare program. The designation ensures Park Clinic is meeting benchmarks for quality of care and a range of other concerns.

The classification also has implications for what type of reimbursements the health care group receives from the programs.

"What this means for us is that Medicare and Medicaid pay us differently" than if the clinic were categorized as another type of organization, explained Sandi Marlowe, the community development director for the organization. "They pay us on a cost basis rather than on a per-service basis."

Cost of service varies with

each patient's case and needs, she said. But a reimbursement plan that repays an organization using a flat rate per service doesn't work well for smaller organizations such as Livingston HealthCare.

"This allows us to be a little closer to what we're providing," Marlowe said.

Park Clinic receives Medicare's Rural Health Clinic classification because the clinic is considered to be in an area that has a shortage of health professionals, Marlowe said.

Clinics receive renewals of the designation every five years. The renewals come after the state Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Medicare program, makes surprise visits to the clinics.

"It's an unannounced site visit," Marlowe said. "They show up in person and just start asking for things and interviewing people."

Park Clinic's assessment came last month. The surprise factor in the designation renewal process ensures that clinics are always cur-

rent on their compliance with standards for quality of care, policies and other facets of running an organization that

receives Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, Marlowe said.

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