

PRESS RELEASE

It is my pleasure to announce that the Panola County Sheriff's Office Detention Center was chosen as the "Site of the Year" by Southern Health Partners inmate health provider. Southern Health Partners is a leading provider of affordable medical, dental, and mental health services to inmates in county and city jail facilities. Since inception, SHP has built their company on a true partnership model with uncompromised quality, value, and integrity. Currently, SHP operates in over 200 correctional facilities in 13 different states.

Panola County partnered with Southern Health Partners three years ago to provide inmate health services at the detention center in an attempt to cut the inmate medical expense burden on the local tax payers. This has enabled the detention center to have a full time nurse on staff as well as a doctor available to provide necessary services when situations arise. The funds for the salary of the staff nurse, funds for the doctor's services, funds for all inmate prescriptions and medical services is covered by SHP through our contract agreement. The partnership with SHP saved the Panola County Jail budget approximately \$60,000 the first year by having the health care services available at the detention center vs. transporting inmates to the emergency room or to a clinic. Having the health services available on site also eliminates the number of situations when an inmate has to be removed from the secured facility in order to be transported to an outside medical provider. We are still sometimes required to transport an inmate to an outside medical facility when more serious situations arise, but the number of transports to outside resources are down approximately 90%. This large decrease is a result of the dedicated work of SHP nurse Ashley Morris and the training of the detention center staff.

Each year SHP awards "Site of the Year" recognition to a detention facility who is partnered with SHP who goes above and beyond, to not only provide affordable, professional health services for housed inmates, but strives to go the extra mile in training and in job performance to save tax dollars and more importantly, saving lives. From over 200 detention facilities in the 13 states covered by SHP, Panola County Detention Center was chosen as the 2017 top facility in the country, for outstanding performance by our SHP nurse Ashley Morris and the Sheriff's Office detention staff.

Ashley Morris is a great asset not only to SHP, but also to Panola County. Her dedication and attentiveness to her duties has served the county well. She not only provides professional health services to housed inmates but also provides professional training to the detention center staff which has without a doubt saved not only tax payer dollars, but has saved lives. The CEO and other administrators from the Southern Health Partners headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee will come to Panola County to present

the "Site of the Year" award to Ashley Morris and our Sheriff's Office staff at a date and time to be announced. I am very proud of Ashley and all of our detention center staff for bringing this national recognition of superior performance home to Panola County!

Sheriff Kevin Lake