

Vail Health

2019 / 2020 ANNUAL

POWER EATS

MAKE-AHEAD
RECIPES

**WHO'S
YOUR DOC?**
THE IMPORTANCE OF
PRIMARY CARE

+
**MEN VS.
WOMEN**

HOW DIFFERENT
ARE WE?

TRANSFORMING
BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH



THE PERFECT SETTING TO CONQUER CANCER

Patients travel from around Colorado and beyond to receive the unique, personalized care Shaw offers in the healing setting of the Rocky Mountains. Our knowledgeable doctors and top-of-the-line equipment help cure cancer. But it's the rest of the care—courtesy of a dietitian, exercise physiologists and Jack's Place, a complimentary 12-room cancer caring house—that helps our patients survive and thrive.

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THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

WHILE THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE NATIONWIDE is uncertain, Vail Health has a plan for transforming behavioral health, reducing the cost of care and making health care more easily accessible than ever.

In April 2019, Vail Health announced its \$60 million commitment to behavioral health over the next 10 years.

A nonprofit called Eagle Valley Behavioral Health has been established, and with the guidance of its new executive director, Chris Lindley (featured on the cover), we are working with a variety of community groups to build needed facilities, improve access to providers and lower barriers to accessing behavioral health care across the valley.

Learn more about this important initiative on page 52.

The cost of health care is another major crisis in our community. While there isn't an easy fix, Vail Health is working to address costs and make health care more affordable. We have been exploring ways to lower our prices and also make pricing more transparent so no one is surprised when they receive a bill for our services.

Accessibility is one way to promote wellness, and Vail Health has always been committed to providing the health care services our community and visitors need, right here where they need them most. Our recent merger with Colorado Mountain Medical (CMM) enhances Vail Health's offerings by adding services like primary care, pediatrics, urology and gastroenterology. By partnering

to manage patient care, our goal is to proactively keep the community healthy. In addition, MIRA, the Mobile Intercultural Resource Alliance, is bringing resources right to the doorsteps of those who need them most. Learn more on page 38.

The future of health care is bright in Eagle County, and as Vail Health's new president and CEO, I look forward to working with you — and on your behalf — to create change. Vail Health is a pillar in this community — from the life-saving services of our Emergency Department and Urgent Cares, to the life-giving work of our Family Birth Center, and now with a new focus on behavioral health and overall wellness, we are proud to care for the people of the Eagle River Valley. I hope you enjoy learning more about some of the great things happening here in this issue of *Vail Health Magazine*.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Cook".

WILL COOK, PRESIDENT & CEO
VAIL HEALTH



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THE TEAM

PUBLISHER
Emily Tamberino

EDITOR
Wren Bova

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN
Carly Arnold Creative

PHOTO EDITOR
Dominique Taylor

CONTRIBUTORS
Will Brenda
Katie Coakley
Chris Dillmann
Katie Harmon
Heather Hower
Traci J. Macnamara
Shane Macomber
Karen Mason
Makayla Meixner
Kari Mohr
Kimberly Nicoletti
Melanie Wong



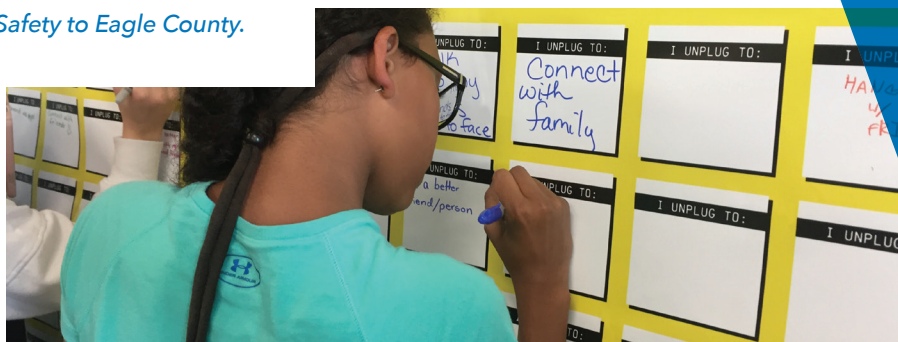
ON THE COVER
Chris Lindley is the executive director of the newly established nonprofit, Eagle Valley Behavioral Health. Collaborating with key groups and members of the community, his goal is to completely transform behavioral health and provide needed resources to the people of the Eagle River Valley.

PHOTO BY
Shane Macomber





Vail Health is proud to partner with local organizations to bring programs like MIRA, ThinkFirst injury prevention, Disconnect to Reconnect and Sun Safety to Eagle County.



GIVING BACK LOCALLY

VAIL HEALTH PARTNERS WITH ORGANIZATIONS WHO SHARE OUR GOAL OF ENSURING OUR COMMUNITY LIVES LONGER, HEALTHIER LIVES.

Vail Health has given millions of dollars back to our community through local initiatives, including:

- Charity care for locals in need
- Subsidized health care services
- Eagle Valley Behavioral Health
- Defibrillators across Eagle County in partnership with Starting Hearts
- Distribute an average of 1,000 ski & bike helmets annually
- Medical & social detox programs
- Eat Chat Parent series with Mountain Youth
- Mountain Family Health
- The Community Market, a Program of Eagle Valley Community Foundation
- SpeakUp ReachOut
- HomeCare & Hospice of the Valley
- Eagle County Schools & EFEC
- Offer Sun Safety program in local schools
- Offer Free Speaker Series in Eagle & Summit counties
- Free high school physicals & athletic trainers
- Partner with Colorado Mountain College to offer Surgical Technology program
- Steadman Philippon Research Institute & Vail-Summit Orthopaedic Foundation

WELLNESS



With the merger of Vail Health and Colorado Mountain Medical (CMM), communication between hospital specialists and primary care providers is more seamless. Pictured here is Vail Health hospitalist Dr. Kristin Ickes and CMM family medicine physician Dr. Susie Vickerman.

WHO'S YOUR DOC?

How preventive care can improve your health and longevity

BY **MELANIE WONG** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME you set foot in your doctor's office? If you're like many Americans, the answer is likely "not recently" or "when I was sick." In fact, data shows that as a population, Americans are starting to trend away from having a primary care doctor.

Physicians point out that this trend is worrisome because it means patients aren't reaping the benefits of preventive medicine. Dr. JerriLu Atkins, a Vail-based family practice physician with Colorado Mountain Medical, explains that some people don't understand the importance of preventive care.

"People have a hard time seeing the value in the expense and time," she says. "Often, people take better care of their houses and cars than they do their bodies."

However, she points out that the expense and time are investments in your health. In fact, regularly seeing a health care provider can prevent bigger — and more expensive — health problems in the future, she says.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH PREVENTIVE CARE?

The goal of preventive care is to address health concerns before they become a problem, or to treat existing problems before they become more serious.

Preventive medicine can have many benefits. Examples include treating common problems like high blood pressure or high cholesterol in order to prevent cardiovascular disease down the road or getting screenings to catch cancer in its early stages, explains Dr. Dennis Lipton, a local internist.

"I prefer to think of truly preventive medicine as occurring more upstream — that is, preventing the person from getting high blood pressure or high cholesterol in the first place using diet and lifestyle," he says.

While the typical adult may avoid the doctor's office as long as they "feel healthy," many common diseases start long before symptoms arrive. Heart disease, cervical cancer, hypertension and atherosclerosis (plaque build-up on artery walls) are all conditions that don't present with clinical symptoms until irreparable damage has been done, says Dr. Atkins.

"If we're on our game as primary care physicians, we can catch these conditions early when things are still treatable. Even for healthy younger people, we can look at a person's family history, see what they're at risk for, and help them prevent and monitor," she says.

For those with persisting, long-term illnesses, such as diabetes, prevention is even more important, because those patients are at a much higher risk for getting other chronic diseases.



"In this person, diet and lifestyle are more important than ever, but medications also come into play that can help reduce the risk of other complications," says Dr. Lipton. "Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to progressive renal failure, for example."

In fact, studies show that when it comes to chronic disease management, more contact with a doctor or nurse leads to better outcomes, says Dr. Lipton.

"Congestive heart failure is a well-studied example of this," he says. "Patients who have regular checkups in the clinic have fewer hospitalizations. Even just brief encounters with a nurse to check weight and vital signs make a difference. We can intervene in the outpatient setting, preventing the severe exacerbations that require hospitalization."

THE WHOLE-PERSON APPROACH

An increasing number of physicians aim to treat their patients using a holistic approach — that is, not just prescribing medications, but helping their patients make powerful lifestyle changes that get to the root of their health issues.

"When a patient comes in with a problem or concerning number, I always look first at a lifestyle adaptation," says Dr. Atkins. "I talk to them about their sleep habits, diet, substance use, family history, exercise and stress levels. There's good data supporting holistic practices such as diet modification as treatment for hypertension, for example. It's integrative, not just giving someone medication."

For Dr. Lipton, holistic care means going beyond the obvious symptoms or lab values and finding the underlying causes. For example, a middle-aged man might come into the office mildly



Colorado Mountain Medical family physician Dr. JerriLu Atkins has cared for some of her patients from the time they were children. This relationship is critical to their ongoing care.

DID YOU KNOW?

All Medicare patients and most people with health insurance can receive an annual wellness visit with 100% of initial costs covered and no out-of-pocket expense to the patient. If additional services are needed, the patient may be required to pay a deductible or co-pay. No referral is necessary. Check with your insurance provider to confirm eligibility.

Annual wellness visits include:

- Measure height, weight, blood pressure and body-mass index
- Review of medical and family history
- Develop or update a list of allergies and prescriptions
- Detect any cognitive impairment
- Personalized health advice
- Identify risk factors, treatment options and appropriate preventive services
- Determine tobacco use and recommend resources for cessation
- Evaluate mental health

To schedule an annual wellness visit, call Colorado Mountain Medical at (970) 926-6340.



I want to get to know my patients — what you do, who your family is and how you like to recreate. That can help guide our health goals and treatment. **I understand you better if I know you're a teacher, a ski patroller or a mountain bike racer."**

DR. JERRILU ATKINS

overweight, prediabetic and constantly tired, and his lab results show low testosterone levels and high cholesterol. This could be chalked up to a need for medications and "low T," but those symptoms could also point to underlying problems such as sleep apnea, poor diet and alcohol use, says Dr. Lipton.

"People underestimate the power of the most inexpensive and simple interventions, such as good sleep, regular exercise, healthy diet, stress reduction and quality time with loved ones. These have been shown time and again to produce better health outcomes and improved longevity — better than any pill or procedure," he says.

KNOWING YOUR DOC

Another reason to regularly visit with your primary care physician is to build a relationship.

"I want to get to know my patients — what you do, who your family is and how you like to recreate," says Dr. Atkins. "That can help guide our health goals and treatment. I understand you better if I know you're a teacher, a ski patroller or a mountain bike racer. You're not just walking into an urgent care hoping you get a doctor who works well with you."

Having a regular physician can save you time and energy as well — after all, someone familiar with your health history might be able to manage a smaller concern with a simple phone call or short office visit. And, instead of searching the World Wide Web for the cause to what ails you, a trusted professional can help decipher the issue and interpret the vast array of information you might see on the Internet.

When it comes to choosing a doctor, Vail Health offers a number of choices within Eagle County. For primary and preventive care, patients can choose from a pediatrician (who specializes in children), family practice physician (who sees every age from newborn to senior) or internist (who specializes in adult medical problems). Beyond that, many primary care doctors focus on a certain area of interest — a family practice doctor may focus on

women's health and obstetrics, while an internist may develop a focus on geriatrics or sports medicine.

A CONTINUUM OF CARE

Of course, there are times when a patient needs more specialized care than a primary care physician can provide. In Eagle County, patients benefit from a tight-knit group of doctors that works together to best meet the community's needs.

For example, someone with gastrointestinal issues might be referred by their primary care physician to see Dr. Stephen Laird, a Colorado Mountain Medical gastroenterologist. Dr. Laird says that in larger networks, it can be difficult for a patient to land an appointment in a timely manner. It can also be difficult to choose the right doctor out of the slew of choices.

"One of the nice things about working in a small community like ours — and in a multi-specialty group like Colorado Mountain Medical — is that all the docs here mostly know one another. We've been working together, and it's not uncommon for us to call each other's cell phones to discuss a mutual patient. We can also generally get people into the clinic pretty quickly when needed," he says.

This flow of care, referred to in the health care world as "continuity of care," can be a challenge in larger cities with multiple medical systems, says Dr. Lipton. Electronic medical records from different health care systems don't always communicate effectively, and transferring records from hospital to hospital can cause delays in care.

"Vail Health providers and physicians have access to the same records, so it is easy to communicate and see results, as long as the patient stays in Eagle County," says Dr. Lipton.

Vail Health's recent merger with Colorado Mountain Medical is designed to ensure seamless care across the health care landscape — from urgent care to surgery and back to primary care, for instance.

Are you ready to find a doctor? See "Choosing the Right Doctor" for questions to ask when choosing the best doc for you. **V**

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOCTOR

Choosing a primary care provider is an important and personal decision. Here are four questions to ask before you decide.

1. Is the doctor covered by your health insurance plan, and is he/she taking new patients?

Most people want to find a provider who is in their network. You'll also want someone whose availability and schedule works with yours.

2. What is the doctor's approach to care?

Find a doctor whose philosophical approach to health and medicine matches your own. You may want someone who strictly practices Western, or allopathic medicine, or you may want someone who is open to other philosophies. You may want someone who is laser-focused on your illness, or you may prefer someone who practices whole-person care.

3. Does the doctor make you feel comfortable?

"No doctor can sit down and give you the world in a 15-minute appointment, but your physician should be interested in making a connection with you," says Colorado Mountain Medical family practice physician Dr. JerriLu Atkins. "Do they sit down with you? Do they look you in the eye? Are they interested in what's going on in your life?"

4. Do you have things in common?

While it's not essential that you and your doctor like the same sports and read the same books, shared interests will help you talk with your doctor and may help him/her better understand your health goals. Vail Health's website provides brief bios on all its physicians. It is a helpful resource for patients seeking a new doctor. Search the Doctor Finder on vailhealth.org.

THE BOYS OF SHAW

Shaw Cancer Center's prostate patients benefit from care, compassion and camaraderie

BY **WILL BRENDZA** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**



PROSTATE CANCER affects roughly one in every nine men. It can be a brutal affair — emotionally, physically and socially. But when you've got the kind of support, multi-disciplinary expertise and high-caliber care of Shaw Cancer Center's prostate program, the journey is a much more hopeful one.

That's exactly how "Captain" Kirk Floyd, an Eagle resident who was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018, describes his experience at Shaw. He calls the team of experts his "family," and says that despite being emotionally jangled by his prostate cancer diagnosis, he never gave up his optimistic outlook. He knew he was getting some of the best care he could ever ask for.

"When I went to the Shaw clinic I was never down. It was always a positive experience," says Kirk. "I never got depressed through my entire journey because I knew that they were there to save my life."

Kirk was diagnosed with prostate cancer just seven days after Christmas in 2018, and by January of 2019 he was already embarking on a journey with Shaw that would change his life and mindset forever.

"I just think of that place like a country club," explains Kirk. "And I thought, 'That country club is going to put my life back on the right track again.'"

COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CARE

Kirk benefited from Shaw Cancer Center's integrated prostate program, which is as comprehensive as it is progressive. Each patient's care is managed by knowledgeable and compassionate cancer specialists, physicians and technicians working together as a team to provide the best possible treatment for each patient's unique needs.

"We call it our cancer conference," explains Kim Sharkey, Shaw's cancer services manager. "We modeled it after our breast cancer program's multidisciplinary clinic. We have a lot of success around it and it's been really beneficial for our patients."

Once a month, this multi-disciplinary A-team of prostate cancer specialists convenes to examine each patient's case and

decide on the best course of treatment, together. Patients can meet with all of their specialists and physicians that same day, allowing them to consult with everyone in one convenient location: Shaw. On hand to discuss anything from recent diagnostics to symptoms or concerns are Shaw's Medical Director of Radiation Oncology Dr. Patricia Hardenbergh, Shaw's Medical Oncologist Dr. Michael Glode, Colorado Mountain Medical Urologist Dr. Connie Wolf, Diagnostic Radiologist Dr. Wayne Wenzel and Shaw's Dr. Alexander Urquhart, who specializes in hematology and medical oncology.



"Captain" Kirk Floyd calls his team of experts at Shaw Cancer Center his "family."



A few Boys of Shaw participate in the annual Spirit of Survival nature hike at Eagle's Nest, followed by a luncheon to celebrate life.



"I think it is so great because in a city or somewhere else, these patients might be driving all over, to three or four different places for doctors appointments," says Sharkey. At Shaw, prostate cancer patients have access to everything and everyone they need, and they don't have to go far from home for their care.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Shaw Cancer Center's prostate program goes beyond the medical aspects of treatment, though. It also provides immense social and emotional support through the Spirit of Survival program and groups like the Boys of Shaw.



Photo by
Katie Harmon



I think the camaraderie and peer-to-peer engagement is really powerful for our patients to know **they are not in this alone.**

ERIN PEREJDA

“Boys of Shaw started out as an informal support group of men that were getting together over lunch on their own,” Sharkey explains. Those men found it valuable to connect with a network of other men going through a similar experience, and decided to take it a step further. “They came to us shortly after they started informally meeting and said they’d like a little more structure around it.”

So, Shaw started to facilitate lunches and built the Boys of

Shaw into a bona-fide aspect of its prostate program.

Quarterly, this group of prostate cancer patients meets up for a “lunch-and-learn.” Sometimes there will be a speaker, such as Dr. Glode, who might talk about specific concerns; a Howard Head Sports Medicine physical therapist to teach pelvic floor strengthening exercises; or a medical specialist to talk about sexual health. There’s a question-and-answer session, and a lot of discussion.

But really, it's the companionship that makes the Boys of Shaw such a valuable group. It's a fraternity, a family of men sharing in a common experience and healing — together.

"I think the camaraderie and peer-to-peer engagement is really powerful for them to know they are not in this alone," says Erin Perejda, a social worker and the survivorship program coordinator at Shaw.

Often, during stressful times, it can be difficult for people to express their feelings or divulge their fears — neither of which are healthy to bottle up when you're fighting cancer. The Boys of Shaw offers male patients a chance to do exactly that in a safe, comfortable place, around people who understand their struggles.

"We bring in a variety of specialists to help with both the physical and psychosocial aspects of cancer, and we continually see our patients form a community of their own, seeking support and wanting to heal and be healthy together," explains Sharkey.

Part of what makes the program so special is its unending development. Shaw periodically hosts focus groups of men with cancer to determine how they can better address the unique challenges that men face in dealing with the disease.

Addressing some of the challenges prostate patients experience can be awkward: The treatment can result in painful and frequent urination, bowel irregularities, erectile dysfunction and a host of other uncomfortable side-effects



A patient receives one-on-one nutrition counseling with one of Shaw's dietitians, Lauren Larson.



Painting is one of the classes offered through the Spirit of Survival's Art for Therapy program.



Men participate in "broga," yoga for men.

that have emotional implications. Patients often have questions about their sexual health, their relationships and other deeply personal issues. It can be a journey of vulnerability, both physically and emotionally.


The support Shaw offers to navigate these challenges is extremely important to help patients not just survive, but also thrive. It's why prostate patients like Captain Kirk are so hopeful, positive and happy to have been a part of Shaw's prostate program. "I really had the best experience," Kirk says of his time and treatment at Shaw. "They have the top-notch people, they're friendly and they're positive... it's really a special place." 

Photo by Katie Harmon



DITCH THE DIET



Healthy eating transcends fads

BY **KATIE COAKLEY** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**

THERE ARE MANY POTENTIAL REASONS WHY diets fail, but for the most part, it's because they're unsustainable. Many involve restricting certain foods or adhering to rigid rules, which makes it difficult to figure out what we're actually supposed to eat. In addition, most of us are busy, on-the-go and budget-conscious, so meeting the unrealistic expectations inherent in fad diets is, well, unrealistic.

The trick is to do what works best for you.

"Fortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all diet that is best for your health, nor is there a single food that will make — or break — your health," explains Makayla Meixner, MS, a registered dietitian and food operations manager at Vail Health. "Instead, wellness depends on our overall eating patterns: the combinations of foods and beverages we choose consistently across our lifespans."

Instead of trying to adhere to impractical rules set forth by restrictive diets, it's important to have more realistic expectations for healthy eating and to realize that these expectations are different for each person. Factors like personal goals, lifestyle, budget and taste preferences should all play a part in the decisions we make about the foods we consume.

"In general, the expectation is that you make healthy choices regardless of, for example, the number on the scale," she explains. "And you include food from a variety of different food groups each day. You balance so that you're getting a little bit from carbohydrates, proteins and fats each day. And you do so in moderation."

Those three elements — variety, balance and moderation — are the keys to healthy eating.

Variety refers to the foods you are eating and how diverse your food choices are. A varied diet includes an array of foods within each of the major food groups. This helps ensure you're getting all the nutrients you need, including essential vitamins and minerals. One way to achieve variety is by considering how colorful your meals are: Different vitamins can give off different pigments, so if you have green, red and orange veggies on your plate, you have a good variety.

"Variety is going to ensure you get all your essential nutrients," Meixner says.

"Balance refers to the proportions on your plate," she explains. "It helps ensure you're choosing foods from all of the food groups and have an adequate mix of carbohydrates, fats and proteins: the energy-providing nutrients."

Meixner suggests the "my plate" method: Fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies, a quarter with a starch or grain and a quarter with a protein. That helps balance the different food groups and energy types.

The last element is moderation. Moderation refers to portion control, getting enough — but not too much — of any one nutrient, as well as calories.

The key is eating everything in accordance to your hunger and fullness cues. Meixner says our bodies are excellent at deciphering when we're full and when we're hungry, but our culture has skewed our perceptions of serving sizes, leading us to eat well beyond our physical needs. Getting in tune with what our bodies are actually saying is the key to moderation.

And before you vow to eschew sugar forever, Meixner says there's no reason to cut out the foods you love as long as you enjoy them in moderation.

"A big thing with moderation is listening to your hunger and fullness cues," Meixner explains. "So if you really love cake and you're not already full, eat some cake in moderation. It's not going to completely sabotage your dietary pattern because your wellness depends on the combinations of foods and beverages you choose consistently."

So how do we eat a variety of foods, in balance, with moderation? When it comes to nourishing our bodies, a little thought and planning can go a long way.

Here are a few of Meixner's simple, yet tasty recipes to get you started.



The Plant-Based Power Bowl is easy to prep and provides a good balance of veggies, protein and grains.



Makayla Meixner, MS is a registered dietitian and food operations manager at Vail Health.





TIME SAVER

This power bowl stays fresh in the refrigerator for up to five days. Scale up this recipe, prep ahead and portion into airtight containers for on-the-go lunches.



Clockwise from top right: Prepped components for the Plant-Based Power Bowl, Turkey & Sweet Potato Chili and a trio of Overnight Oats flavors: pumpkin pie, chocolate peanut butter and berry vanilla.



PROTEIN BOOST

Add plain Greek yogurt or a scoop of your favorite protein powder to your morning oats.



OVERNIGHT OATS

Serves 1

Overnight oats are a highly nutritious and convenient solution for busy mornings. Just half a cup of raw oats packs 4 grams of fiber — around 13% of your daily needs. They're also rich in essential minerals like magnesium, iron and zinc.

To turn this into a balanced meal, mix in a variety of colorful fruits, nuts, nut butters and seeds to add protein and healthy fats. Here are three delicious options.

Ingredients:**Base:**

- ½ cup old fashioned oats
- ½ cup low or non-fat milk or unsweetened milk alternative (almond, coconut or rice milk)

Mix-ins & Toppings:**Berry Vanilla Overnight Oats**

- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp maple syrup or other sweetener
- ½ cup or more of your favorite berries for topping
- 2 tbsp slivered almonds for topping

Chocolate Peanut Butter Overnight Oats

- 1 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- ½ tsp honey or other sweetener
- ½ cup or more of banana slices for topping

Pumpkin Pie Overnight Oats

- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- ½ tsp maple syrup or other sweetener
- ½ cup puréed pumpkin
- ¼ cup plain Greek yogurt for topping
- 2 tbsp pecans for topping

Directions:

Combine your base ingredients and chosen mix-ins. Cover and chill overnight. Toppings may be added before or after chilling. Heat in microwave or eat cold. Enjoy!

Expert tips:

Time-saver: Overnight oats stay fresh in the refrigerator up to five days. Scale up this recipe, prep ahead and portion into lidded mason jars or airtight containers for breakfast on the go.

No added sugar: Skip the sweeteners. Mix in mashed banana or unsweetened applesauce instead.

PLANT-BASED POWER BOWL

Serves 1

Plant-based proteins offer something that animal products do not — beneficial plant compounds called phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are naturally occurring chemicals that often have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. When consumed regularly, phytonutrients may help boost your overall health and prevent chronic disease.

This quick and simple recipe contains chickpeas and quinoa — two plants that offer 8 to 13 grams of protein per cup, plus complex carbohydrates. To add flavor and balance, the dressing provides a dose of healthy fats.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup grape tomatoes, sliced
- 1 cup cucumber, sliced
- 1 cup canned chickpeas, drained
- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup feta cheese
- 2 tbsp Italian salad dressing

Directions:

Toss all ingredients in a bowl and enjoy!

Expert tips:

Protein boost: Add 4 ounces of lean poultry or fish, such as chicken breast or canned tuna.

No added sugar: Make your own dressing using 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, ½ tsp red wine vinegar, ¼ tsp Italian seasoning, a squeeze of fresh lemon and salt and pepper to taste.

TURKEY & SWEET POTATO CHILI

Serves 4

This simple and savory dish can be eaten by itself, as it provides a balanced mix of carbohydrates, protein and fats. Each portion provides two servings of vegetables — a food group many Americans are lacking in their diets.

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil, for cooking
- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 28 ounces canned fire-roasted tomatoes
- 15 ounces canned red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced into cubes
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp onion powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Cilantro, avocado and lime wedges for topping (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a saucepan on medium-high heat. Once hot, add ground turkey and heat until brown and cooked through, around 10 minutes.
2. Add tomatoes, sweet potatoes, kidney beans, broth and seasonings.
3. Turn up the heat and bring chili to a boil.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer 10-15 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are tender.
5. Enjoy with optional toppings: cilantro, avocado and lime.

Expert tips:

Time-saver: Make extra for delicious leftovers or freeze for future, speedy meals. Keep for up to 3-4 days in the refrigerator or 4-6 months in the freezer.

Low-sodium: Omit salt and opt for “no salt added” and “low sodium” canned goods and chicken broth. **V**

VEGGIE BOOST

Add onions, jalapeños, corn, bell peppers, kale or spinach for an extra dose of veggies.



GROWING OUR FAMILY TO TAKE CARE OF YOURS

For over 40 years, Vail Health and Colorado Mountain Medical have partnered in providing quality health care. Now we have come together as one. Our goal? To serve you even better. Patients will benefit from access to the same trusted physicians and convenient locations, as well as a full spectrum of services. So now the answer is clear. When your family needs health care, come see ours.

Castle Peak Senior Life and Rehabilitation

Tessa Beal, MD
Carly Kleiman, PA-C
Keith Rapp, MD
Justine Smith, NP-C

Dermatology

Aaron Loyd, MD

Ear, Nose, & Throat

Jennifer Pate, PA-C
Casey Strahan, MD

Family Medicine & Urgent Care

JerriLu Atkins, MD
Tessa Beal, MD
Jennifer Bettenhausen, MD
Edward Dent, MD
Tania Engle, PA-C
Jonathan Feeney, MD
Jean Hadley, MD
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BRAIN AND BALANCE

When something goes wrong, a collaborative approach to care makes all the difference

BY **TRACI J. MACNAMARA** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**



THE BRAIN HAS A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY for a three-pound organ that tends to go unnoticed as long as it's healthy and happy within the human head. The brain is what helps us feel the chill of winter or appreciate the smell of spring flowers. It governs all body functions, allows us to communicate with others and stores memories from our past. The brain controls the balance, movement and coordination that's necessary for hiking mountain trails or playing a song on the guitar. The brain is the seat of intelligence, creativity, emotion — and so much more.

Given its central role in our being, the brain needs to be protected and nurtured, but it's often an afterthought until something goes wrong. Efforts to change this trend are underway, however, with local initiatives like Vail Health's ThinkFirst program, which focuses on increasing the awareness of brain health, providing helmets to prevent injury and talking about the signs and symptoms of a brain injury so they're easier to spot. Cooperation and knowledge-sharing are also taking place among area physicians, physical therapists, athletic trainers, coaches, parents — and patients themselves.



At Howard Head Sports Medicine, video goggles assist in the evaluation and diagnosis of vestibular disorders that occur on their own or as a symptom post-concussion. Besides recording the nystagmus (quick movements) of the eye, the goggles also make it difficult for patients to compensate with their vision, allowing for more accurate diagnoses. This incredible technology was made possible by the generosity of donations to the Vail Health Foundation.

BRAIN INJURIES AND COORDINATED CARE

Coordinated care efforts are most recognized when they save a life or when a brain injury impacts a loved one. Edwards resident Lisa Griffith experienced the nuances of these impacts from a parent's perspective when her son, Finn, was in a skiing accident in 2017 and sustained a concussion while training with his teammates in the terrain park. He was wearing a helmet, but the impact from the fall was severe enough that Vail Ski Patrol transported Finn down the mountain in a sled. He was then taken to Vail Health, where he displayed several classic concussion signs and symptoms.

"Finn was confused after the fall and wasn't sure what happened," Griffith remembers. "He kept asking the same questions, and he was nauseous. After a few hours in the hospital, tests ruled out a neck injury or anything beyond a concussion. I was sent home with a packet of information that was part of the hospital's concussion protocol, and then Finn began the healing process."

Little did Lisa know that this packet full of valuable information would come to her again, and then again, as she and her husband, Chris, accompanied Finn to follow-up appointments with a physician and then his athletic director at Vail Ski and Snowboard Academy. It contained clear directions, tools for assessing Finn's symptoms and information about the process he needed to follow before returning to ski with his team.

"As a parent, I didn't know anything about concussions or what I should be looking for to help, so it was reassuring to get the same advice from the hospital, our physician and the school. I needed direction, and I got the same organized information from everyone involved," Griffith says.

Such a coordinated approach to concussion care can be credited, in part, to the Jake Snakenberg Youth Sports Concussion Act, which went into effect in 2012. Named after a student-athlete who experienced a fatal concussion complication called second-impact syndrome, the act requires that coaches receive education about concussions, that a student-athlete be removed from the field of play if a concussion is suspected and that the student be signed off by a health care professional before returning to play.



Six weeks after Finn sustained his injury, he was signed off to return to skiing by Dr. Jonathan Feeney, a Colorado Mountain Medical physician who specializes in concussion care. During those six weeks, both Finn and his mother came to understand how a coordinated care effort and an organized, multidisciplinary approach to treatment could help smooth the process from injury to recovery.

"Having a team of professionals in place is important for coordinated brain injury care, and we have a great team in place here," says Dr. Feeney. "But the most important part of that team is the patient. Patients can help their recovery process by recognizing symptoms and reporting them accurately. Symptoms can be prolonged if not addressed properly."

Dr. Feeney recommends seeing a physician right away when a brain injury is suspected and then following up with a physical therapist to help keep the recovery process on track.

BALANCING BRAIN HEALTH FOR ALL AGES

The Centers for Disease Control report most traumatic brain injuries fit within the mild category of which concussions are a part, but they can also be moderate or severe — and stem from a variety of sources ranging from car accidents to falls. While all types of brain injuries affect people of all ages, some can disproportionately impact the aging population. These include falls and issues with the vestibular system, which includes portions of the inner ear and brain that help

control balance and eye movements. Approximately 35% of adults over the age of 40 experience some type of vestibular dysfunction that results in symptoms including vertigo and dizziness, among others.

In response to increased community needs for care related to head injuries, concussions, vestibular conditions and balance problems, Howard Head Sports Medicine has developed a Brain & Balance Care team of physical therapists dedicated to providing ongoing care for these issues. Across its 10 locations in Eagle and Summit counties, the Brain & Balance Care team's therapists partner with physicians, athletic trainers and other health professionals to help ensure patients with brain and balance issues are getting the right treatment at the right time in their healing process.

"I didn't really comprehend how fragile the brain is until I got a brain injury," says Shayna Barry, who worked with Brain & Balance Care therapists Devyn Moore and Brittney Huntimer for physical and vestibular therapy after sustaining a concussion while snowboarding at Beaver Creek. "My symptoms were physical and emotional. Even though I'm normally high-energy and optimistic, I struggled with depression, anxiety and self-doubt on top of the headaches, dizziness and fog."

Barry's healing process included activities to promote strength, flexibility, relaxation and focus. Seemingly normal things like going to the grocery store or walking through an airport were challenging for Barry, as her brain couldn't process everything her eyes and ears were seeing and hearing. In those moments, she practiced calming strategies she learned in therapy, including breathing and closing her eyes to reduce stimulation. These techniques also helped her manage other day-to-day activities like cleaning the house, and they allowed her to gradually increase her activity level as she healed.

"Devyn and Brittney helped me find ways to overcome the challenges I was facing — and they were incredibly empathetic, thoughtful and kind during my recovery. They both helped me regain my confidence and helped me feel more like me again," says Barry.

While the Brain & Balance Care team's focus is on providing physical therapy for brain injuries related to

concussions, vestibular dysfunction and falls, therapists also work with stroke and Parkinson's patients. In addition, therapists are equipped to train individuals in fall prevention methods, and they work with athletes on improving reaction time and sport-specific balance skills.

"When working with patients, it's important for us to consider the whole person and not just the primary injury," says Howard Head's Brain & Balance Care Lead Therapist Lauren Rust. "Sometimes people don't realize that other symptoms they're not reporting might also be related to the main problem they're experiencing."



Finn Griffith benefited from a coordinated effort amongst his doctors, physical therapists and coaches after suffering a concussion in 2017.




Shayna Barry worked with Howard Head Sports Medicine's Brain & Balance Care team to overcome challenges she faced after sustaining a concussion while snowboarding.





ThinkFirst brings its brain injury prevention program on the road, educating students at Eagle County Schools and providing helmets at events throughout the county.

As of June 2019, Rust has been leading a team that anticipates seeing up to 1,500 patients who need ongoing care for brain and balance issues in 2019. Only three years earlier, the number of patients seen for this type of treatment was 536. Part of the three-fold increase is attributed to an increase in community awareness about brain health, but it's also due to the widening number of professionals in the Vail area who are equipped to treat brain injuries effectively. Patients now have more opportunities closer to home to get the treatment they need, and at a higher level of care.

"Vail has long been known as a mecca for the treatment of orthopaedic injuries, but I'm most excited about seeing this community embrace a higher level of care for injuries that affect the brain," says Rust. "We're really branching out in our work together to make sure that patients can get the best care possible, right here." 

VESTIBULAR HEALTH

The vestibular system might not be the best known of the body's systems, but it's one that's intimately linked to balance since it provides the brain with information about spatial orientation and movement. The inner ear is a key component of the vestibular system, which works within the body's complex set of sensorimotor systems to help control eye, head and other body movements necessary for proper balance.

"Media attention has raised public awareness about concussions," says Howard Head Sports Medicine Brain & Balance Care Lead Therapist Lauren Rust. "But what many people don't realize is that the vestibular system can be impacted by concussions — and also by the aging process."

In response to increased community needs for ongoing care in these areas, the Brain & Balance Care team focuses on providing physical therapy for brain injuries related to concussions, vestibular dysfunction and falls. Here's how these three aspects of care are related:

BALANCE

The same trauma to the brain that can cause a concussion can also cause the vestibular system to dysfunction. Balance problems, dizziness, difficulty staying focused and trouble stabilizing vision are commonly associated with concussions that also cause damage to the vestibular system. Follow-up exams are important in diagnosing post-concussion vestibular issues. Physical therapy and other medical interventions can help retrain the brain to process signals correctly from the vestibular system and restore balance.

not be detected until advanced ages. The most common symptoms include imbalance and dizziness, which interferes with the everyday activities of 30% of persons over age 70. While other sensory deficits can contribute to balance issues, physical therapy can help address symptoms, increase strength and improve balance.

FALL PREVENTION & RECOVERY

Falls are both a leading cause of concussions across all ages and a result of vestibular sensory decline in older adults. But the good news is that older adults can help avoid falls through balance training and other prevention methods such as removing trip hazards and ensuring proper lighting in the home. Athletes, too, can help avoid falls by working on sport-specific balance, agility and even the art of learning to fall more gracefully.

AGING

Aging affects all of the body's systems and organs, including those of the vestibular system. Aging's effects on vestibular structures can include loss of sensory hair cells in the inner ear, which begins early in life, but vestibular dysfunction may



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Rebecca and Nick Kanaly care for her father, Jim, as well their two-year-old daughter, Charlotte, and their 14-year-old lab mix. Photo by Dominique Taylor



AGING DYNAMICS

As Eagle County's population gets increasingly older, more families are learning to navigate the world of caregiving

BY KARI MOHR

IT'S APPROACHING NOON ON A BEAUTIFUL SUMMER TUESDAY, and the Eagle Senior Center is buzzing with activity. A low-impact exercise class is wrapping up in one room while the dining room begins to fill with a vibrant community of seniors. Most still live independently and either drove here themselves, were dropped off by a loved one or got a ride on the dedicated senior ECO Transit shuttle. Lunch for seniors is hosted by Eagle County Healthy Aging every Tuesday and Thursday in Eagle and every Wednesday and Friday in Minturn. Each location has its own unique identity and autonomous site council made up of seniors.

On this particular Tuesday in Eagle, the group ranges from those in their early 60s to the oldest member, 96-year-old Ruth Lenz.

Lenz moved to Eagle thirty years ago to help her daughter when she had twins. Now her daughter helps take care of her. As Lenz settles in for lunch, her daughter runs off to vacuum Lenz's apartment. "You know the reason she's doing so well is because she has a daughter," her friend Judy Clock says matter-of-factly. "We should all have daughters." Clock refers to a phenomenon of caregiving in the U.S., which is supported by data from the Institute on Aging that reports upwards of 75% of all caregivers are female, and may spend as much as 50% more time providing care than males.

The Eagle seniors are a mix of longtime locals and transplants. "Do you know what? I used to know everybody," says regular attendee Johnnette Phillips, whose Louisiana accent lingers even after 64 years of living in Eagle, including eight years as Eagle County's first female County Commissioner and 14 years as the County Clerk and Recorder. "Now a lot of the people move here because they have kids here. We seem to have a lot more people coming to the senior group all the time."

Phillips is right. The senior population in Eagle County has been growing at a steady clip and is projected to multiply exponentially in the coming years. And, in a place as active and youthful as the valley, in many ways the county-wide conversation is playing catch-up as the need to create services and infrastructure around supporting a growing senior population and their caregivers comes into focus.

While Eagle and Gypsum have been communities for more than 100 years, the popularity of Vail, and then Beaver Creek, drove a population boom from the 1970s onward, which centered around an active, outdoor-focused lifestyle. Those first waves of avid outdoorsmen and women are now aging into older adults as a newer crop of retirees is also choosing to settle in Eagle County to enjoy the outdoor lifestyle and often to be near children and grandchildren. In 2010, Eagle County's population of adults aged 65 and older was at 3,069. Five years later, that number had almost doubled to 5,573. By 2035, those 65+ are projected to account for 20% of the population.

Many of the people in this group are unusually healthy and active for their age, which allows them to delay some of the degenerative issues that affect their peers in other parts of the country. Neurologist Dr. Marc Treihaft, who practices both in Denver and Eagle County, notes that while Denver has a very active senior population,



If you don't allow our seniors to live here, you're missing out on the ability to pass on generational knowledge to our youth.

You're missing the social interaction of creating generations that work together.

JUDD HAIMS

"Vail is a hyper-magnification of that. There are people in their 80s and even 90s that are still skiing, biking and staying active."

Even so, at some point, time catches up with all of us. Aging body systems, suffering an injury or experiencing a bad fall can be detrimental to an older person. Local endocrinologist Dr. Rebecca Adochio notes, "People who live here, from a mentality state... they have this thought of being very youthful and active, and that keeps them youthful and active — but they may not always realize that their body is changing, and they can't do the same things as effectively and efficiently as they once could."

Local internist Dr. Dennis Lipton treats adults of all ages. He says, "One of the most important rules of aging well is 'don't get injured.' Being injured prevents you from moving and exercising, impacts sleep and often leads to poorer food choices due to limited strength and mobility. All of these things lead to accelerated aging. Often, people's aging occurs in large step-offs instead of a gradual decline."

In a sprawling community whose culture is so defined by outdoor pursuits, a large step-off physically can also mean a drastic change in people's social life, both in their capacity to keep up physically and often in their ability to drive.

"It's very isolating for people when they are no longer able to keep up with their peers," says Dr. Lipton. "It can lead to significant depression."

While accepting major changes in one's physical activity level is often hard on such an active and healthy population, it is essential to continue to be physically and socially active in some capacity. Fortunately, the need to support seniors as they transition into progressive aging has come to the forefront of Eagle County Public Health's goals for a healthy population. "We are looking at the gaps that exist that might keep folks

from aging here long-term," says Eagle County Healthy Aging Supervisor Carly Rietmann. "We are looking at these gaps at a systems level to work towards filling them by addressing things like access to better health care, transportation and social opportunities."

Ensuring these services are in place is not only essential for the aging population but for the health of the whole community, argues Judd Haims, who owns and runs non-medical homecare provider Visiting Angels.

"If you don't allow our seniors to live here, you're missing out on the ability to pass on generational knowledge to our youth. You're missing the social interaction of creating generations that work together," says Haims. "Most of us who move here, we don't have our parents here, so what are our kids seeing of older people? How do they relate to older people? There are steep impacts when we don't have our seniors around town."

THE SANDWICH GENERATION

Rebecca and Nick Kanaly's family is the picture of multigenerational living as they stroll through Nottingham Park on a summer afternoon. Her 72-year-old father, Jim, has memory issues related to a traumatic brain injury and uses a walker, which 2-year-old Charlotte carefully guides while their 14-year-old lab mix saunters ahead on his leash. "I hear 'Do you need help?' a lot," Rebecca says, laughing. "And I say, 'Yes!'"

Rebecca and Nick are members of what is known as the "sandwich generation," raising their own young child while caring for an aging parent. According to the Pew Research Center, people in this situation of providing care and/or financial support for an elderly parent, while also supporting their children make up about one-in-seven middle-aged adults (15%) in America. The pressure of rising health care costs is especially pronounced for this group, whose numbers in Eagle

County are sure to increase along with the rising numbers of seniors.

When Rebecca first looked into moving her disabled father to be with her in Vail in 2010, the prospect of caring for him was overwhelming. "I didn't feel ready," she says, "and I think that's really important for other caregivers to hear because we always question ourselves."

She began to research by calling Adult Protective Services of Eagle County. "They actually told me 'It's not a good idea... there are no resources for seniors with traumatic brain injury here.'" But the avid snowboarder knew that to find her own satisfaction in life while caring for her dad, she had to try bringing him here. And for Jim, who spent some of his happiest years in Colorado, the chance to return to the mountains was hugely appealing. They decided they'd give it a shot.

Almost immediately after the move, Jim ended up in the hospital due to a variety of complications. Rebecca was grateful that his 10-day stay allowed her to quickly connect with a team of providers that would end up caring for her father for years to come. She found doctors who were genuinely invested in helping her dad, and there was good communication amongst his various caregivers.

Rebecca also began attending the Eagle County Caregiver/Memory Loss Support Group, where she and other members identified the frustration over a lack of resources for the aging population with disabilities and memory loss. "So we started what was Eagle Valley Senior Life (which is now Caregiver Connections)," says Kanaly, who helped develop the organization as treasurer for three years while she worked toward her bachelor's degree in business at Colorado Mountain College.

Jim still attends Caregiver Connections' twice-weekly programs at the Eagle River Presbyterian Church. Adults aged 55+ living with moderate limitations can participate in activities that encourage social interaction while caregivers receive respite and resources.

Helping to establish the group was just the start for Rebecca, who has since gone on to earn her Executive MBA from University of Denver and is now the executive director and CEO of the local United Way. If that sounds like a lot to juggle on top of also raising a toddler, it is. "I want to continue my career, and I also want to be a mom and take care of my dad," she says. "People say, 'How do you do it?' Hands down, the answer is: 'with help.'"

Rebecca has become an expert in navigating the resources available to seniors and caregivers in Eagle County,



Blanche Mauro and her cousin, Margaret Collett, were reunited at Castle Peak Senior Center after nearly 75 years.

as well as the support and care available through her father's insurance. She makes use of groups like Caregiver Connections as well as Visiting Angels. She has also trained a local friend to care for her dad for a few hours, twice a week. Rebecca is especially grateful for the seemingly boundless positivity and support of her husband, Nick.

"I love Jim as much as I love my own dad," Nick says with a grin, "and I treat Jim even better!"

The family squeezes into a two-bedroom condo in Vail, with Jim and Charlotte each having their own room and Nick and Rebecca sleeping in the living room. They say in many ways the setup works for their family, but they are actively saving toward a down payment on a larger home, likely down valley.

"(Caregiving at home) is not for everyone," says Rebecca, "but if you can do it, it brings you so much closer." As she says this, Charlotte toddles over to give her grandpa's walker a playful tug. Jim, who is seated on a bench, gamely takes up a gentle game of tug of war. Rebecca watches them with a smile, "I value this time, and now I hope that my dad lasts long enough that Charlotte can fully process what's going on because she loves him. Just seeing the way she interacts

with the walker, you can just see she really cares about what happens to him. This is what I want for both of them."

According to the National Alliance of Caregiving and AARP, roughly 34.2 million Americans have provided unpaid care to an adult age 50 or older in the past year. At \$470 billion in 2013, the value of unpaid caregiving exceeded the value of paid home care and total Medicaid spending in the same year.

LOCAL CARE

For those who aren't able to care for aging parents in their home, there is income-eligible independent housing at Seniors on Broadway, as well as assisted living apartments at Castle Peak, both of which are located in Eagle. Prior to Castle Peak's opening in 2016 (initiated by and in collaboration with valley communities and Eagle County), there were no assisted living or in-patient skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities in Eagle County, meaning residents would need to relocate to either Garfield or Mesa counties or the Front Range for that type of care. Having a facility of this kind not only allows residents to stay in the valley, it also provides area caregivers the ability to have their loved ones close by. As of 2017, Castle Peak also became approved

to accept Medicare and Medicaid for its skilled nursing, short-term rehabilitation and memory care services.


Edwards resident Mindy Mauro's mother-in-law, Blanche Mauro, lives at Castle Peak and Mindy says it's a relief to know that Blanche is just a 15-minute drive away. "My husband and I are there one to three times a week," she says.

Doctors check in with Blanche right at the facility, which is a huge benefit since many residents no longer drive. Mindy also likes that as Blanche ages, she'll be able to stay in a facility that is familiar. "Even if she moves into a higher-tier level of care," says Mindy, "the people know her there. And I think that's important."

For Blanche, coming to Eagle was a homecoming decades in the making. Born in Squaw Creek (near what is now Cordillera) in 1924, Blanche was one of 11 children in a family of homesteaders. "It was pretty wild back then," she says, laughing. "There was just nothing. I'm 40 years older than the Town of Vail!"

Originally from Mississippi, Blanche's parents chose to come to the valley for many of the same reasons as people who come today. Her grandfather, a minister born in Ireland, had ridden on horseback from Mississippi to see the famed Mount of the Holy Cross. He'd always spoken of the area's beauty, and so when Blanche's mother and father decided to adventure west to homestead, they chose to be close to Holy Cross. After finishing high school in Gypsum, Blanche spent the intervening years raising a family in Colorado Springs.

The first day Blanche came to tour Castle Peak, she was introduced to a group of residents, one of whom commented, "I only ever knew one Blanche." It just so happened that resident was Blanche's first cousin, Margaret, who she had affectionately called "Sissy" when they were growing up. They had lost touch and hadn't seen one another in nearly 75 years. Now, they live just down the hall from one another.

While the opportunity to move into Eagle's first assisted living facility made for an incredible reunion with her cousin, the intimate setting sometimes makes an extrovert like Blanche feel a little stir crazy. The gregarious nonagenarian thrives in social interactions, which Mindy credits as being the secret to her vibrant longevity. Fortunately for Blanche and the rest of Eagle County, a growing system of support and resources for seniors is right outside her door, ensuring a community that values a healthy, multi-generational county for all. 

SENIOR SERVICES

CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS

Improving the quality of life for older adults with cognitive, physical or social limitation, and supporting their caregivers.
(970) 977-0188
support@getcaregiverconnections.org

DIETARY GUIDANCE & CONSULTATION

A service provided through Eagle County's meal program.
(970) 531-4172

HEALTHY AGING RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Eagle County Healthy Aging is a terrific resource for all things senior-related in Eagle County, including:

- Home-delivered meal program
- Volunteer driver medical transportation
- Nutrition counseling
- Resources and information
- Senior Center activities for those "60 or better" in Eagle and Minturn

(970) 328-8896

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS

Offered to home-bound older adults two days per week.
Gypsum/Eagle/Wolcott:
(970) 328-8896
Edwards/Avon/Minturn/Vail:
(970) 328-8831

IN-HOME CAREGIVING

Assistance Caring 4 You Homecare (970) 390-2889 (medical & non-medical)
HomeCare & Hospice of the Valley (970) 930-6008 (medical & non-medical)
Visiting Angels (970) 328-5526 (non-medical only)
People Care Health Services (970) 874-0136 (non-medical only)

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

If you are in need of a ride to a medical appointment, call **Mountain Ride**.
(844) 686-7433
mtnride.org

MEDICARE INFORMATION & COUNSELING

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for Medicare beneficiaries
(970) 468-0295 x120
SHIPMedicareCounseling@gmail.com

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Eagle Valley Behavioral Health
www.eaglevalleybh.org

PUBLIC TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES

Eagle River Valley: ECO Transit
Paratransit is also a service offered by ECO Transit for those who are medically unable to drive.
(970) 328-3250

RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Alpine Area Agency on Aging (AAAA) assists seniors and caregivers with resources for aging well, including:

- Information and referrals
- In-home services
- Transportation
- Home-delivered meals
- Legal assistance
- Financial assistance
- Caregiver support programs
- Counseling for care management

(970) 468-0295 x107
alpineaaa.org

211 is a non-emergency health and human services resources call center. The team at 211 is bilingual and has a comprehensive list of resources available to people in the community.
wc211.org

SENIOR-SPECIFIC HOUSING

Senior-specific independent living complexes in Eagle:
Golden Eagle Apartments and Seniors on Broadway
(970) 328-8897
Castle Peak Senior Life and Rehabilitation (970) 989-2500

VETERANS' SERVICES

Assists veterans and their families file for benefits.
(970) 328-9674
pat.hammon@eaglecounty.us

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Alpine Area Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is a volunteer program specifically for people 55 or older.
(970) 468-0295 ext.122
volunteers@nwccog.org

 **PETE ROSKOVICH | SALISBURY, MD**
husband | father | restaurant owner



YOUR HEART IS IN GOOD HANDS

Maryland resident Pete Roskovich texted his family: "Vail is awesome, 6-12 inches of fresh powder." A few hours later, he collapsed in the Back Bowls from a massive heart attack. Thanks to the life-saving intervention of first responders and Vail Health's Cardiac Catheterization Lab, Pete survived and returned home to his beautiful family with a new appreciation for health, life and his heart.



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FRALICK, NP**



**DR. NELSON
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INSIDER



Steadman Philippon Research Institute uses an outdoor course in Vail to better evaluate successful ACL reconstructions. Photo courtesy Steadman Philippon Research Institute

MAKING THE LEAP

How local research and initiatives create tangible results around the world

BY **KAREN MASON** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**

VAIL HEALTH IS RAPIDLY BECOMING KNOWN as a center for cutting-edge research and innovation. While significant research studies and trials typically take place in bigger university hospitals, Vail has historically been home to scientists, physicians and physical therapists whose curiosity and desire to improve health care have led to remarkable breakthroughs locally and around the world. According to Vail Health's Amy Lavigne, "We continue to work with our partners to improve health and wellness not just for our community, but for all."

RESEARCH FOR VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

Founded in 1988 by orthopaedic innovator Dr. Richard Steadman, Steadman Philippon Research Institute (SPRI) achieves outcomes-based medicine through intensive clinical relevance and research.

In August 2019, SPRI announced receipt of a grant from the Department of Defense (DOD) Office of Naval Research totaling \$4.5 million to support four research projects aimed at reducing the risk of osteoarthritis later in life and reducing long-term disability among active duty service members and veterans. SPRI researchers and scientists will be investigating improved return-to-duty protocols and better healing for wounds sustained during combat, amongst other studies.

“Being awarded these grants to help our military service members and veterans stay active is an honor for our entire team,” says Dr. Marc J. Philippon, managing partner of The Steadman Clinic and co-chair of SPRI. “At SPRI, our approach — and what sets us apart — is quickly translating our discoveries in the lab to the clinical setting to improve outcomes for

our patients. We are grateful to the DOD for entrusting us with this important and meaningful work.”

Musculoskeletal injuries, specifically those to the knee, are the leading cause of disability for active military and veterans. The incidence rate of ACL injuries is 10 times greater in military personnel than civilian populations.

Because the reinjury rate for ACL reconstruction surgeries is about 10 to 15%, this means some soldiers are cleared for duty only to experience reinjury, additional surgeries and healing time. The Mobile Platform for Optimizing Warfighter Rehabilitation (M-POWER) study is designed to help reduce that rate.

For the study, Dr. Matthew Provencher, along with Dr. Scott Tashman and his research team, strategically placed portable, wireless sensors on volunteers in SPRI's Biomotion Lab. In addition to individual indoor testing — standard procedure when analyzing a return to full activity for ACL reconstruction — researchers followed them on a course in SPRI's backyard: Vail Mountain. As indoor testing is done in a very predictable environment, it does not replicate real, outdoor terrain.



Howard Head Sports Medicine physical therapists Henry Scholz and Matt Giordanelli perform a shoulder study on Emilia Troyano.

Ditches, boulders and hills all helped simulate the sort of environment a soldier might encounter in the field. In placing wearable sensors on the feet, legs, back and chest, researchers captured body movements and assessed how participants performed on the outdoor course. By testing healthy volunteers, SPRI researchers hope to learn what “normal” movements look like and determine if patients who have been cleared for full activity still perform differently — a finding that might suggest they're not completely healed and may be at higher risk for reinjury. Because any sort of uneven terrain requires quick biomechanical responses and taxes the body and its systems in healthy individuals, initial data from this study has proven that there is a definite need for a more realistic way to evaluate if a military member is ready to return to duty following injury rehabilitation.

As a way to make the research even more accessible, the SPRI team is now working to determine the minimum number of sensors needed to perform the test, making the new return-to-duty testing protocols more affordable and realistic for future use. Because of this project and SPRI's other military-focused research, active duty military personnel around the world will be safer due to the studies being performed right in Vail.

HOWARD HEAD SPORTS MEDICINE'S SHOULDER AND ANKLE STUDIES

Physical therapist Helen Bradley with Howard Head Sports Medicine (HHSM) has overseen an in-depth shoulder study over the past couple of years.

She explains, “We're looking at strength norms in the shoulders of healthy individuals. Previously, we were using the patient's uninjured shoulder as the comparison for getting strength back in the injured shoulder following surgery.”

But Bradley says there are issues with this method. Most people have a dominant shoulder, and use may affect strength. Or they might have had an injury on the other side that could affect strength long-term. The current formula for being “released” from physical therapy is when the injured shoulder reaches 90% of the strength in the other shoulder. In reality, that decision needs to be made with more information and nuance based on some of the issues described above.



Bradley says they are working to find an average strength measurement in four decades of life in people ages 20-59. They are testing 400 healthy individuals using a hand-held dynamometer, which measures strength in seven different positions of the shoulder. "We've been doing it for several years. The data collection is time-consuming, but we are close to being done. Once we have that 400-subject number, we'll start the data analysis."

The results will provide therapists across the country with valuable data they can use to treat patients recovering from shoulder surgery. "Our plan is to write a paper to submit to medical journals and publish our study. That way, it's shared within the national physical therapy community," says Bradley.

HHSM is also conducting an ankle study to examine average heel strength and range of motion in the ankles of 400 healthy, active individuals. Ana Robinson, a physical therapist with Howard Head, says Vail's extremely active population creates a wonderful pool of subjects. "We're asking study participants how much they exercise each day and they are higher than average," she says.

The study is designed to determine what is a normal range of motion for the ankle and what is the normal strength of a calf. She says, "We know a difference in ankle strength most likely makes someone more susceptible to injury, but we don't know where people should be. Does it vary from each decade of life?"

The study has a presence at health fairs and local gyms. The testing takes 10-15 minutes. For the lunge test, participants are asked to gently place their toe against a wall and see if they can bring their knee to the wall. Researchers record the distance a subject can get their toe away from the wall while still maintaining contact between the wall and the knee. For the strength test, participants are asked to do as many calf raises as they can. As soon as it's too hard, they stop. The height and number of repetitions they complete are recorded.

Robinson says the study will provide useful data for physical therapists. "We'll be able to say, 'I have a 40-year-old patient who is injured. I can look up and say, for as active as my patient is, he should be able to get to this number.' We'll have a better ballpark to set goals."

VAIL HEALTH'S CESAREAN INITIATIVE

In September 2015, Vail Health's Family Birth Center began to focus on the hospital's cesarean rate to reduce the number of C-sections for low-risk deliveries.

While cesarean sections can be life-saving for both mothers and babies in certain situations, cesarean delivery rates have greatly increased in the United States since the 1970s without improving health outcomes. Nearly 1 in 3 women in the U.S. who gives birth does so by cesarean section. Yet, cesarean delivery is a major abdominal surgery, which poses its own risks for both mother and infant, and increases the cost of health care. Women undergoing a cesarean delivery are at greater risk for severe pain after delivery, the need for possibly addictive pain medications, hemorrhage, infection, blood clots and even death. Newborns are at greater risk for respiratory problems, and cesarean delivery can interfere with bonding between mother and infant at a critical time. Women who undergo a cesarean section to deliver their first baby have a 90% chance of having a cesarean section in their next pregnancy, with risks to mothers increasing with each cesarean delivery they have.

Through a statewide initiative called SOAR (Supporting vaginal birth for low-Risk mothers), Vail Health focused on reducing the number of cesarean deliveries for women who are considered low-risk for needing to deliver via cesarean section.

"This includes the births that we can control," says Elizabeth McDaniel, BSN, CNML, RNC-OB, clinical manager of the Family Birth Center. "That means one baby, low-risk, at-term with its head down. If the baby is breech, mom is going to have a C-section and this is out of our control. Twins are higher risk and if someone had a previous C-section, they almost always have another C-section."

McDaniel says her team started with data collection, looking at current recommendations and analyzing what they were doing that was different. "What's changed is we're using a checklist that standardizes the practice around the decision-making while still ensuring the safety of both mom and baby. This allows a care team to come together before making a decision. Can we allow



New mom Krissy Evancho says it's a powerful feeling to be able to sustain her son's life with breast milk.

more time, or have we reached the 'failure to progress' stage? We've seen remarkable improvement. When we started the program, our cesarean rate was 30.12%. Today, it is at 19.49%."

Vail Health also started recording individual physician rates so doctors could look at their own practice and see how they compare with other physicians. "This encourages them to look at best practices of the physicians with low rates," says McDaniel, adding that patient engagement and education is also important. "We talk with patients about what they can do to optimize a vaginal birth and advise them to work collaboratively with their care team."

VAIL HEALTH'S FAMILY BIRTH CENTER BREAST MILK INITIATIVE

The mission behind Vail Health's Family Birth Center breast milk initiative is simple — to increase the number of babies who leave the hospital being breastfed. Amy Lavigne, who was the manager of perinatal services at the time of the study, says when formula is introduced early on, breast milk is used less later on.

"Any amount of breast milk is still good and important. Breast milk has been proven to improve overall health during infancy and through the rest of the child's life," she says. "It decreases asthma and allergies and reduces obesity."

Lavigne believes there are also community benefits to this program. "What's best for the newborn is best for the community. We improve population health if we improve breast milk feeding rates."

Lavigne says the initiative got underway in 2016 with initial efforts to ensure education for patients through community prenatal classes. "In drilling down the data, we were able to find out which populations might be less likely to feed babies breast milk. When we discovered that included our Latina population, we started translating all our materials into Spanish."

Another population that left the hospital without being breastfed was Level 2 nursery babies with higher needs due to infection or prematurity. In response, more lactation consultants were brought into the nursery. In the spring of 2017, the birth center also implemented a donor breast milk program. Donated breast milk from a Denver breast milk bank is now available for moms who don't have breast milk. McDaniel explains, "When we implemented donor milk, that is when we saw our breast milk feeding rate climb and sustain above the US Healthy People 2020 Goal of 85.8%. Our current breast milk feeding rate is 89.85% year to date. This is incredibly gratifying as the health benefits of human milk for infants include nutritional, immunological, developmental, social, economic and environmental as well as a decreased risk of a wide range of illnesses and infections beyond infancy. Mothers also receive health benefits from breastfeeding, such as optimal metabolic profiles, reduced risk of various cancers and psychological benefits."

PAIN MANAGEMENT & OPIOID SPARING INITIATIVES

Through its Pain Management Committee, Vail Health is doing its part to positively impact the opioid crisis by using alternative medications and therapies while still prioritizing and succeeding in effective pain management for patients.

"Vail Health is really taking the lead on this issue," says Dr. David

Ruttum, an anesthesiologist with Anesthesia Partners of Colorado and a leader on the committee's work to reduce the prescription and exposure of opioids. He says he was personally moved to start an opioid study in 2017 after attending a Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) meeting on opioid use and disorder and learning about the problems associated with opioids. "Orthopaedic surgery tends to be opioid heavy and the majority of surgeries we do in Vail are orthopaedic."

"We are very concerned with managing a patient's pain in ways other than just opioids," explains Dr. Ruttum. "Our goal is to maximize comfort and minimize risks due to any medications."

There is no national standard on how many opioids a patient should have during surgery, so Dr. Ruttum and his team decided to measure the use for various types of surgery. "We needed to create a baseline to know where we were and where we needed to go."

By employing best practices for pain management for opioid reduction, the team was able to implement a change in opioid use both during and after surgery. "By doing things as simple as giving the patient Tylenol and anti-inflammatory medication before surgery, we have been able to reduce opioid use by 20% both during and after surgery. In the operating room, we've started giving other non-opioid pain-relieving medications."

"Another avenue we've taken is we've started giving patients oral medications during recovery."

Previously, patients would only receive intravenous medication in the recovery room. Now, patients are sent home with the same medication, so everyone knows how well that medication is working before patients leave the hospital. New professional guidelines are also being created for how many opioids a patient goes home with based on what type of surgery has been performed. The Pain Management Committee is meeting with surgeons and establishing set amounts of medications to send home with patients.

Vail Health's pharmacies are also taking measures to reduce pill theft and prevent drug abuse and initiation with locking prescription bottles for opioids and other controlled substances. The locking bottles are proven to improve patient safety at home, in schools and throughout the community.



We are very concerned with managing a patient's pain in **ways other than just opioids.**

DR. DAVID RUTTUM



Patients of Vail Health's pharmacies are now offered locking prescription bottles for opioids and other controlled substances. The bottles are proven to reduce pill theft and prevent drug abuse and initiation.



Vail Health's Family Birth Center has also been working to decrease opioid use amongst its patients. By giving non-opioid medication in the hospital, it has decreased opioid use from 55% to 29% without increasing pain in their patients.

According to Dr. Ruttum, talking with patients about opioids is critical. "Before I attended the CHA Summit on opioids in 2017, I was very nervous about talking with patients about opioid use. I thought they would view the conversation as being too evasive or judgmental. But I found just the opposite. I was surprised at how comfortable patients were talking with me about it."

Dr. Ruttum says it's best practice to talk with patients about opioids before they have surgery, so everyone has the same expectations. "So many people are concerned; they read about the crisis in the news. More often than not, patients thank me for coming up with a plan. They're grateful that I cared enough to talk to them." **V**



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TRAILBLAZERS

Surgeons at Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery become national leaders in using innovative techniques for care

BY **KIMBERLY NICOLETTI**

Photo by Dominique Taylor



THE SURGEONS AT VAIL-SUMMIT ORTHOPAEDICS & NEUROSURGERY are truly cutting edge when it comes to pioneering new techniques in surgery, resulting in even better outcomes for patients. Neurosurgeon Dr. Ernest Braxton and orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Nathan Cafferky — and their medical teams — have placed Vail Health on the map as one of the top hospitals nationwide to undergo surgery. Dr. Braxton is a renowned leader in minimally invasive artificial disc surgery, as well as an innovator in performing spinal fusions on patients who remain awake and conscious during surgery. Dr. Cafferky was one of the first surgeons in the U.S. to employ ROSA, a newer robotic technology, in total knee replacement surgery.

HISTORIC FEAT

On September 11, 2018, Dr. Braxton became the first surgeon in the nation to insert an artificial disc into a patient's spine through the belly button.

While "natural orifice" surgery is common in gall bladder removals, for instance, Dr. Braxton's approach was the first of its kind in the U.S., partially because neurosurgery tends to be very conservative and slow to advance, due to its high stakes.

"We believe this case is a landmark and represents the first of many as spine surgeons begin to realize the benefits this technique may provide their patients," NovApproach Spine, which holds patents related to the surgical method, stated in a press release. "Vail Health should be proud of their leadership in advancing spinal care with this patient-centric approach."

While most discs wear out closer to the base of the spine, the patient Dr. Braxton made history with suffered from a degenerated disc at the level of his belly button. The higher location gave Dr. Braxton the opportunity to replace the disc through the umbilicus.

THE BACKBONE OF FASTER RECOVERY

The natural orifice surgery exemplified how Dr. Braxton and his team consistently strive for minimally invasive surgery, which reduces recovery time and pain.

In his routine spinal fusion surgeries, Dr. Braxton prevents muscle die-off and the associated higher risk of infection by cutting small incisions on the side of the spine and spreading the muscles, rather than completely slicing through them. Other, more invasive, surgeries cut closer to the spine and strip the muscles off of the bones to fuse vertebrae.

More intrusive methods stop blood flow to the muscles, which causes muscles to die, making them impossible to rehabilitate and prone to infection, Dr. Braxton says.

In keeping with his high standards of minimally invasive surgery, Dr. Braxton often performs spinal disc fusion surgeries while patients are awake, rather than sedated under heavy anesthesia.

In 2016, he was one of the first surgeons in the nation (Miami surgeon Dr. Michael Wang performed an identical surgery the same year, and it is unclear who completed it first) to successfully perform an outpatient awake spine fusion surgery. Traditional neurosurgery knowledge maintained that spinal fusions were too long, painful or complex to undertake awake. He performed the first awake surgery in Colorado in 2019 after joining Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery.

Part of Dr. Braxton's expertise, which led him to perform an awake spinal fusion, stemmed from his experience as a neurosurgeon during the war in Afghanistan.

"It gave me the confidence to handle anything that comes in the door," he says, talking about the high level, complex and serious neurological injuries he treated. It also trained him to automatically employ the best methods to return soldiers to duty — an attitude that translates well into the active lifestyle of Eagle County residents and visitors.

Dr. Braxton had completed more than 200 less complex spinal operations on awake patients, using a local anesthesia and pain blocks, before attempting an awake spinal fusion.

Even though the practice of awake spine surgery is growing, it's generally only available at major medical centers in large cities, with the prominent exception of Vail.



Awake surgeries prevent the need for general anesthesia, which can lead to serious complications, especially in older patients or in high elevations like Vail. Surgeries without general anesthesia allow patients to recover faster, without an anesthesia hangover that can last days. It often prevents the need for post-operative narcotics for pain control; at the very least, patients require fewer narcotics, and that's important because people with back problems can be vulnerable to becoming addicted to the painkillers, Dr. Braxton says.

While traditional disc fusion surgeries require patients to remain hospitalized for three to four days, awake patients leave the hospital the same or next day. "It allows me to be more delicate with neurological structures and creates a more professional atmosphere that is centered on patient care, and patients seem to recover better because of more gentle handling of the tissue," he says. "If it doesn't hurt during surgery, usually it doesn't hurt after surgery."

Dr. Braxton can also avoid a surgeon's biggest nightmare: severing a nerve, which often looks like a disc or scar tissue if it's flattened out. By probing the area in an awake patient, surgeons receive 100% confirmation they're cutting the proper tissue because if it's a nerve, the patient will feel it.

"You don't have that benefit when the patient's asleep," Dr. Braxton explains.

Some surgeons use expensive neurological instruments to obtain the same assurance, but their patients' bills add up, especially if they happen to be out-of-network.

Awake surgeries also help doctors pinpoint the exact location the pain is coming from and ensure they have successfully intervened by asking patients about levels and locations of soreness during surgery.

"Before, we used our best medical judgment as to what's causing pain, but pain is a subjective experience; what causes pain in one patient doesn't cause pain in another," he says, explaining that now he can say to the patient: "You tell me when the pain goes away, and then we know the operation is done."



Dr. Ernest Braxton performs a spinal fusion on an awake patient, preventing the need for anesthesia, reducing the need for narcotic painkillers and allowing the patient to return to activity sooner.



Dr. Nathan Cafferky performs a knee replacement surgery using ROSA, a robotic surgical assistant.

Though an awake spinal fusion may sound painful, Eagle County residents like Tom Kleinhardt, who underwent a fusion on June 20, 2019, don't experience pain.

"Your body feels some motion, and you feel pressure and a little jerking, but nothing to be concerned about," Kleinhardt says.

In fact, he comfortably watched a travel documentary about Singapore on an iPad as he laid face down for his 2-½ hour surgery.

He had heard recovery from general anesthesia could take longer in older people and result in complications, like memory problems, so he opted for the awake surgery.

"I want to encourage other people, if it's appropriate, to do the same thing," he says. "I highly recommend it."

PRECISE KNEE REPLACEMENTS THROUGH ROBOTICS

Robotics are assisting in surgeries with increasingly good results. Dr. Cafferky had been a consultant for Zimmer Biomet, which ultimately developed the Robotic Surgical Assistant (ROSA), for two years before the FDA cleared it for use in total knee replacements in January 2019.

By April 2019, the robot (ROSA) arrived, making Vail one of the first in the nation to acquire the technology. In May, Dr. Cafferky successfully completed his first robot-assisted total knee replacement surgeries.

Through precise, real-time measurements, ROSA guarantees surgeons the tension they place on each of the ligaments is perfect. Before ROSA, surgeons used their medical expertise to decide if ligament tension seemed precise. "This was the art of the total knee replacement," explains Dr. Cafferky. "With ROSA, we get to move away from the art of surgery, and make it more scientific, thus potentially improving outcomes."

"Now we get scientific data telling us if we're doing a good job or not. Balancing the ligaments is one of the most important aspects of knee replacement surgery, and ROSA tells the surgeon that appropriate ligament tension has been achieved throughout knee range of motion, and that's the game changer."

The robotic data is especially important, as it has the potential to improve patient satisfaction. Currently, in the U.S., about 20% of patients who had total knee replacements performed with traditional instrumentation are "frustrated or unsatisfied" with their artificial knee performance, Dr. Cafferky says. In his practice, that percentage is around 10%. "While 90% of my patients report they are satisfied with their total knee, seeing 1 out of 10 of my patients be unsatisfied is enough for me to look to technology for help. The goal is to reduce the number of unsatisfied patients."

While he needs hard evidence in the form of 1-year, 5-year and 10-year outcome studies on knee replacements with ROSA, he is seeing "very good early outcomes."

"It has the potential to help move medicine forward and help improve upon a surgery that already has a good outcome track record," he says.

Before the FDA approved ROSA for total knee



The most exciting aspect is the objective data I get during surgery... now I can tell a patient, with confidence, that **'your knee is perfect. I have scientific evidence to support that.'**

NATHAN CAFFERKY, MD, FAAOS, ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

replacements, it sanctioned the robotic assistant for neurosurgery because ROSA has a very small — 0.5 millimeter — margin of error. This means that ROSA allows for bony cuts to be very pure.

Prior to surgery, ROSA converts standard X-rays to a 3D model of the knee. This allows physicians to map out patients' exact and unique anatomy before even operating. Prior to this technology, other older robotic systems required an expensive MRI or a potentially high-radiation CT scan. Neither are required for the use of ROSA, which could be safer for patients and save them money.

"It helps doctors to make bony cuts more pure and to make ligament tension more accurate," he says. "We are customizing a patient's knee replacement to meet their demands. With ROSA, it makes knee replacements more replicable and more reliable."

ROSA is made of a base with an arm, which can position knives for the most accurate bony cuts possible, or allow surgeons to position the arm. Safety mechanisms prohibit the robotic arm from actually touching a patient's body, unless the surgeon guides it to do so. This allows the surgeon to stay in control of ROSA throughout the case. Thus, the surgeon is still the one operating.

Dr. Cafferky likens surgery with ROSA to "going from paper maps to GPS."

"The most exciting aspect is the objective data I get during surgery... now I can tell a patient, with confidence, that 'your knee is perfect. I have scientific evidence to support that,'" he says.

Since ROSA makes cuts, artificial implants and ligament balancing more precise through objective, rather than subjective, evaluations, Dr. Cafferky believes ROSA can help patients recover with less pain and return to their active lifestyles faster. He says it also has the potential to increase the longevity of knee replacements and minimize future surgical interventions. "This is what I will be researching moving forward," says Dr. Cafferky.

Through the innovative methods Dr. Braxton and Dr. Cafferky are helping pioneer, patients at Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery recover faster and experience less pain or discomfort after surgeries. But, the advancements don't stop there; physicians like Dr. Braxton and Dr. Cafferky remain committed to staying on the leading edge of medicine as knowledge and technology continually progress. **V**



NATHAN CAFFERKY,
MD, FAAOS

Board-Certified
Orthopaedic Surgeon



ERNEST BRAXTON,
MD, MBA, FAANS

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EAT. CHAT. PARENT. REPEAT.

Program addresses youth mental health and well-being

BY **HEATHER HOWER**

PARENTING CAN FEEL VERY isolating. Are you doing the right thing? What effect does technology have on developing brains — how much is too much? What's the difference between bullying and meanness? What's the latest on vaping, drugs and drinking? There's so much to be aware of and, frankly, it can feel overwhelming. Most caregivers aren't experts, but they want the best for their children, whether they are 18 months old or 18 years old.

According to the 2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey conducted by Mountain Youth (formerly Eagle River Youth Coalition), 32 percent of local middle school students reported feeling sad and hopeless, a 33 percent increase from 2015. The data proved young people feel stressed, anxious or depressed.

Statistics like these energized Mountain Youth to develop Eat Chat Parent, a speaker series to help parents, caregivers and trusted adults navigate the complicated-yet-wonderful world of raising children. Young people ages ten right through to young adults are encouraged to be a part of these conversations, creating a multigenerational approach to discussing tough topics.

"The best way to conquer risk-taking behaviors is to communicate about the topic at least three to four years prior to the behavior occurring," Carol Johnson, Mountain Youth's community education manager, says. Eat Chat Parent educates families on all areas of youth mental health and well-being, from technology to self-esteem. Topics are addressed in an open, safe space where participants can discuss issues, ask and answer questions and learn tips to better communicate as a family.

In 2018, Mountain Youth began working with presenting sponsor and community partner Vail Health to bring in nationally acclaimed experts and speakers for Eat Chat Parent. The free speaker series includes a complimentary dinner and childcare, as well as Spanish translation services. The number of participants grew from 200 in its inaugural year to nearly 1,500 in 2018. What did participants learn over the course of the year? It turns out, quite a bit.

TECHNOLOGY OVERUSE

Clinical psychologist, attorney, author and founder/director of Digital Citizen Academy, Dr. Lisa Strohmman is passionate about helping families connect to educate, empower and inspire responsible technology use. Her focus is on proactively preventing and reducing the issues students, educators and parents face as a result of technology use — and overuse.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO?

1. Set time limits.
2. Do not allow tech in the bedroom.
3. Follow age-appropriate rules.
4. Communicate and discuss risks and always make sure that the lines of communication are open.
5. Maintain awareness of your children's social media accounts.
6. Disconnect by example.

For more information, visit www.digitalcitizenacademy.com.

"LIKE," THE MOVIE

This IndieFlix documentary explores the influence of social media on our lives. Young people are candid with their insights, realizing how it impacts them, sometimes creating feelings of loneliness.

FIVE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS:

1. Start the conversation about social media early: studies show that parents should speak with their children three to four years before the behavior takes hold.
2. Make a plan or contract that details family expectations and resulting consequences. This is a great time for an open conversation about why children may want to use Snapchat or Instagram — and why you may not want them to just yet.

3. Remind your young ones that there is virtually no privacy on the World Wide Web — then help them establish boundaries and turn their accounts on to "private" mode so only approved followers can view, comment and like the content.
4. Stop cyber-bullying before it starts. Remind children how hurtful a mean comment can be — and that it can get them into serious trouble. Know that there are also ways to filter out inappropriate comments.
5. Turn off notifications from apps. This helps cut down on distractions and multitasking.

For more information, visit www.thelikemovie.com.

RESILIENCY & SELF-ESTEEM

"Building Resiliency and Self-Esteem in Our Kids" featured Mind Springs Health President and CEO Sharon Raggio, LPC LMFT; Mountain Youth's former Youth Advisor Gerry Lopez, who discussed overcoming depression; and high school senior Mel McCalley, who shared their journey toward gaining self-esteem and self-acceptance in a gender non-conforming world.

Self-esteem, coping and resiliency are vital traits in a young person's life. Dr. Raggio focused on core strengths — and that 40 percent of our personal happiness comes from intentional activities. Small steps can make a serious, and positive, impact on our lives.

SOME OF HER "STEPS FOR HAPPINESS" INCLUDE:

1. Cultivate optimism.
2. Avoid overthinking and social comparison.
3. Learn to forgive.
4. Develop strategies for coping.
5. Commit to your goals.

Take the free character strengths survey, and learn about the practice of well-being, at www.viastrengths.org.



Remember, you want children to come to you with the difficult questions about sex, drugs, vaping, smoking and friend issues. **Take a deep breath and respond thoughtfully.**

KARI COMMERFORD, M.A.

TECHNOLOGY MISUSE

Dr. Sameer Hinduja, PhD, a professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University and co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, addressed best practices to curb technology misuse. He presented fundamental tips for Internet use and also discussed cyberbullying, sexting and unwise social media use.

DR. HINDUJA'S TIPS:

1. Establish an open line of communication, so when there is a crisis, your child will feel comfortable coming to you. Start with conversation (What's your favorite app? Why? What do you do while in it?).
2. Talk with and listen to your child. Be calm, don't overreact.
3. Make sure your child is (and feels) safe. Convey unconditional support.
4. Sexting: Encourage your teen to think twice before sending an explicit photo to anyone and delete any pictures sent.
5. Remind children that the pictures they send or post can be distributed to almost anyone and everyone.

For more information, visit www.cyberbullying.org.

ANXIETY

"Your Child + Anxiety" was led by local author Julie Kiddoo and Dr. Steven Schlozman, co-director at Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds at Massachusetts General Hospital and assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

Participants learned that anxiety is a normal, healthy emotion, and children will experience periods of worry and fear. "It's our job to support our kids through what comes naturally difficult for them," Dr. Schlozman says.

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Remain calm. Don't yell. Listen.
2. Know your child's temperament, strengths, weaknesses and cognitive abilities. Have

there been any sudden, abrupt changes in their social world, culture or cognition? Are these changes worrisome?

3. Go outside. It's therapeutic. Movement and exercise are proven to decrease stress and build connections in the brain.
4. Embrace diversity. Acknowledging our differences and talking about them helps lower stress levels.
5. Be part of a community gathering. When we have a sense of community, we feel calmer. We require community; it's where we watch each other. It's life-saving.


For more information, visit www.mghclaycenter.org.

TEEN SUBSTANCE USE & TOXIC STRESS

"Teen Substance Use and Toxic Stress" was led by Kari Commerford, M.A., director at Gunnison County Substance Abuse Prevention Project, lecturer of Psychology at Western State Colorado University.

COMMERFORD'S COMMON-SENSE PARENTING ADVICE:

1. Different children have different levels of stress. Something that seems inconsequential to the 14-year-old can be devastating to the 9-year-old. Roll with it and listen.
2. It's okay to back off... just be available when your teen, tween or child wants to talk. It may be at 9:30 p.m. and you're ready to relax, but it's the perfect time to get inside your child's mind.
3. Be open to questions and calm with responses. Remember, you want children to come to you with the difficult questions about sex, drugs, vaping, smoking and friend issues. Take a deep breath and respond thoughtfully.
4. Factual responses are important. Obviously, instill your family's values in your child, but it's key to share the data on the why.

For more information, visit www.gunnisoncounty.org/156. 



2019-20 SCHEDULE

POSITIVE PARENTING: CHANGE YOUR LANGUAGE, CHANGE THEIR LIFE

Paul Jenkins, PhD,
National Speaker & Author

- September 10 | Eagle Valley HS
- September 11 | Battle Mountain HS

SELF-CARE INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

Alex Annacone,
CU Depression Center

- October 8 | Battle Mountain HS
- October 9 | Eagle Valley HS

REBUILD YOURSELF VS TALK THERAPY

*en Español, English
interpretation available
Janina Fariñas, PhD, L'ancía
y la Cocina

Olga Wilkins, Family Connect
Gerry Lopez, Eagle Valley
Behavioral Health

- November 5 | St. Clare's Church
- November 6 | St. Mary's Church

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM PREDATORS

Elizabeth Jeglic, PhD,
National Speaker & Author

- January 14 | Eagle Valley HS
- January 15 | Battle Mountain HS

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

Steven Schlozman, M.D.,
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry
at Harvard Medical School

- March 3 | Eagle Valley HS
- March 4 | Battle Mountain HS

5:30 PM Dinner

6:00 PM Presentation

Free childcare

Reservations required

Spanish interpretation available

Questions? Contact Carol Johnson
at cjohnson@mountainyouth.org.

GOING MOBILE

MIRA brings health care and social services directly into neighborhoods

BY **HEATHER HOWER** PHOTOS BY **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**



WHEN A 40-FOOT RV wrapped in photos of our mountains and people rolls into local neighborhoods, the residents cry, “Mira!” which means “look!” in Spanish. The word also translates to “vision.”

Communities along the I-70 corridor and into El Jebel have been seeing the Mobile Intercultural Resource Alliance (MIRA), and many already appreciate the vision behind it. Dispensing information and encouraging community conversations, MIRA brings critical resources right to the doorsteps of those who need them most. From low-cost medical care to housing down payment programs and a food bank that rivals many farmers’ markets, MIRA is a one-stop shop for local families who might not have access to these resources.

MIRA symbolizes all that is good in our community: It’s a cohesive partnership between Eagle County Public Health, Vail Health and the Eagle Valley Community Foundation. The cheerfully determined staff makes connections and shares information, thereby improving overall public health and quality of life.

Before it was MIRA, the RV was purchased by Vail Health's Volunteer Corps in 2012 as an on-the-go simulation lab and training center for life-saving skills. However, when it was determined the trainings could take place without the need of the RV, it was parked for a few years until an idea began percolating.

An unexpected team of people started brainstorming, including Vail Health employees and Eagle County commissioners. Representatives from fleet maintenance, information technology and marketing all got involved, and a vision for the RV was born. "We realized, yes, this can happen," says Jeff Owens, who is in Vail Health's marketing department but also holds a commercial driver's license, making him a key member of the team that transitioned the RV from training ground to resource center.

The bus was donated to the Eagle Valley Community Foundation, and staffing is provided by several entities. Melina Valsecia, community connector for MIRA, is an employee of the Foundation, while her MIRA coworkers, Liduvina Torres and Faviola Alderete, are employed by Eagle County. The MIRA crew often teams up with Vail Health employees to educate the community and provide resources.

"They are dynamic; they're paying attention and consistently considering the needs of the community," Owens shares.

In fact, even before MIRA was officially introduced to the community and only days after the bus was fully outfitted, a call for help was answered and MIRA was dispatched to the Lake Christine Fire of 2018. "While the intention wasn't to respond to a crisis like the fire, we felt compelled to share the incredible resources we have on board with people who were in great need," explains Valsecia. "We knew right away how valuable our mobile resource center can be."

This synergistic team creates a welcoming environment right from the start. People are warmly greeted as they enter MIRA. Some arrive tentatively; others step on board ready to learn about the community resources available to them. Employees are bilingual, and all materials come in both English and Spanish. Connections are made, and those who stop in and ask for help leave with much more than a pamphlet.

"We are not only giving information out, we are helping people navigate the system. People need health insurance, childcare and food; normally they would need to go to three different places for those resources," Valsecia says. "We say, 'let's make the connections.'"

Most people leave the bus with at least two resources, whether it's connecting about Medicaid, finding healthy food options or even managing a toothache. While the team creates the connections, sometimes the partners come right to the source. One day in late June as Vail Health and the Eagle County Sheriff's Office were sharing tips on helmet safety and checking the safety of car seats, a dental hygienist set up screenings right on the bus.

Just as MIRA is a one-of-a-kind resource, the way it operates is reshaping the way people receive care. Many organizations are receptive to having Valsecia or Torres reach out and establish relationships on their behalf. "We are trying to change the system to be more one-on-one, more personalized," Valsecia says. "I think the key, besides partnerships, is the people who are on the bus; we are community connectors."

MIRA's resources and connections will continue to expand. Next, Valsecia hopes to bring a Spanish-speaking mental health provider on board. After all, the three MIRA team members




We are not only giving information out, we are **helping people navigate the system.**

MELINA VALSECIA

see and hear the true needs of the community: "We're having tough conversations in here; tough conversations nobody knows about — depression, grief, domestic violence. But we keep track of what's in those conversations because we need to bring it up to the organizations involved."

Bringing the mobile clinic to the neighborhoods pays off. In October 2018, MIRA brought Eagle County Public Health nurses right on the bus and in that month alone, more than 700 community members received vaccinations. Why? Because in the long and lean Eagle River Valley, getting from point A to point B can be a challenge. Dotsero is a long way from Vail. Even getting to the Eagle County building without a car, and with a child or two in tow, is a challenge. MIRA reduces the challenge and puts health care and other resources within reach.

MIRA has a rotating schedule so community members can plan ahead. It can be found at miraeaglecounty.com. While some services are consistent (dental screenings, for example), others are available on a rotating basis. After its first 168 days in operation, MIRA worked with 2,956 children and adults. Imagine what can be as MIRA continues its journey up and down the Eagle River Valley. 



Eagle County Paramedic Brenda Hazard, Bus Operator and Community Specialist Liduvina Torres and Community Connector Melina Valsecia.



Brenda Hazard checks the vitals of a neighborhood resident who hopped on the bus for health care resources.





THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Stem cell research looks promising to help people age better

BY **KIMBERLY NICOLETTI**

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE age 90 or older will quadruple between 2010 and 2050. But what's the point of living longer if you're burdened with disease and degeneration?

Not much, which is why Johnny Huard, PhD and other scientists have been studying healthy aging for 25 years. Dr. Huard is the chief scientific officer and director of the Center of Regenerative Sports Medicine at Steadman Philippon Research Institute, and he and other researchers may have found the key to slowing the effects of aging and helping people recover from injuries, illnesses and degeneration.

After decades of clinical trials, scientists finally understand why people age at a cellular level: essentially, our stem cells become dysfunctional, less active or "tired," as Dr. Huard explains it.

DIET AND EXERCISE

Dr. Huard asserts that healthy aging relies on five pillars: healthy diet, lifestyle, personalized medicine, regenerative medicine and prescription medications. Each of these five fundamentals contributes to supporting healthy stem cells. These interventions won't transform a 50-year-old into a 25-year-old, but they can assist that older person in aging much better from age 50 on.

A healthy lifestyle — including a ketogenic diet (low carb, high healthy fat intake), exercise and stress reduction — already goes a long way in preventing excess stem cell decay.

“Nutrition is vital. Eat less and live longer,” Dr. Huard says, adding that studies have shown the combination of a ketogenic diet, moderate calorie restriction and 14-hour fasts between dinner and breakfast increase health span in humans and lower risks for diabetes, cancer and aging in general.

Stem cells originate in blood vessel walls, so exercise is important because it increases vascularity, which results in more stem cells and, ultimately, faster healing and slower aging. He recommends a moderately to intensely active lifestyle.

But obviously, diet and exercise alone don’t prevent stem cells from eventually dying off. As it turns out, other cells in the body, called senescent cells, drive inflammation and literally turn healthy cells

into dysfunctional ones by producing molecules that disturb the function of neighboring cells. So, the question becomes: Can we stop these nasty senescent cells?

SUPPLEMENTS

Studies show we can, and that’s where personalized medicine, regenerative medicine and medication come into play.

Dr. Huard begins with personalized medicine: He tests blood for a host of markers most doctors don’t routinely look for, including vitamin E, hormone, mineral levels, heavy metals, etc. Once people bring their blood markers to baseline readings, he recommends the next two steps: regenerative medicine and medication.

Supplements and prescription drugs are the most straightforward, though Dr. Huard cautions people to work with their doctors, as some medications and supplements are contraindicated in certain situations. Several prescription drugs look promising in their ability to kill senescent cells.



Johnny Huard, PhD is a world-renowned scientist and the Chief Scientific Officer and Director of the Center for Regenerative Sports Medicine at the Steadman Philippon Research Institute.



The Steadman Clinic physician and SPRI researcher Dr. Thos Evans performs a clinical trial focused on the aging process. Photos courtesy Steadman Philippon Research Institute

WHAT IS A STEM CELL?

Stem cells are undifferentiated cells, which can develop into a variety of cell types, such as muscle, red blood or brain cells. They also work as an internal repair system in tissues.

STEM CELLS

Regenerative medicine, the fifth pillar of anti-aging, includes stem cell banking. At birth, all of our cells are “good,” accommodating 100% rejuvenation potential. By age 50, only 50% of our cells are “good,” and at around 75, only 25% have regenerative potential, due to the destructive force of senescent cells.

In a study of mice with progeria (accelerated aging and its related, debilitating symptoms), mice injected with 500,000 young stem cells lived three times longer with significantly better health than non-injected mice. Another study showed that young mice receiving blood from old mice aged prematurely, and old mice receiving blood from young mice slowed down their aging process; these old mice also suddenly possessed rejuvenating factors, including the ability to fight Alzheimer’s disease. And, the results seem to transfer to humans, too. Dr. Huard asserts that, on average, women (and female animals) live longer than males because more women than not become pregnant and benefit from the young stem cells of their fetuses, women who become pregnant between age 40 and 50 age slower and achieve extreme longevity, he says.



It's not going to be one thing.
It's going to be multiple things, and it's not going to be tomorrow; it's going to take time.
The goal is not to make you look younger. It is to make you age better.

DR. JOHNNY HUARD



"Your stem cells may prove someday to be a lifesaver," Dr. Huard says, adding that the best gift parents can give their baby involves "banking" the stem cells in the umbilical cord. "Stem cell banking is the best investment you can make in your life."

The process of banking usually involves extracting 10 cc of fat and freezing the stem cells. Dr. Huard began banking his a year ago.

However, a few major sticking points still exist. First of all, there

are companies who take people's money and don't follow the proper banking procedures, Dr. Huard says. The cost to bank stem cells is approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000, but that amount only covers the actual banking process; getting stem cells re-injected into the body costs much more. And, the main problem in this nation is that the FDA has approved the removal and freezing of stem cells, but it hasn't approved injecting them back into the body.



SPRI scientists pursue "bench-to-bedside" research, a term they use to describe studies that begin at the laboratory bench and develop into treatments or therapies that physicians will use for their patients.

The FDA wants to ensure scientists growing stem cells have mastered the technique because "a lot of things can go wrong," Dr. Huard says. Still, other countries such as Germany and Mexico regularly grow and re-inject banked stem cells into people. Dr. Huard and others are committed to educating the FDA about how they have discovered safe ways to grow the necessary amount of stem cells. Perhaps in the future, we will not need to grow all stem cells if we know in advance the cells that are the best for healthy aging.

Ultimately, Dr. Huard sees a day where stem cells are banked at birth, or at least banked prior to soldiers being deployed, astronauts launching into space and diseases progressing. Banked, younger stem cells can help those astronauts counteract high radiation exposure, help the wounded warriors heal and save older people from age-related degeneration.

Though stem cell research suggests profound breakthroughs, it's important to remember that it's not the only intervention necessary for healthy-aging effects; diet, exercise and personalized and regenerative medicine all play a role.

"It's not going to be one thing. It's going to be multiple things, and it's not going to be tomorrow; it's going to take time," Dr. Huard says. "The goal is not to make you look younger. It is to make you age better." **V**





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TALES FROM THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

VAIL HEALTH'S EAST WING TAKES SHAPE

VAIL HEALTH'S EAST WING IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN FOR PATIENT CARE IN LATE 2020, and the construction team is hard at work to meet that goal. The community's hospital of tomorrow will look and function very differently from the old medical center many remember. While it served the community and our visitors well for over 50 years, the basic mechanical and electrical systems were ready for upgrades and replacement; medical spaces were disjointed, confined and inefficient; and the facility had not kept pace with the rapidly changing health care industry or other mountain hospitals.

When the project is complete, the community and our visitors will benefit from a new state-of-the-art Emergency Department, a relocated helipad on the medical center campus with direct access to the hospital, increased parking capacity, appropriate medical space for physician groups and a new main entrance off S. Frontage Road, thereby removing 100% of patient, visitor, emergency and staff traffic from W. Meadow Drive and improving the pedestrian experience in that area.

There are 80-90 workers on site most days, and if they weren't so busy building a hospital, they'd tell you some great stories about what makes this project so interesting. Here are a few.



HITTING ROCK BOTTOM

When the goal is to dig 65 feet below grade, you celebrate hitting "rock bottom" when you get there. After removing 2.5 million cubic feet of dirt, concrete and steel — 1.8 million of which was recycled — the space where the old Vail Clinic and hospital parking garage once stood could best be described as a chasm. Over 600 million gallons of underground water was diverted from around the construction site. The water was filtered from 35 on-site wells to remove sediment, at which point it was tested by a lab to ensure purity. It was then returned to the riparian stream between Vail Health Hospital and Dobson Arena. This operation prevented the construction site from becoming a mud pit, and added clean water to the stream. Peering down inside the giant hole, construction workers looked tiny as they began laying a 4-foot thick foundation for the lowest level of Vail Health's new parking garage.



BUILT TO LAST

Studies have shown that kids who play with Legos develop dexterity, problem-solving, planning, teamwork and math skills. Some of those kids grow up to work for pre-cast concrete installation companies like the one Vail Health has used to build the new east wing and parking garage. The structures of these buildings were prepared, cast and cured in a factory in Colorado Springs. The process is called pre-casting, and it's more effective than on-site casting in terms of cost, labor and time. Pre-cast concrete also offers better quality and longevity. Each piece of concrete goes through a testing process to ensure strength and stability. All together, Vail Health is using 1,040 pieces! Slabs weigh anywhere from 10,000-30,000 pounds, and all of the pieces were stored on a lot the size of a football field. In Spring 2019, we began the adult-style Lego work of fitting all the pieces together to form a five-story parking garage and an eight-story hospital building. Each piece of concrete is designed with embedded connection points that are joined together and welded. Thankfully, unlike a Lego set, these blocks are built to last.



Pieces of pre-cast concrete for Vail Health's east wing and parking garage weigh as much as 30,000 pounds.



Peering down into the construction pit 65 feet below grade, construction workers looked tiny in comparison.



WHAT A BEAST

Over the years, King Kong faced off with Godzilla, Gorosaurus and even the Skull Island Python. In 2019, King Kong took on Vail Health.

Passersby couldn't help but notice the 500,000-pound crane rising from Vail Health's construction site. Meet the "King Kong 300" (as in 300 tons). This beast can lift up to 40,000 pounds at once, and the boom stretches 240 feet into the sky.

Thanks to the King Kong, the walls of the new parking garage and porte-cochère are in place. Unlike the "real" monster of lore, our King Kong came and went quietly, making only constructive progress.

WHY A NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT?

For over 50 years, Vail Health has patched up, cured and cared for our community and visitors when they've needed us most. Our Emergency Department (ED) is the only Level III trauma center in Eagle County, and it's one of the busiest in Colorado. Serving a community of about 60,000 residents, plus tens of thousands of adventurous tourists on any given day, is a feat in our current ED, which is now one of the oldest parts of the building on campus.

Designed in coordination with physicians and nursing staff, the plans for Vail Health's new Emergency Department address current space constraints and the community's changing health care needs.

- The new ED will provide 51% more square feet of space than our current ED.
- There will be 19 exam beds and 12 private rooms—two more exam beds and nine more private rooms than we currently have. Three of the rooms will be specially designed for behavioral health, and one room will be equipped for forensic examinations.
- Two centralized nurse's stations will improve visibility of the department and circulation efficiency.
- Patients arriving by ambulance or skier transport will be brought in via a new ambulance garage for privacy and protection from the outdoor elements.
- Patients and visitors arriving in a personal vehicle or shuttle will have quicker/easier access to the ED from our new plaza entrance on S. Frontage Rd.
- Adjacencies will be improved by adding a new ambulance garage and imaging department directly

next to the ED, and the outpatient pharmacy will be relocated nearby.

- An elevator within the department will take critical patients swiftly upward to the new on-site helipad, reducing travel time when minutes matter and ensuring the safety and efficiency of transport.

MOVING PARTS

When Vail Health originally contemplated the Master Facility Plan, the idea of building a brand new hospital in a different location was considered, but quickly dismissed. It certainly would have been easier to work with a blank canvas; however, the community's needs for a hospital in the heart of Vail remained a priority.

Renovating and expanding the Vail campus has required a high level of flexibility as a myriad of moving parts must fall into place. A Master Plan Logistics Team and Moves Committee was formed to coordinate over 60 moves that impacted over 150 staff members, all of whom graciously accepted the moves as "growing pains" in the process of building the world's most modern mountain hospital.

BIG DUMPS = BIG HEADACHES

While most of us rejoice over big snowfalls, those in the construction world equate big dumps to big headaches. The freezing temperatures of last winter made digging a foundation and pouring concrete tough tasks. In order to dig into frozen ground, Vail Health's construction team had to use hydronic ground thaw machines, which circulate hot water into long, winding pipes that are then covered by insulating blankets to keep the ground warm. To prevent the concrete from freezing while it was being placed, giant furnaces on the construction site pumped heat under insulation blankets to maintain concrete temperatures above 50° Fahrenheit.

In addition to keeping the construction site warm and clear of snow, there is always concern for keeping the construction workers safe from the elements. Warm layers are essential, and breaks are common in the winter to allow the workers to get inside and warm up.

So, while you pray for a big snow year, please also request a few warm days for the construction team to work on this monumental project! **V**



A rendering of Vail Health's new east wing shows the entrance to the Emergency Department on South Frontage Road.



Growing our Own

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE

By Karen Mason

With a high demand for skilled health care workers, Vail Health offers numerous opportunities that both inspire and educate local talent from an early age and support new professionals just breaking into the field. Whether it's igniting that initial spark to propel a high school student into the medical field or empowering recent graduates to continue learning on the job, Vail Health is preparing the health care leaders of tomorrow right here in Eagle County today.



Howard Head Sports Medicine intern Summer Kenney, Nurse Resident Eric Blitzstein and Surgical Tech student Michaela Mitchell.

High School Programs

Vail Health engages students at Battle Mountain and Eagle Valley high schools through several programs aimed at getting them interested in the medical field. Christine Albertson, community outreach and events manager for Vail Health, says it's a great eye-opening experience for young people. "There are so many fields and career paths they don't yet know about," she explains.

Given that so many students worry about the cost of college, Vail Health makes a point to explain how many health care jobs don't require a four-year degree. "There are other ways to land good paying jobs in the industry without being saddled with debt. They can go into the Associate Degree in Nursing program at Colorado Mountain College, for instance, become a surgical technician or get their EMT license," says Albertson.

For sophomore and junior high school students wanting a taste of what a clinical job would look like, Vail Health offers two job shadow tours each semester. Students visit six different hospital departments during the four-hour tour, including the Emergency Department, Imaging, the Patient Care Unit, Surgical Services, the Laboratory and the Pharmacy.

Vail Health also offers a two-hour tour of the Urgent Care in Gypsum, which gives students a more hands-on experience. They work with EMTs, nurses and physician assistants to learn how to draw an IV, put in a breathing tube, take an X-ray and make up a chemotherapy bag.

Howard Head Internship

18-year old Summer Kenney became interested in the field of sports medicine after taking an athletic trainer class at Battle Mountain High School. Her counselor suggested she apply for the Howard Head Sports Medicine internship program. "I knew what physical therapy consisted of, but the program opened my eyes to so much more," she reflects. "I shadowed at three clinics in Vail, Edwards and Avon. It was important to shadow as many different therapists as I could since they all have their own techniques. I was able to see what they all do differently."

Kenney says she also enjoyed observing all the different therapy types, including occupational therapy, pediatric therapy and hand therapy. "I also got to work in the Emergency Department to experience a faster-paced environment. One day we had 18 ACL tears. It was fascinating to see how fast they diagnosed it, got them in a brace and showed them their pre-surgery exercises. I'm only 18 years old and I already know how to diagnose an ACL or MCL tear!"

Kenney plans to study health and exercise science at Colorado State University. "I think it's really important that Eagle County offers these types of programs. It allows students like me to decide whether this is really what I want to do."

Clinical educator Lydia Sprouse, RN, shows high school students how to administer an IV during one of Vail Health's job shadow programs.





Lew Perna, PA, teaches a high school student how to intubate a patient using a human simulator at one of Vail Health's job shadow programs.

CareerX

CareerX pairs Eagle County youth with local businesses, enabling them to explore careers, learn about local businesses, and develop college and career plans that fit their interests. Eagle County is one of the few mountain regions offering this statewide program and has modeled its program after ones in Denver.

Amanda Spannagel, CareerX coordinator for Eagle County Schools, says Vail Health outshines with its real-world offerings. "Students start to realize they don't have to become a doctor or a nurse to be in the medical field. They can start on a different path and see if it's something they like," she adds.

CareerWise

Another new program, CareerWise, is offered through a collaboration with the Vail Valley Partnership. This program is geared toward students who are planning to go into the health care field and have a specific idea of what direction they want to take. These students get paid and will work with Vail Health for three years, starting with 12 hours per week for the first year, increasing to 24 hours per week for the second year and 36 hours per week the third year.

"Vail Health has joined the Vail Valley Partnership in offering CareerWise because we want to be on the cutting edge of building our own local skilled and loyal workforce," says Chief Administrative Officer Rick Smith, who oversees Vail Health's Human Resources department. "This program allows us to work with a few student apprentices to combine their theoretical learning with practical learning, which helps to focus their educational and career objectives."

"Students start to realize they don't have to become a doctor or a nurse to be in the medical field. They can start on a different path and see if it's something they like."

Amanda Spannagel



CareerWise student apprentice Dayanara Guillen hears a pulse for the first time, thanks to the mentorship of Vail Health's Urgent Care technicians Cheri Gabriel and Clarissa Rich.

Steadman Philippon Research Institute's Surgical Skills Lab is an international destination for medical education.



Colorado Mountain College Surgical Tech Program

Everyone in Michaela Mitchell's family has some sort of medical background, so she knew health care was most likely in her future after graduating from Coal Ridge High School in New Castle, but she just didn't know exactly what it would be. Originally working as an autotransfusionist, Mitchell found herself in the operating room watching the surgical technicians and immediately knew that's what she wanted to do. "I loved how they were always one step ahead of the surgeon, being able to anticipate what the surgeon would need ahead of time," she explains.

Thanks to a partnership with Colorado Mountain College and Front Range Community College, Vail Health gives students like Mitchell the opportunity to pursue a two-year Associate of Applied Science degree in the field of surgical technology at Colorado Mountain College's Edwards campus. Mitchell started the program in January 2019 and will be graduating in December 2019.

With world-renowned orthopaedics and some of the best general surgeons in Colorado performing a variety of operations at Vail Valley Surgery Centers in Vail and Edwards, surgical technicians get invaluable experience and assist patients directly in their care.

As a surgical technologist, Mitchell will play an integral role in the operating room. Some of her job tasks will include preparing the patient and operating room for

surgeries, passing sterilized equipment and tools to the surgeons, assisting the surgical team by holding organs in place, dressing the wound after surgery, and transferring the patient to the recovery room. "It's much more hands-on than my previous job," adds Mitchell.

By educating locals who have already made Eagle County their home, Vail Health has a better chance at attracting and retaining employees who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of living in the High Country.

Steadman Philippon Research Institute Internship

Brenton Douglass decided to take a gap year between his 3rd and 4th year of medical school at the University of Minnesota so that he could work as a research assistant in the Steadman Philippon Research Institute (SPRI) Biomedical Engineering (BME) Robotics Lab. "I'm very interested in orthopaedic sports medicine, so this was a perfect time for me to take a step back and further my education in a different way," he says. "I've always wanted to do something with mobility. It's very important to people. It affects every aspect of their life. Being in a position where you can fix that for someone, it's very powerful."

Right now, Douglass is studying the potential for new surgical techniques to protect ACL grafts from re-rupturing after reconstruction. "Every time I dissect a

different joint, I can make sure I know my anatomy really well. Spending a year learning all the anatomy is going to put me ahead."

Travis Turnbull, deputy director of the Department of Biomedical Engineering at SPRI, says not only is SPRI's internship program a great way to attract and groom future employees, but the research assistants are essential to the work they do. "There are some really strong, bright minds here in our local community and elsewhere. We not only expose them to research they may not have known existed, but also provide an opportunity for them to see that there's high level medicine happening right here in the mountains."

Vail Health Nurse Residency Program

Vail Health implemented a 12-month nurse residency program in 2018 to address the looming nursing shortage. Transition to Practice Program Coordinator Amy Lavigne explains, "It's not getting better, it's getting worse. And in a small community, we feel that even more. We just don't have a large pool of nurses to pull from like the larger cities do. Our area's higher living expenses, cost of housing and weather deter people from wanting to live here, and that has a huge impact."

The program brings newly graduated nurses into five areas of the hospital: the Patient Care Unit, Intensive Care Unit, Surgical Services, Emergency Department and Family Birth Center. Nurse residents spend three months in an intensive clinical immersion phase and the remaining nine months focused on professional development.

"We've taken new grads in the past, but it's been very few and far between," says Lavigne. "We were worried about them getting the experience they needed to be competent and independent. This program ensures that it's done right and will increase the number of applicants. Not many organizations the size of Vail Health have a Transition to Practice program. Just having the program in and of itself is a recruitment strategy."

Lavigne says they hope to grow the Transition to Practice program to other specialties and disciplines at the hospital. "When you give through a really good program like this, it creates a level of loyalty. The nurse residents see how much we care about them and how much we recognize the difficulty of transitioning into an independent nursing practice. In exchange, we get a return on our investment and better care for our patients."

Eric Blitzstein and Susy Dozier are the two nurse residents in the program's latest cohort, which started in March 2019. They are both Eagle County residents who went back to nursing school in hopes of building a career in Eagle County.

Originally from Peru, Dozier came to the Valley 10 years ago. "It was my dream to become a nurse," she remarks. "I started taking classes at CMC and one of my instructors told me about the Vail Health residency program. For me, it was a no-brainer. We've established a life here in Eagle County. It was a way to keep my family here and not have to commute or move to Denver. I have a son and we didn't want him to have to change schools. I don't see myself living anywhere else."

Dozier looks forward to giving back to her community and helping people heal.

"People don't go to the hospital because they want to, but because they need something from us. It's very rewarding to be the person to hold their hand and help them through a difficult experience."

"One day we had 18 ACL tears.

It was fascinating to see how fast they diagnosed it, got them in a brace and showed them their pre-surgery exercises.

I'm only 18 years old and I already know how to diagnose an ACL or MCL tear!"

Summer Kenney



Clockwise: Vail Health Nurse Resident Eric Blitzstein, Nurse Resident Suzy Dozier, PCU/ICU Clinical Educator Jessica Ociepla and Transition to Practice lead faculty member, Elizabeth Kruger.

Dozier says as a new nurse, it's sometimes hard to open up and ask questions. "But when others are coming up to you, it's easier to ask. Every nurse has been amazing and are so willing to show me things."

Eric Blitzstein grew up in the Philadelphia area and moved to Eagle County in 1992. He worked for 27 years as a Beaver Creek Ski Patroller. "In my past experience, I enjoyed being the patient advocate," he says. "I like being in tough situations and wanted to take it to a new level."

Blitzstein recently attended CU Denver and earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree through an accelerated BSN program. His wife and two young kids stayed in Edwards while he attended school. "Continuing to live in Eagle County was always the goal," he says. "I was certainly concerned about moving and commuting. I really wanted to work in a community that I had grown to love so much."

Blitzstein says he feels fortunate. "I knew I wanted to make ends meet here but it's tough when housing is 50% of your income. I'm thankful Vail Health is recognizing there are people right here in the community who will make great professionals in this industry." **V**

LIVING IN THE

A man with short brown hair and a blue t-shirt stands with his arms crossed in a grassy field. He is wearing a black smartwatch on his left wrist. The background is a blurred landscape with green grass and distant hills under a soft sky.

+

HOW THE EAGLE RIVER
VALLEY IS TRANSFORMING
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

► BY KIMBERLY NICOLETTI

SUICIDE BELT

On a fall day in 2016, Gerry Lopez stood alone during a fire drill at his high school while his classmates talked and laughed within their groups of friends outside. At that moment, he decided to end his life. He was a junior.

"I came out of the building and had nobody. I was by myself," Lopez recalls. "That day I told myself: 'This is the last day I'm going to be in pain.'"

As a young child, Lopez had learned to suffer silently. "In the Hispanic culture, men look down on depression as a sign of weakness," Lopez says. "I was scared to lose my manliness, if that makes sense."

To compound the shame, priests in Mexico, where Lopez was born, proclaimed suicide a mortal sin leading straight to hell.

"If you have these thoughts, there's no cure," Lopez says, summarizing his early religious education. "You just have to keep them to yourself."

But after imagining how devastated his family would be if he completed suicide, Lopez overrode those early messages and turned to a school counselor, who referred him to a psychotherapist.

Through therapy, Lopez learned he wasn't the only one burdened with depression; that was his first step to recovery.

"I thought I was the only one and everyone around me was all happy and didn't have these thoughts," he says.

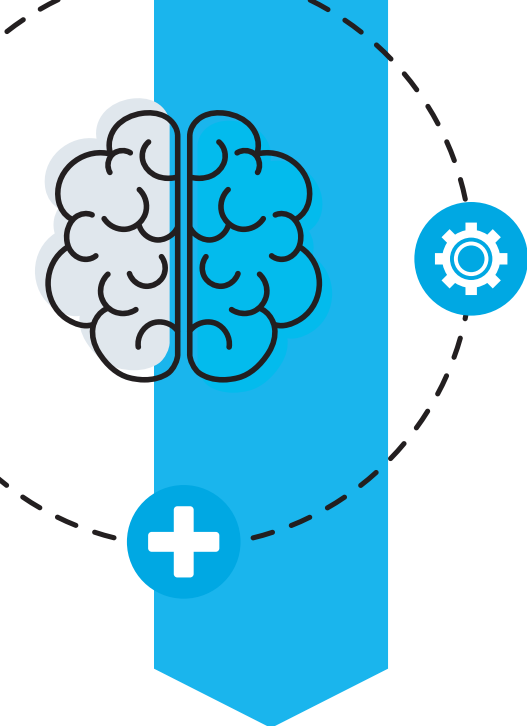
His therapist taught him to identify, express and accept his feelings and proactively practice self-care, whether that included watching movies, exercising or simply getting out in nature. She spurred ideas of how to expand his social life and make friends, and he eventually gained the confidence to join the school's cross country team, where his teammates accepted and supported him.

"They encouraged me to be a better student and a better person, and to go to college," he says.

Since then, Lopez has earned his associate degree in business administration. He still struggles with depression occasionally, "but now, I understand what to do and what my options are."

As executive director of Eagle Valley Behavioral Health, Chris Lindley aims to ensure that mental health is treated with as much care and as many resources as physical health.

PHOTO BY SHANE MACOMBER



**"WHAT IS
TAKING
PLACE IN
EAGLE
COUNTY
IS UNLIKE
ANY
INITIATIVE
I'VE SEEN
ANYWHERE."**

**MICHELLE MEUTHING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE HOPE CENTER**

Running is one way Lopez clears his mind. Another aspect of his self-care involves reaching out to others. As the youth engagement coordinator for Eagle Valley Behavioral Health, he regularly shares his story with the community to decrease stigmas surrounding depression, anxiety and other mental health issues.

"To be a part of this effort gives me hope," he says.

But not everyone has been as successful in finding help as Lopez. Some haven't yet connected with the proper support, and others, like Jamie Wahrer struggled for years through a faulty system of care.

A manager at a Vail spa, Wahrer sustained a brain injury from snowboarding in 2014, which caused dire depression.

"It was like a tidal wave was hitting me, and it just laid me flat," Wahrer recalls.

For two years, she ended up in the Emergency Department nearly every other day, due to panic attacks mixed with depression, she says.

"Sometimes doctors didn't understand what a panic attack was, and I felt like they classified me as a drug addict seeking medication," she says. "As far as resources, there wasn't much out there."

As a result, she ended up in the three nearest mental health facilities — one in Grand Junction and two in Denver.

"If I had to sum up brain injuries and depression, it would be one word: Alone," she says.

Fortunately, Wahrer learned to meditate and found a brain injury support group, as well as medication that helps. She also found a therapist who could sit with her and coach her through panic attacks.

"I'm a strong believer in support groups," she says. "I want people to know that they're not alone. There are resources out there. It's becoming more and more known that we have to address the mental health issue. Eagle County faces the challenge of education — a lot has to do with knowledge."

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Lopez, Wahrer and thousands of other locals have felt lost and isolated in their battle with mental health. Eagle County sits in what has been termed the "suicide belt," which stretches from Taos into Utah, Wyoming and Montana. The name stems from the disproportionate number of suicides in high-elevation resort and rural towns.

Experts have identified about 15 unique factors that contribute to elevated suicide rates in the

mountains. These include: high costs of living and financial strains, the Western ideal of rugged individualism ("pull yourself up by your bootstraps"), living far away from family and close friends, access to guns and a gun culture, altitude (shown to alter blood chemistry) and the "paradise paradox." The latter refers to newcomers moving to "paradise" to escape their problems, yet finding their troubles still exist.

Amidst these stressors, many locals work two jobs to make ends meet, so they have little time to build friendships. And, as more people focus on electronic devices, posts of their friends' "fabulous" lives bombard them.

"The biggest problem is the loneliness epidemic," says Lopez, who is 20. "We are the most connected, but also the most disconnected. A lot of our youth are depressed in middle school because they take the perfect pictures on social media seriously."

Lopez regularly talks to middle and high school students who feel pressured to fit in by being great athletes, getting high and drinking, or both.

"Either you participate in that or you're lonely and not cool," Lopez says.

Robust party scenes and expectations to be uber-athletic also surround adults. Nonparticipation can fuel loneliness, anxiety and depression, which many people attempt to avoid by drinking or using marijuana.

While physical health care resources are abundant in Eagle County, behavioral health care has lagged. There are half the number of mental health providers when compared to the state average, and according to a 2017 Mental Health America report, Colorado ranks an abysmal 43rd out of 50 states for mental health treatment and access to services.

On top of insufficient resources, mental health still carries a stigma, causing most people to suffer in silence.

"Our community values and rewards physical health achievement and does nothing at all like that around mental health," says Chris Lindley. "Many of us will talk about physical injuries; it's normal conversation ... (yet) the incidences of mental health issues are more prevalent. When we can talk as freely about mental health, we've won."

Lindley has been appointed the executive director of the nonprofit Eagle Valley Behavioral Health. He wants the community to spend as much money, time and energy on mental health as it does on physical health.

"It's 100% connected," he says. "You cannot be physically healthy without being mentally healthy, and vice versa."

THE TIPPING POINT

Visits to Vail Health's Emergency Department for anxiety and depression rose 465% (from 63 to 350) between 2013 and 2018. Eagle County lost 17 people to suicide in 2018, up 183% from 2016.

"All of the sudden, behavioral health was recognized as a raging wildfire," says Michael Holton, vice president of marketing and communications at Vail Health. "People started identifying it as a local crisis, and community groups came together to better understand the issues and find solutions."

In 2017, a new tax to support mental health on recreational marijuana sales and growth operations passed by 75% of votes. Both residents and community leaders began to pay more attention to the lack of resources Eagle County and other mountain and rural towns face when it comes to mental health.

Community groups including Eagle County Paramedic Services, Eagle County Schools, Mountain Youth (formerly Eagle River Youth Coalition), Hope Center, Mind Springs Health, Mountain Family Health, SpeakUp ReachOut, University of Colorado's Depression Center and local police departments joined Vail Health and Eagle County to identify gaps in service and determine next steps.

In January 2018, tax revenue began to stream into the Behavioral Health Initiative Fund. Eagle County contributed \$1.3 million to the cause, and Vail Health came forward with a \$60 million commitment over the next 10 years. Vail Health also created the unaffiliated nonprofit, Eagle Valley Behavioral Health, to lead the initiative and direct the Behavioral Health Initiative Fund. Its goals are to improve access to therapists, resources and programs; decrease the stigma of mental illness; collaborate with local and regional entities devoted to behavioral health; and build a cross-functional behavioral health facility, which includes psychiatric hospitalization.

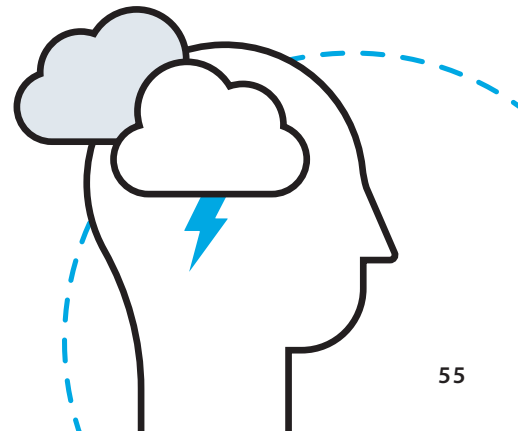
The nonprofit works to increase awareness and resources — including the planned crisis center — and collaborate with and amplify other nonprofits' efforts, such as SpeakUp ReachOut's suicide prevention trainings, education and "You Are Not Alone" messages.

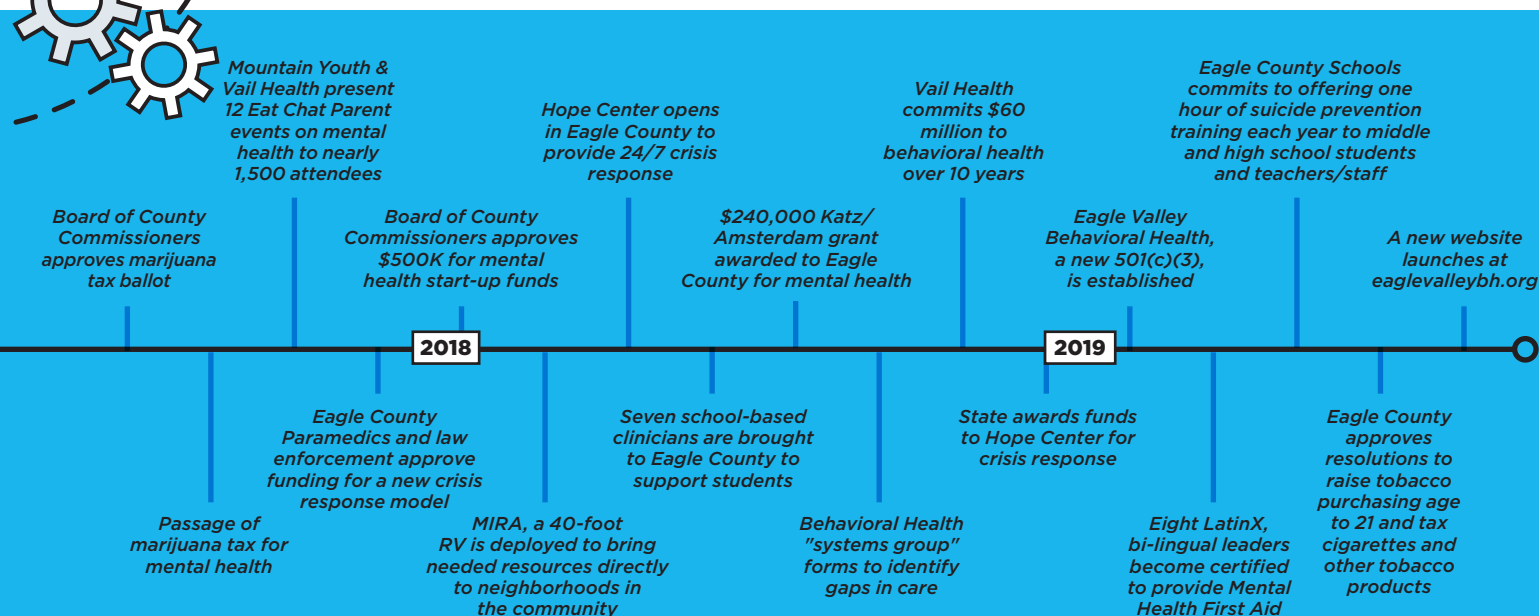
Eagle Valley Behavioral Health aims to stimulate open conversations through efforts like Mountain Youth's Eat Chat Parent speaker series, which attracted nearly 1,500 attendees last year — 10 times the amount of past participants — after Vail Health ran print and social media ads.



▲ Gerry Lopez didn't particularly like running until he joined his school's cross country team. He found his passion, as well as a community of people who cared about him and challenged him to pursue his goals. Running with his teammates helped him overcome a sense of loneliness that caused depression. Today, he is a distance runner and the youth engagement coordinator for Eagle Valley Behavioral Health. PHOTO BY DOMINIQUE TAYLOR

"Communitywide, the nonprofit aims to ensure open conversations, hold partners accountable and always ensure that the patient's needs are our number one priority," Lindley says. "While we all come to the table with different hats, we are collectively working for the same mission, and that is to transform the Eagle River Valley's behavioral health system."





"GIVEN ALL THE GREAT THINGS WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED IN ONLY THE LAST TWO YEARS, THE FUTURE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN THE EAGLE RIVER VALLEY IS BRIGHT." – CHRIS LINDLEY

"We have buy-in from every major stakeholder in the county, from the top level. The boat's going to start moving because we're all rowing in the same direction," says Michelle Meuthing, executive director of Hope Center, an organization dedicated to bringing mental health services to people in crisis. "What is taking place in Eagle County is unlike any initiative I've seen anywhere. This initiative is really going to make a mark on Colorado, and if it's successful, it will become a model for other communities."

IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS

Eagle County Paramedic Services filled a large gap in behavioral health services by giving the Hope Center seed money to open a satellite office in Eagle County in September 2018. Hope Center has been working in the Roaring Fork Valley for nine years. Its clinicians specialize in managing crises, such as suicidal ideation. Clinicians accompany police or paramedics responding to crisis calls. They help calm people in crisis, establish a safety plan, link them to therapeutic resources and follow up days later. Most of the time, they prevent hospitalization through such intervention.

"It decreases the trauma on the patients themselves by having a good home plan to follow," explains Greg Daly, Chief of Police at the Avon Police Department.

Before Hope Center came to Eagle County, paramedics usually took people to the Emergency Department for evaluation, or police officers took them into protective custody, which meant handcuffing and holding them at the station. "They're not criminals, and we shouldn't be treating them as such," Daly says.

Once in the station, they would wait until a mental health clinician could arrive and evaluate them, unless they were under the influence of alcohol, in which case an officer had to sit with them until they sobered up. If the clinician decided they posed a safety issue, an ambulance ushered them to the Emergency Department.

Within seven months of Hope Center's interventions, ambulance transportations to the Emergency Department decreased by 76%.

"The last thing a patient needs is five bills," says Chris Montera, CEO of Eagle County Paramedics. "Now we save them money by treating them in their environment and helping them maintain status in their community instead of going into the hospital."

In addition to its crisis work, Hope Center has added nine clinicians to Eagle County Schools, with a goal to staff all 17 schools with clinicians. They identify the highest risk kids and provide therapy in the hopes of preventing future crises.

OTHER SOLUTIONS

In 2018, Vail Health purchased land for a cross-functional behavioral health facility. Construction is planned for 2020.

The center will provide crisis stabilization, detox, respite care and a walk-in clinic, open 24/7. It will alleviate the intense stress of driving (or an ambulance ride) to Denver or Grand Junction when people need hospitalization.

"The vision is: No matter what your issue is, you can go there and you can get help — whether you can't sleep or you're suicidal or you can't get the hamster wheel to stop," Lindley says.

Eagle Valley Behavioral Health will hire outside professionals to provide care and run the facility.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

Eagle Valley Behavioral Health isn't just going to build a cross-functional behavioral health facility; the intention is to transform the entire behavioral health landscape, from

▼ The Eagle Valley Behavioral Health Advisory Group is comprised of community leaders who are critical to the initiative.
PHOTO BY DOMINIQUE TAYLOR



ending social stigmas to fostering strong support systems.

“Now there is a positive wave in relationship to changing the paradigm from very, very, very under-resourced to being a model community for the nation,” Daly says.

Eagle County representatives have been meeting with other mountain town nonprofits to share solutions. Eagle Valley Behavioral Health has built a website at www.eaglevalleybh.org to offer a provider directory and other resources. Community leaders are also researching ways to attract therapists to the valley and help people pay for services, perhaps through vouchers or sliding scales, Lindley says. In addition, he and his team are placing a priority on addressing the unique needs of the LatinX populations in the community.

“Given all the great things we’ve accomplished in only the last two years, the future of behavioral health in the Eagle River Valley is bright,” says Lindley.

As other mountain communities struggle with similar issues, Eagle Valley Behavioral Health hopes to share its ideas and vision. “The Eagle River Valley is poised to become a leader in the conversation because it has the resources — it has unity and collaboration, a plan, the funding and

a backbone organization to lead it,” Holton says.

But community leaders and nonprofits can’t change everything by themselves; they need locals to participate by attending educational events and forums and by bringing the topic of mental health into everyday conversations.

“I’m seeing a reduction in the stigma with the different efforts, but it’s not a process that will end,” Lopez says. “(It’s like) this is Day One, and people need to wake up every single day, because the stigma is decreasing, but we need to minimize it so much more.”

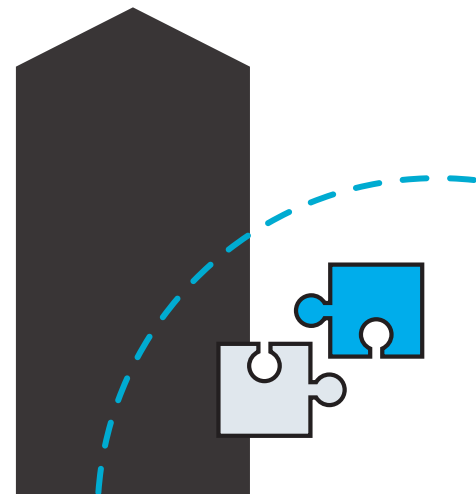
Equating behavioral health problems with physical injuries and illnesses helps normalize the issues — and the people who suffer with depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other mental health issues. Eagle Valley Behavioral Health opens up healing opportunities for everyone to come together, learn and give and receive support.

“I want people in Eagle County to know there’s hope,” Lopez says. “All they have to do is open up.”

“We have all recognized the behavioral health shortcomings in this community,” Lindley says, “and we all know we can do better, and we will. It takes a valley.” ▼

LEARN MORE ►►

**EAGLE VALLEY BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH’S WEBSITE IS A HUB
OF RESOURCES, INCLUDING
A PROVIDER DIRECTORY.
VISIT EAGLEVALLEYBH.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



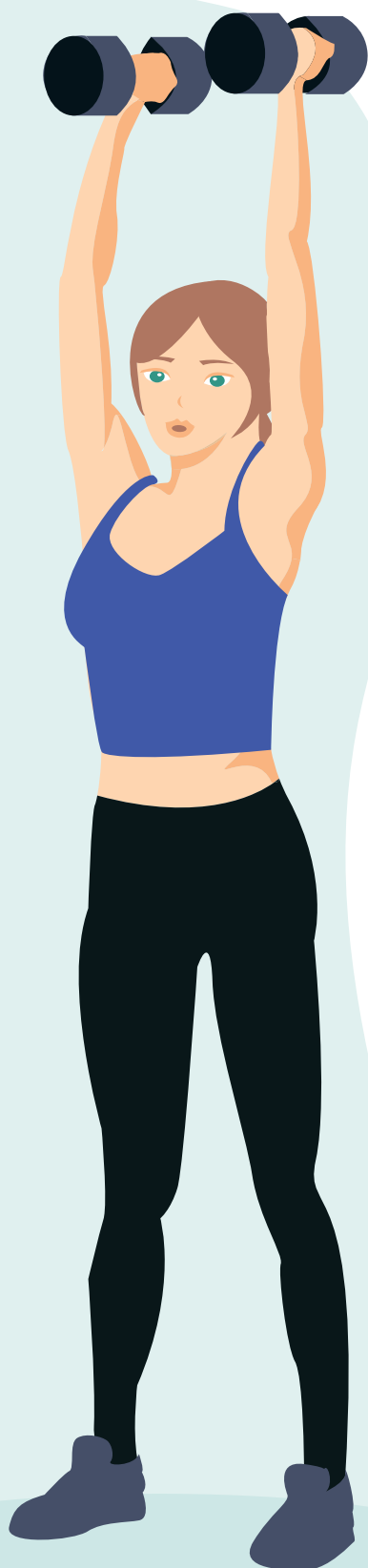
MEN VS. WOMEN

ARE WE

CREATED EQUAL?

BY KATIE COAKLEY • ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARLY ARNOLD





It seems as if the differences between men and women have been cataloged for centuries: the way we look, the way we act and even the way we drive, which is up for much debate.

Some have said we come from different planets. But, putting political, sociological and sexual differences aside, are men and women really that different?

It turns out that when it comes to the interior workings of our bodies — the blood, bone and muscle — not really. However, there are undeniable differences between us that set the genders apart in how we approach fitness, nutrition and health care.

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Walk into any gym and the differences between men and women are almost immediately obvious. In terms of physical appearance, men tend to be bigger and bulkier; women tend to be leaner. But, the differences don't stop there.

"Women tend to under-emphasize the importance of strength training for long-term musculoskeletal integrity and bone strength, and men tend to do more extreme sports that make them more prone to injury. Of course, these are stereotypes and generalizations," explains Dr. Dennis Lipton, a local internal medicine specialist. "The important thing for both sexes is to find something they enjoy and keeping moving!"

Here in Eagle County, the division between strength training versus cardio is less pronounced because of the outdoor activities we all enjoy, but as a generalization, it's pretty fair. And think about it: When you walk into a gym, you tend to see more men in the weight area and more women on cardio machines and in yoga classes.

SO WHAT WE CAN WE LEARN FROM EACH OTHER?

It's a matter of balance: To attain a high level of fitness and health, you need both strength training and aerobic training. For many men, that means adding more aerobic and conditioning training to routines; for women, it means adding in weight training.

"The focus in guys and gals isn't any different," says Dr. David Karli, a Steadman Clinic physician who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation and regenerative medicine. "We want a combination of strength training and aerobic training to get the best effect, but also to promote the most health benefits. You just have to look at lifestyle and what types of habits people have and then modify them accordingly."

And for those women who might be worried about bulking up too much... don't be. The different hormones in men and women will take care of that.

"I think one of the most obvious differences, but the one that contributes most to the differences between men and women, is the hormonal spectrum," says Dr. Karli. "Men and women have totally different hormonal profiles, which dictate and, in some respects, control why a woman's a woman and why a man's a man. In terms of physical differences, men tend to be a little bit thicker, muscle-wise, than women because of higher testosterone levels."

When it comes to exercise and exercise physiology, Dr. Karli says that both men and women's bodies respond to the same stimuli, but they may respond in different ways. When men weight train, they tend to build muscle more easily than women. It's not that women can't build muscles like men, but because of the lower testosterone and higher levels of estrogen in women's bodies, women just won't bulk up like men.

“A HEALTHY DIET IS A HEALTHY DIET.

MEN NEED TO EAT SALADS TOO.”

- DR. DENNIS LIPTON

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

So there are some differences when it comes to how men and women work out and how that impacts our bodies. But what about what we put into those bodies?

“I’m not convinced there’s a huge difference here,” Dr. Lipton says. “A healthy diet is a healthy diet. Men need to eat salads too.”

Dr. Susie Vickerman, a family medicine physician at Colorado Mountain Medical, agrees.

“Whole foods are important for everyone,” Dr. Vickerman says. “Reducing or avoiding processed carbohydrates and sugar would be a blanket statement where men and women are the same.”

But while it may be true that men and women need the same nutrition, several studies have shown that one’s gender often influences one’s food choices. According to the results of an extensive survey conducted by the American Society for Microbiology, in general, men are more likely to report eating meat and poultry items, and women are more likely to report eating fruits and vegetables. Another study, reported on by the *Washington Post*, shows that those choices might align with social, gender-based values. Luke Zhu, a co-author of the study, says “a growing body of evidence suggests that diners, consciously or not, associate healthy food with ‘femininity’ and unhealthy food with ‘masculinity.’”

It’s possible that this is a direct result of the fact that men simply require more calories than women do, and thus have more wiggle room when it comes to making food choices. But other factors likely play a role too.

“Women are more likely than men to be on diets and are more dissatisfied with their body weight and shape,” writes Rachel Johnson,

PhD, M.P.H., R.D. in *EatingWell*.

“One large survey found that, of those people who were a healthy weight, 23 percent of the women perceived themselves as overweight, while only 9 percent of the men did. ... Men are obviously more accepting of their bodies and as a result seem to have a more relaxed approach about their food choices.”

“Nutritional habits are probably the easiest variable to change to improve health,” Dr. Karli says. “But it’s arguably the most difficult one to get people to follow.”

His takeaway for both men and women: Vegetables are good, too many carbs are bad and we need lean protein in our diets.

HIS & HERS MENTAL WELLNESS

While much of health care deals with the physical body, mental wellness is just as important and greatly contributes to overall health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depressive disorders are major contributors to the world’s health burden; they affect approximately 350 million people worldwide. A growing body of research indicates that psychiatric disorders are largely caused by a combination of stress and environmental, neurobiological and genetic factors. The study also concluded that women are nearly twice as likely as men to suffer from mental illness — not because of genetic factors, but because of gender and wealth inequality. These inequalities include (but are not limited to): domestic violence, sexual abuse, unpaid caring work, higher hours of work, lower social status and lack of access to reproductive rights and education.

While this study was conducted on a world-wide scale, the differences

between men and women in regard to mental health tend to be more environmental rather than biological.

“Those (studies) really point to the way I see things clinically. So much is related to context for men and women that the actual effects of socialization kind of wash out at the clinical level,” says Dr. George McNeill, a local clinical psychologist.

Dr. McNeill says that there are so many factors that can impact the way men and women relate to the world, including how you’re raised and even gender expectations from the geographical area in which you grew up. But he says it’s risky to make generalizations like the idea that men don’t seek help as readily as women do, or that women more easily talk about their feelings — these are both false assumptions.

In addition to breaking down stereotypes, Dr. McNeill is also trying to change the way we think about mental health. Instead of the idea that men or women seek help because there’s a “problem,” he likes to help his clients develop a set of skills to deal with the ebb and flow of our emotions to enjoy healthier living.

“People come in and they say, ‘I just lost my job and I’m really anxious and I’m having a hard time sleeping and I don’t know what’s wrong with me,’” Dr. McNeill says. “I say, ‘Well, you’re completely normal. If you’re under stress like that...or you spend your life in a high level of stress, that would be horrible. There’s nothing wrong with you. So let’s figure out a way to manage it.’”

Whether you’re a working mother or a young man experiencing a break-up, both men and women experience stress, pain, fear, sadness. It’s how we manage our emotions that define each and every one of us uniquely — no matter our sex.





DISSECTING THE DOCTOR'S VISIT

It seems as if perhaps men and women aren't very different at all — it's simply how we respond to things like exercise, food and stress. But what about when it comes to our approach to health care?

"We have different needs and our bodies go through different changes, but the actual need for health care and wellness is the same in both," Dr. Vickerman explains.

Dr. Vickerman reports that in the past year, roughly 35% of the annual wellness visits in her office were conducted on men and 65% on women.

That lines up with data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which indicates women are 33% more likely than men to visit a doctor to treat an injury or illness, and 100% more likely to visit a doctor for preventive health and

annual exams. Unfortunately, the study also shows that Americans use preventive health services at about half the recommended rate. Preventive medicine takes a proactive approach to health care with the goal of maintaining well-being to prevent disease or disability. It's why doctors encourage annual wellness visits, as well as screenings like mammograms and colonoscopies. Preventive care reduces health care costs and improves overall population health.

On the flip side, when patients come in with a variety of medical problems, the focus is more on treatment. Dr. Vickerman encourages patients to follow up with her to establish a relationship of care so that she can recommend diet and exercise routines, as well as lifestyle changes, that may enhance their lives.

"I would say that wellness is just as important for men as it is for women,"

Dr. Vickerman says. "The focus may not be the same, but it carries the same importance."

Both Dr. Vickerman and Dr. Lipton stress the fact that preventing disease and illness is preferable to treating it. Putting off doctor's visits and ignoring your health may seem like an unavoidable situation when you're dealing with other responsibilities like family or jobs, but it's more harmful in the long run. Take care of yourself and you'll be better equipped to continue taking care of others down the road — this is true for both men and women.

In the end, the question of whether men and women are created equally is a silly one. Of course they are — they're just different! And just as you wouldn't treat a 5-year-old in the same way you would a 50-year-old, those differences can be significant. But the need for a healthy mind, body and soul remains universal. **V**



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Difference Makers

BELOW: Since Vail Health began partnering with Starting Hearts in 2016, 66 defibrillators have been installed throughout Eagle County with 16 more planned for installation by March 2020. The goal of the partnership is to make Eagle County one of the safest places in America to experience a cardiac arrest.



LEFT: Vail Health awarded \$16,000 in scholarships for employee dependents in 2018. Pictured here are Mary Sheahan, RN and her daughter, Eleanor, whose father is also a Vail Health employee.

BELOW: Vail Health helped Eagle County Schools purchase "Project Lead The Way" curriculum and STEM materials for six district schools. These are materials that guide students through the completion of a project that exercises several different academic skills along the way.



ABOVE: Vail Health is a proud supporter of The Cycle Effect. Through funding assistance and education about nutrition and self-care, Vail Health helps reinforce the goals of The Cycle Effect to build self-esteem and promote overall wellness.



« HEALTH FAIR



Providing free and affordable health screenings is the key to preventing disease before it starts. Vail Health was proud to partner with the Eagle Lions Club to host the 9Health Fair, which provided free and significantly discounted screenings to over 550 Eagle County residents.

CAMP 911

What better way to ensure the security of our community than by educating our youngest members on how to keep the rest of us healthy and safe? At Camp 911, kids ages 9-11 learn important lessons like self-defense, first aid, how to escape a fire, what to say if you have to call 911 and how to administer a defibrillator.



THINKFIRST

Vail Health's ThinkFirst injury prevention team distributes helmets and education around Eagle County all year long.

Reaching Out

OUR CROWD

Shaw Cancer Center's Sun Safety team visits Eagle County elementary schools to deliver their message about the importance of sun protection.

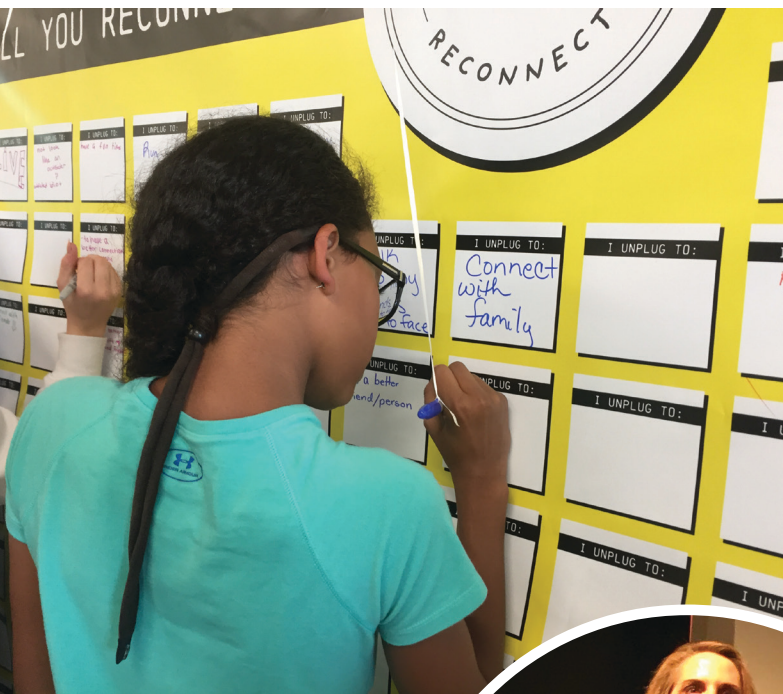


LEFT: Lizzie Matsen poses with Stella Jackson (daughter of Vail Health's Julie Jackson) in dresses they made out of insulation from Hello Fresh dinner boxes and straps used to bring up one of the Beaver Creek gondolas.

BELOW: Emergency Department physician, Dr. Gayle Braunhaultz, in a dress of her design and creation.



« PROJECT FUNWAY



ABOVE: Many thanks to Eagle County Schools for partnering with Vail Health to encourage students, teachers, parents and community members to disconnect from social media, YouTube and video games for five days and reconnect with the people and activities they love. Nearly 1,200 people took the pledge and used their free time away from technology to do things like kayak, take their dog for a walk, play family board games, read a book and just hang out in the backyard.



« EAT CHAT PARENT

Nearly 1,500 people attended the 12-part Eat Chat Parent speaker series by Mountain Youth (formerly Eagle River Youth Coalition), sponsored by Vail Health.

RIGHT: Students learned about health care jobs through hands-on training at Vail Health's urgent cares and hospital.

BELOW: Vail Health volunteers Stephanie Kearney, Chelsea Dentler, Kim Greene and Susan Weiss offered free helmet education at the Kids Adventure Games.

» JOB SHADOW PROGRAM



Making a Difference



« VAIL HEALTH'S ACTIVE HEALERS

Vail Health fields trail running, mountain biking and softball teams for its employees to get active, be together and have fun in the community.

Giving Back to Vail Health



join us

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has given back to Vail Health! The generosity of our benefactors, volunteers, ambassadors and other community members is essential to Vail Health's mission to care for Eagle County's residents and visitors.

There are many ways you can get involved and support Vail Health:

Make a gift

Fundraise

Attend an event

Volunteer

Share your story

Sign up for our newsletter

Include Vail Health in your will or estate plan

Vail Health Foundation aims to foster and grow lasting relationships between Vail Health and our supporters. To get involved or learn more, contact us at foundation@vailhealth.org or (970) 569-7766.



**VAIL HEALTH
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Visit our website at
vailhealthfoundation.org.



PINK VAIL



Thanks to over 2,400 participants and 4,000 donors, Pink Vail raised over \$900,000 for patient care and programming at Shaw Cancer Center in 2019.



« HIKE, WINE & DINE

A record number of over 400 hikers hit the trail in Beaver Creek for the 10th anniversary of Hike, Wine & Dine in September 2018. The event raised over \$125,000, and has raised nearly \$800,00 for Jack's Place since its inception.

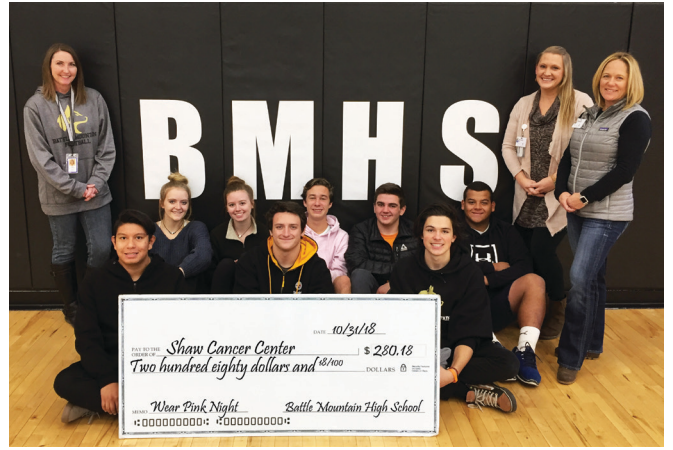
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Cornelli family. Kjersti Moritz, Courtney and Kevin Armitage. Participants hike up Beaver Creek Mountain. Shaw Physicist Merrill Mann and her daughter enjoy the delicious food prepared by some of the valley's finest chefs.



OUR CROWD

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Athletic teams, restaurants and even the Eagle River Fire Protection District came together to raise awareness and funds during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.



TOUGH ENOUGH TO WEAR PINK

Shaw Cancer Center is the grateful beneficiary of Eagle County Fair & Rodeo's Tough Enough to Wear Pink night.





» WINTER CELEBRATION

CLOCKWISE: Devon DeCrausaz, Deborah Wittman, Ellen Moritz, George Johnson, Susanna Johnson Shannon, Geordy Johnson, Tim Shannon. The Winter Celebration featured exhibits highlighting programs at Vail Health and Steadman Philippon Research Institute that were supported by the Together Campaign.

» TOGETHER CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

Benefactors celebrated the culmination of Vail Health and Steadman Philippon Research Institute's \$100 million Together Campaign. CLOCKWISE: Vail Health Board Chair Mike Shannon, The Steadman Clinic Managing Partner Dr. Marc Philippon, The Steadman Clinic CEO Dan Drawbaugh and Vail Health President and CEO Will Cook thanked benefactors for exceeding the Together Campaign goal. Vail Health Foundation Board Chair Mary Randall with Ann Smead. Event attendees toured Howard Head Sports Medicine, SPRI Biomotion Lab and the east wing construction zone. Dr. Johnny Huard, Dale Mosier and Dr. Scott Tashman.



Thank you! Thank you!

MEDICAL DIRECTORY



WHILE IT'S SOMETIMES uncommon to find a wide array of medical services in a rural setting like Eagle County, Vail Health believes in providing quality health care in the communities where our patients and their families need it the most. With over 350 physicians and advanced providers, services are offered in Eagle and Summit counties, including primary and specialty care through Colorado Mountain Medical, Urgent Care clinics up and down the valley and specialty clinics for cardiology, cancer diagnosis and treatment, physical therapy and plastic surgery. The main campus in the heart of Vail is a Level III Trauma Center, Level II Nursery and home to some of the world's most celebrated surgeons.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Eagle Valley Behavioral Health

www.eaglevalleybh.org

Vail Health is a partner in the Eagle Valley Behavioral Health initiative. The goal of this new nonprofit is to transform the behavioral health landscape in our valley. The website is a great resource to find a local therapist and get involved. If you or a loved one need to talk to someone immediately, please call 911 or the Crisis Hotline at 1-844-493-8255, or text "TALK" to 38255 any time, day or night.

BREAST HEALTH

Sonnenalp Breast Center, Shaw Breast Center & Cancer Clinic

See Cancer Diagnostics & Care

CANCER DIAGNOSTICS & CARE

Shaw Cancer Center

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7429

Patients travel from around Colorado and beyond to receive the unique, personalized care Shaw offers in the healing setting of the Rocky Mountains. Our knowledgeable doctors and top-of-the-line equipment help cure cancer. But it's the rest of the care — courtesy of a dietitian, exercise physiologists, social worker, genetic counselor, nurse navigator and a complimentary 12-room cancer caring house in a stunning setting — that helps our patients survive and thrive.

Shaw Cancer Center is a service of Vail Health Hospital.

Jack's Place

332 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7644

Patients traveling to Shaw Cancer Center for treatment are invited to stay with their caregiver at Jack's Place, a cancer caring house. Overlooking the spectacular Lake Creek Valley and peaks of the Sawatch Mountain Range, Jack's Place features 12 luxurious private rooms, an inviting common living area, gourmet kitchen, library, yoga studio and massage room. With a donate-what-you-can philosophy, patients and their family or caregiver are invited to take respite at Jack's for the day or overnight, while in active treatment. Jack's Place was built and funded by the Shaw Outreach Team.

Sonnenalp Breast Center — Edwards

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7690

Established in 2002, Sonnenalp Breast Center provides the most sophisticated technology available for breast imaging and diagnosis of breast cancer in the Rocky Mountains, including 2D and 3D mammography. The Breast Center features a relaxing, spa-inspired interior in a private setting. Our knowledgeable and compassionate radiologists and mammography technologists provide the best care and expertise to guide patients in the pursuit of breast health.

Sonnenalp Breast Center is a service of Vail Health Hospital.

Shaw Breast Center & Cancer Clinic — Frisco

323 W. Main Street, Suite 101
Frisco, CO 80443
(970) 668-6400

Shaw Breast Center & Cancer Clinic in Frisco offers the latest in breast screening, including 3D mammography, in a convenient Main Street location. The clinic also offers infusion

treatments and provides the greatest knowledge and compassion for patients.

Shaw Breast Center & Cancer Clinic is a service of Vail Health Hospital.

CARDIOPULMONARY

Cardiopulmonary Services

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7218

Cardiopulmonary medicine deals with the heart and lungs, specializing in respiratory care, cardiology, electroencephalography (EER) and sleep services. Cardiopulmonary Services provides diagnostic and therapeutic interventions to routine and critical care clients. Rocky Mountain Pediatric Cardiology offers a pediatric cardiology clinic at Vail Health, assisting patients with suspected or known heart disease from newborn to age 18.

CARDIOVASCULAR

Cardiovascular Center

108 S. Frontage Road W., Suite 206
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 476-1110

337 Sylvan Lake Road
Eagle, CO 81631

323 W. Main Street, Suite 101
Frisco, CO 80443

Led by board-certified cardiologists, the Cardiovascular Center offers adult cardiology services, including pacemaker implants and the management of coronary heart disease, hypertension, lipid disorders, arrhythmia, valvular heart disease, cardiomyopathies and congestive heart failure.

Cardiac Diagnostics

The Cardiovascular Center provides a full range of cardiac diagnostic testing, including nuclear stress testing and stress echocardiograms. In

addition, echocardiography, EKGs, CT angiograms and heart rhythm monitoring services are available.

Cardiac Catheterization & Electrophysiology Lab

Vail Health's Cardiac Catheterization & Electrophysiology Lab allows cardiologists to visualize the arteries and chambers of the heart, treat abnormalities and diagnose and treat arrhythmias.

Anticoagulation Clinic

Vail Health's Anticoagulation Clinic provides convenient care for patients taking warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin and low molecular weight heparin. The staff provides assessments, reviews and adjusts medications, checks for possible drug interactions, provides patient education and guides the management of blood thinners for invasive procedures.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac Rehabilitation delivers care to individuals who have experienced a significant heart event or are involved in the maintenance and prevention of further disease. Patients are closely monitored as they follow the guidance of trained professionals to improve strength and endurance.

DERMATOLOGY

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 926-6340

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical offers clinical, cosmetic and surgical dermatology for patients of all ages, as well as immunodermatology, which includes skin cancer treatment and prevention, as well as eczema and allergy treatment.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

EAR, NOSE & THROAT

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 926-6340

Otolaryngology is the medical specialty focused on the ears, nose and throat (ENT). Colorado Mountain Medical's specialists treat patients of all ages and offer a full range of medical and surgical services for ENT diseases and disorders.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

EMERGENCY CARE

Vail Health Emergency Department

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7225
Open 7 days a week, 24 hrs/day

Vail Health's Emergency Department (ED) is a 24-hour facility staffed by board-certified emergency physicians. A Level III Trauma Center, emergency trauma care is provided to infants, pediatrics, adolescents, adults and geriatrics.

Beaver Creek Medical Center

1280 Village Road
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 949-0800
Open during ski season only 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. - 7 days a week, open holidays

Beaver Creek Medical Center is located in Beaver Creek Village. The clinic offers emergency care services with a 12-bed treatment area, two of which are critical care. X-ray, lab services, occupational health services, wound care, orthopaedic and respiratory care are available. No appointment is needed.

Beaver Creek Medical Center is a service of Vail Health Hospital.



ENDOCRINOLOGY

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 477-5160

323 W. Main Street, Suite 101
Frisco, CO 80443
(970) 668-6404

Colorado Mountain Medical's board-certified endocrinologists specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases related to the hormones of the endocrine system, including diabetes, thyroid disorders, metabolic and weight disorders, menopause, osteoporosis, adrenal gland disorders and pituitary disease.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

EYE CARE

Eye Center of the Rockies

www.eyecenterrockies.com

232 Broadway Street
Eagle, CO 81631
(970) 926-7773

Eye Center of the Rockies provides eye care and ophthalmology, including medical and surgical care for cataracts, glaucoma, retina and LASIK. Providing routine eye exams for all ages, Eye Center of the Rockies also offers eyeglass prescriptions and contact lens fittings.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

FAMILY MEDICINE

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West, Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631



Colorado Mountain Medical provides comprehensive health care at three convenient locations in Vail, Avon and Eagle.

Colorado Mountain Medical's family medicine doctors provide comprehensive health care based on knowledge of the patient in context of the family and the community, emphasizing disease prevention and health promotion.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 926-6340

Colorado Mountain Medical's gastroenterology team focuses on the digestive system and its disorders, such as inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

INFUSION THERAPY

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7600

Shaw Cancer Center offers infusion therapy to treat an assortment of chronic and sometimes rare diseases.

Infusion Therapy is a service of Vail Health Hospital.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West, Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical's board-certified internists specialize in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases in adults of all ages. They help patients achieve optimal health, as well as manage complex or life-threatening chronic illnesses. No referral is necessary, and all Medicare patients and most people with health insurance can receive an Annual Wellness Visit with 100% of the initial costs covered and no out-of-pocket expense to the patient.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & VACCINES

Traveler's Clinic

230 Chapel Place, Unit D 101
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 569-7715

Vail Health's Traveler's Clinic is a full-service provider of immunizations, travel medication prescriptions, medical

advice and documentation for world travelers.

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical's primary care physicians are able to prepare you medically for travel and answer any questions you may have. The best time to see the doctor is 4-5 weeks before your trip.

LABORATORY & BLOOD WORK

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7280

Vail Health's laboratory is accredited by the College of American Pathologists and offers comprehensive testing.

MEDICAL LIBRARY

Medical Library at Shaw Cancer Center

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7607

Free to the public, the Medical Library loans books, journals, magazines, audio books, videos and children's materials. The wide-ranging, up-to-date health care collection is open to patients and the community. The library is home to the region's only certified medical librarian and offers many personalized services, including reference, interlibrary loan and document delivery, material loans, databases and over 320 electronic journals.

OBSTETRICS/ GYNECOLOGY (OB/GYN)

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical's obstetrician/gynecologists specialize in the health of the female reproductive system and breasts. They deliver babies and treat diseases and disorders of the female reproductive organs.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

Family Birth Center

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7181

Vail Health's Family Birth Center is a labor and delivery unit and Level II Nursery, equipped to handle most babies born after 32 weeks, or full-term babies with health concerns. Home to pediatric specialists and neonatal nurse practitioners, the center also offers lactation counseling and childbirth classes.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WORKERS COMPENSATION

Occupational Health Clinic

230 Chapel Place, Unit D 101
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 569-7715

Occupational medicine offers services specialized to the needs of employees and employers. Common services include physical exams, drug screening, injury prevention and vaccination programs, as well as custom programs built for the particular needs of each workplace.

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical works with employers and employees to identify health and safety needs in the workplace, then coordinates and delivers services and programs.

ORTHOPAEDICS & TOTAL JOINT CARE

Howard Head Sports Medicine

See Physical Therapy

The Steadman Clinic

www.thesteadmanclinic.com

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 476-1100

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632

226 Lusher Court, Suite 201
Frisco, CO 80443

The Steadman Clinic is a world-renowned orthopaedic clinic with facilities in Vail, Edwards and Frisco. Specializing in knee, hip, shoulder, elbow, hand, spine, foot and ankle injuries, The Steadman Clinic's experience and research have led to significant advances in orthopaedics and sports medicine.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

Steadman Philippon Research Institute

www.sprivail.org

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-9797

Founded in 1988 by orthopaedic surgeon Dr.

J. Richard Steadman, the Steadman Philippon Research Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization, known throughout the world for its research into the causes, prevention and treatment of orthopaedic disorders.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery

www.vsortho.com

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 300
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 476-7220

1140 Edwards Village II, B-105
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-3240

Peak One Drive, Suite 180
Frisco, CO 80443
(970) 668-3633

Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery (VSON) was founded in 1979 and specializes in all major orthopaedic and neurosurgical (spinal) specialties. VSON recently introduced several innovative new procedures to Eagle County. Their top surgeons use an integrated approach to injury repair by creating customized treatment plans.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

Vail-Summit Orthopaedic Foundation

www.vsoresearch.org

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 300
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 476-7220

Vail Summit Orthopaedic Foundation (VSOF) is committed to the research, development and deployment of innovative orthopaedic surgical and recovery techniques to develop new programs and insights to help shorten recovery times and provide immediate progress in the field of orthopaedic surgery and recovery.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

PEDIATRICS

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 926-6340

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical's pediatricians specialize in the health of infants, children and adolescents.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

PHARMACY

Vail Pharmacy

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7253

The only pharmacy in Vail Village, the Vail Pharmacy is located inside Vail Health Hospital. The pharmacy retails over-the-counter medications, has a wide assortment of braces and accepts prescription transfers from other pharmacies, telephone prescriptions and multiple insurance plans (insurance card needed). We also offer adult vaccines, including flu, Tdap (whooping cough), shingles and pneumonia, all administered by vaccine-certified pharmacists.

Edwards Pharmacy

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7676

Located at the Edwards Medical Campus, the full-service pharmacy accepts a wide array of insurances and offers over-the-counter medications and prescription delivery. The pharmacy also offers adult vaccines, administered by vaccine-certified pharmacists.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Howard Head Sports Medicine

www.howardhead.org

Avon:

The Westin, 126 Riverfront Lane
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 845-9600

Beaver Creek:

1280 Village Road
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 949-5522
Open during ski season only

Breckenridge:

505 South Main Street
Breckenridge, CO 80424
(970) 547-2763

Eagle:

377 Sylvan Lake Road
Eagle, CO 81631
(970) 328-6715

Edwards:

320 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7777



With 10 locations in Eagle and Summit counties, Howard Head Sports Medicine's patients benefit from innovative physical therapy techniques, state-of-the-art equipment and experienced physical therapists.

Mountain Recreation Field House
(Howard Head Performance & SafeHealth)
450 Miller Ranch Road
Edwards, CO 81632
(970) 569-7770

Frisco:

100 Basecamp Way, Suite 105
Frisco, CO 80443
(970) 668-3169

Gypsum:

52 Lundgren Boulevard
Gypsum, CO 81637
(970) 777-2700

Silverthorne:

265 Tanglewood Lane
Silverthorne, CO 80498
(970) 262-0179

Vail (West Clinic):

181 W. Meadow Drive
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 476-1225

Vail (East Clinic):

108 S. Frontage Road West
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 479-7291

Howard Head Sports Medicine (HHSM) helps people of all abilities rebuild their body and spirit. Working closely with the world's top orthopaedic doctors and researchers, our progressive sports medicine protocols are reshaping physical therapy worldwide. HHSM offers rehabilitative, preventive and nonsurgical therapies. Services include brain and balance care, aquatic therapy, dry needling, hand therapy, lymphedema therapy, occupational therapy, orthopaedic rehabilitation, Pilates, sports rehabilitation, total joint therapy, vestibular rehabilitation, men's and women's health and Howard Head Performance.

Howard Head Sports Medicine is a service of Vail Health Hospital.

PLASTIC SURGERY

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 206
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 569-7656

322 Beard Creek Road
Edwards, CO 81632

Specializing in breast reconstructive surgery for cancer survivors, Vail Health's Plastic Surgery strives to offer a personalized experience from each patient's first consultation, through surgery and beyond. Plastic surgery is not just about looking better, but also improving the body's form and function and enhancing overall quality of life.

PODIATRY

Eagle-Summit Foot & Ankle

www.esfootankle.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 205
Avon, CO 81620
(970) 949-0500

842 Summit Blvd
Frisco, CO 80443
(970) 668-4565

Eagle-Summit Foot & Ankle has been serving the feet of Eagle County for 20 years by providing quality foot and ankle care, sports medicine and surgery in Eagle and Summit counties.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

PRIMARY CARE

Colorado Mountain Medical

www.cmmhealth.com

108 S. Frontage Road West,
Suite 101
Vail, CO 81657
(970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
Eagle, CO 81631

Primary care physicians provide wellness and preventive medical services, treatment for injury and illness and ongoing care of various medical conditions.



With family practitioners, pediatricians and internists on our team, Colorado Mountain Medical treats patients of all ages.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

Mountain Family Health Center: Edwards
www.mountainfamily.org

320 Beard Creek Road
 Edwards, CO 81632
 (970) 945-2840

Mountain Family Health Center provides high-quality, integrated primary, behavioral and dental health care with special consideration for the medically underserved, regardless of ability to pay.

Not owned or operated by Vail Health.

SLEEP DISORDERS

See *Cardiopulmonary Services*

SURGERY

Surgical Associates
 181 W. Meadow Drive
 Vail, CO 81657
 (970) 479-5036

With some of the most respected surgeons in Colorado on our team, Vail Health is fortunate to be the home of Surgical Associates. Known for their expertise in emergency and trauma care, they also specialize in general surgery, cancer detection and prevention, cancer surgery, laparoscopic surgery and wound and ostomy care.

Vail Valley Surgery Centers
 181 W. Meadow Drive
 Vail, CO 8165
 (970) 476-8872

320 Beard Creek Road
 Edwards, CO 81632

Vail Valley Surgery Centers are world-class, multi-specialty outpatient surgical centers,

offering the finest state-of-the-art technology, treatment and physician expertise.

Partially owned, but not operated, by Vail Health.

For orthopaedic surgery, see orthopaedics.

URGENT CARE

Vail Health Urgent Care Avon

230 Chapel Place
 Avon, CO 81620
 (970) 949-6100
Open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. - 7 days a week, open holidays

Vail Health Urgent Care Gypsum

410 McGregor Drive
 Gypsum, CO 81637
 (970) 777-2800
Open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mon-Fri, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat/Sun, open holidays

Vail Health's Urgent Cares in Avon and Gypsum are equipped to manage most emergency medical situations, including wound, orthopaedic and respiratory care. They also offer on-site X-ray and lab services such as urinalysis, quick strep, influenza, pregnancy, occult blood and glucose testing. No appointment is needed.

TREATING:

- + Abrasions, bruises, scrapes and lacerations
- + Cough, cold, fever and flu symptoms
- + Respiratory or urinary tract infections
- + Ear, eye, nose and skin infections
- + Minor burns
- + Minor fractures
- + Sprains and strains
- + Intestinal illness, including dehydration

Skip the wait — let us know you're coming at vailhealth.org/urgent.

Colorado Mountain Medical
www.cmmhealth.com



⌕
 Vail Health's Surgical Associates specialize in emergency and trauma care, general surgery, cancer detection and prevention, laparoscopic surgery and wound and ostomy care.

108 S. Frontage Road West,
 Suite 101
 Vail, CO 81657
 (970) 926-6340

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
 Avon, CO 81620

377 Sylvan Lake Road, Suite 210
 Eagle, CO 81631

Colorado Mountain Medical offers same-day appointments and welcomes walk-in patients with acute injury or illness as a convenient and affordable alternative to the Emergency Department for non-life threatening medical issues.

UROLOGY

Colorado Mountain Medical
www.cmmhealth.com

50 Buck Creek Road, Suite 200
 Avon, CO 81620
 (970) 926-6340

Urology is the medical specialty concerned with the study, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the urinary tract in females and of the genitourinary tract in males. Colorado Mountain Medical's (CMM) board-certified urologists have more than 40

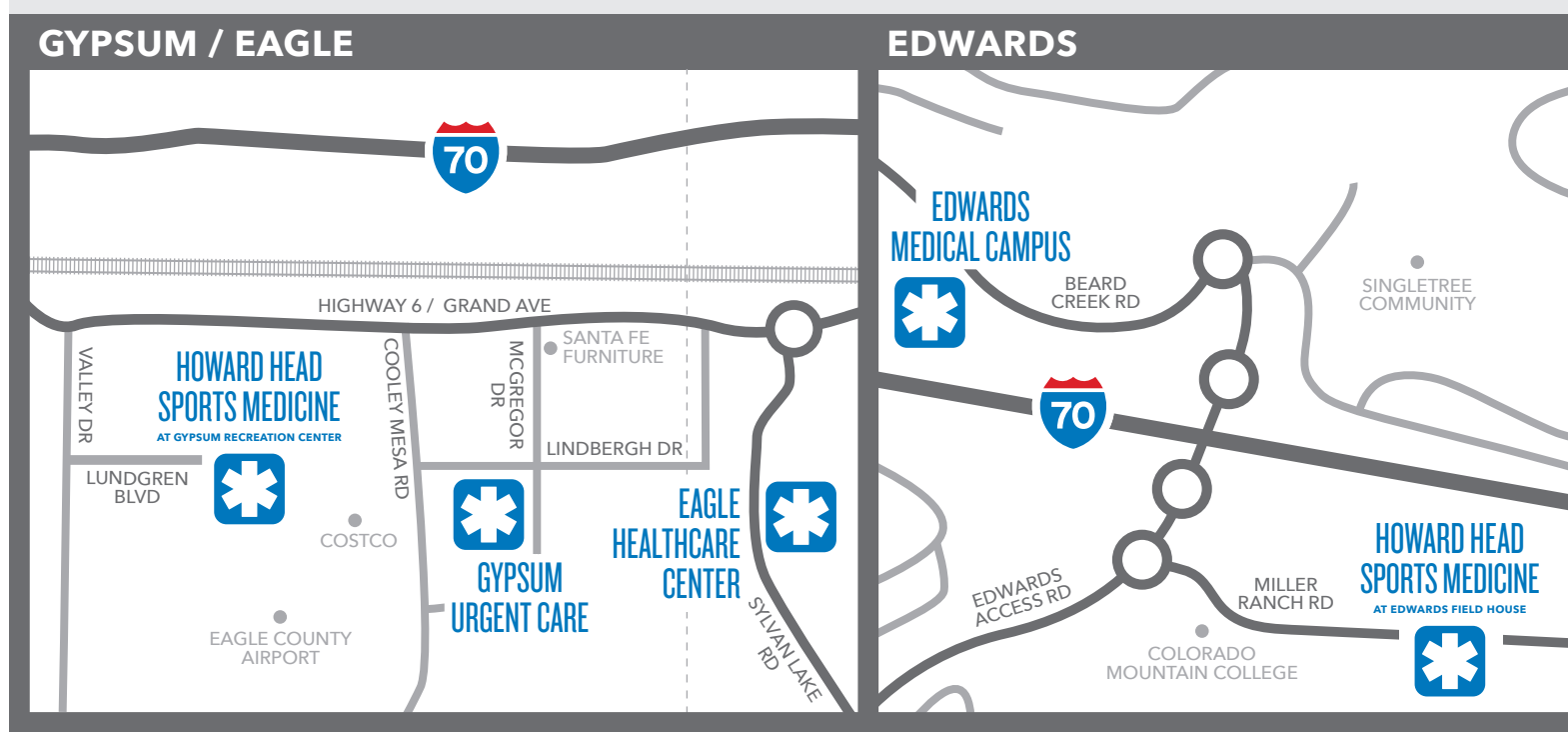
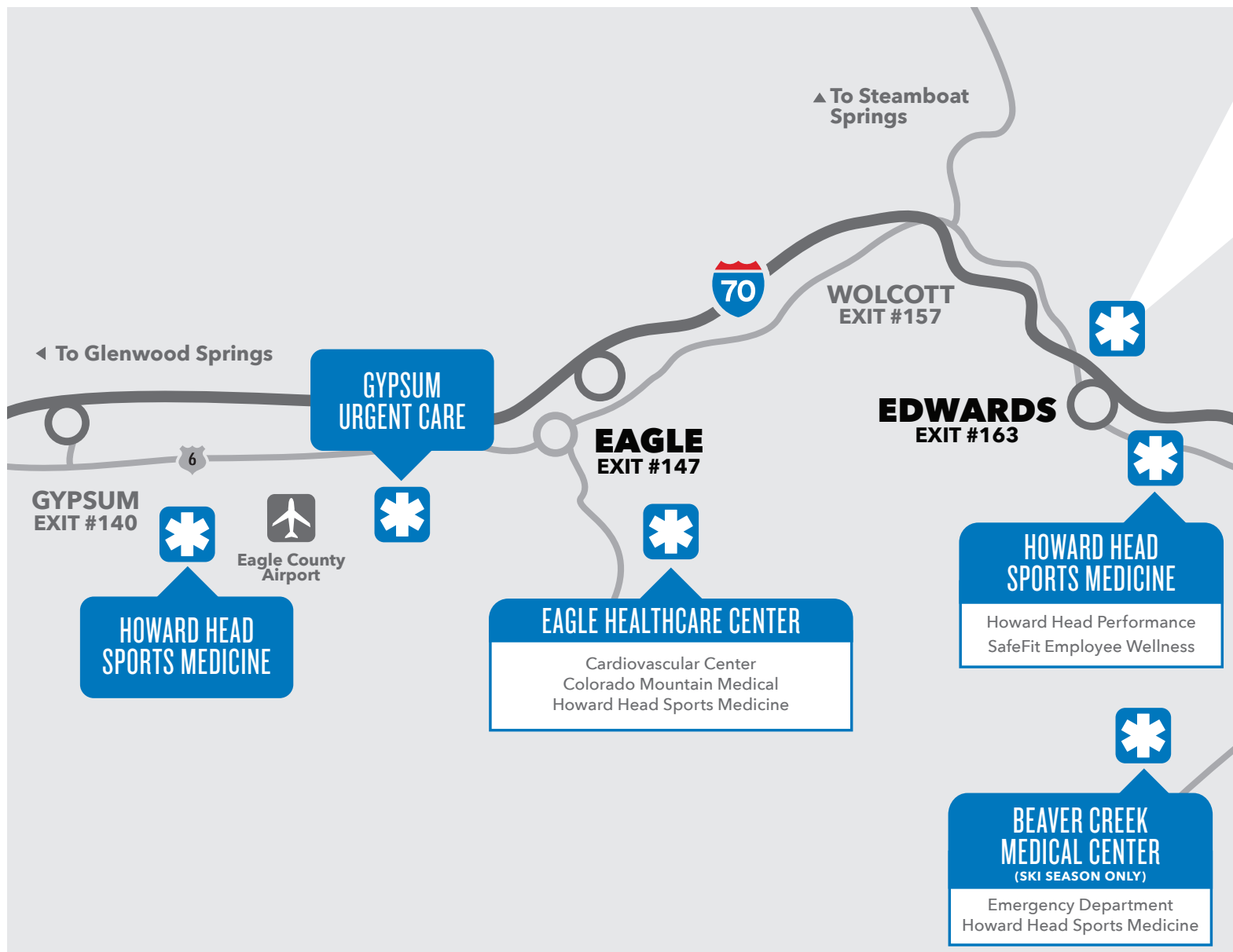
years of experience in adult and pediatric urology. In addition to general urology care, CMM's urologists diagnose and treat many conditions of the urinary tract, including enlarged prostate, kidney stones, prostate cancer, low testosterone, incontinence (including non-surgical options), bladder cancer and more. They also perform many in-office and surgical procedures, including vasectomies.

Colorado Mountain Medical is a proud partner of Vail Health.

WOUND & OSTOMY CARE

Surgical Associates
 181 W. Meadow Drive
 Vail, CO 81657
 (970) 479-5036

Using advanced wound care treatments to accelerate the healing process and maximize patient comfort, the care team specializes in burns and trauma; surgical wounds; and diabetic, venous stasis, arterial and pressure ulcers. The ostomy specialist also provides expert advice and treatment options on troubleshooting, new products, support groups, practical lifestyle tips and more. Physician referral is required.



EDWARDS MEDICAL CAMPUS

Edwards Pharmacy
Endocrinology (Colorado Mountain Medical)
Howard Head Sports Medicine
Internal Medicine (Colorado Mountain Medical)
Jack's Place, A Cancer Caring House

Mountain Family Health Center: Edwards
Shaw Cancer Center
Sonnenalp Breast Center
The Steadman Clinic
Vail Valley Surgery Center

**HOWARD HEAD
SPORTS MEDICINE**
BRECKENRIDGE,
SILVERTHORNE, FRISCO



FRISCO SPECIALTY CLINIC

Cardiovascular Center
Endocrinology (Colorado Mountain Medical)
Internal Medicine (Colorado Mountain Medical)
Shaw Breast Center & Cancer Clinic

**COLORADO
MOUNTAIN MEDICAL**



**AVON
EXIT #167**

**WEST VAIL
EXIT #173**

**VAIL
EXIT #176**



**EAST VAIL
EXIT #180**



To Denver ►



Map not to scale

VAIL MEDICAL CAMPUS

Cardiopulmonary Services
Cardiovascular Center
Colorado Mountain Medical
Emergency Department
Family Birth Center
Howard Head Performance
Howard Head Sports Medicine
Imaging
Laboratory
Plastic Surgery
Steadman Philippon Research Institute
Surgical Associates
The Steadman Clinic
Vail Pharmacy
Vail-Summit Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery
Vail Valley Surgery Center

**HOWARD HEAD
SPORTS MEDICINE**

AVON MEDICAL CAMPUS

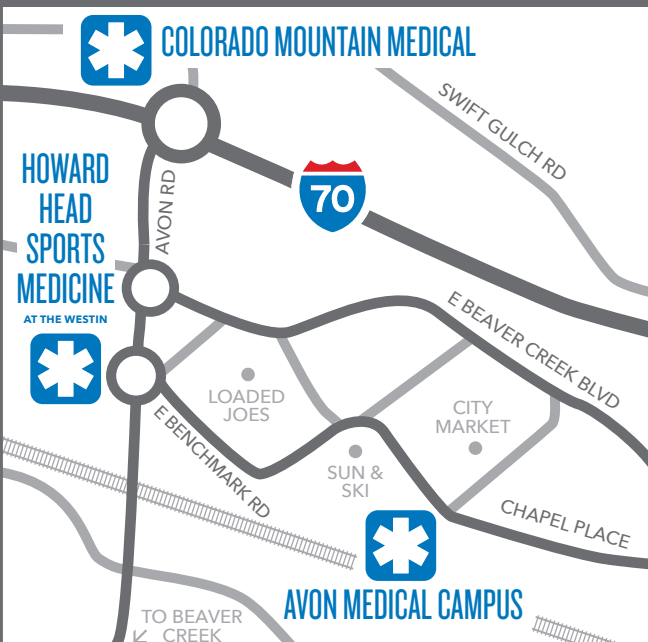
Occupational Health
Traveler's Clinic
Urgent Care

**BEAVER
CREEK**

BEAVER CREEK



AVON



VAIL



The Picture of Health



Vail Health's Kim Greene teaches Tai Chi to seniors in Minturn.

Photo by Dominique Taylor

EVERY CANCER. EVERY COLOR.

PINKVAIL™



MARCH 28, 2020 | MARCH 27, 2021

**SKI DAY, COSTUME CONTEST AND LIVE MUSIC
BENEFITING EVERY PATIENT AT SHAW CANCER CENTER**

PINKVAIL.COM

presented by



V VAIL HEALTH

VAIL Like nothing on earth.™





**Eagle Valley
Behavioral Health**

EagleValleyBH.org

It Takes A Valley.

LONG LIVE *the depressed.*

Your story is not finished. You are not defined by a condition, past mistake, addiction or current struggle. You deserve to live a long, healthy life. It's time to find a therapist or support group and write the next chapter. Visit EagleValleyBH.org.