

HEALTH MATTERS  
ASPEN VALLEY  
HOSPITAL

FALL 2015



Photo by Heather Knott, RN

**OUR MISSION:**

TO DELIVER EXTRAORDINARY  
HEALTHCARE IN AN ENVIRONMENT  
OF EXCELLENCE, COMPASSION,  
AND TRUST.

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“IF THERE WAS A TRIP ADVISOR FOR  
HOSPITALS, I WOULD GIVE ASPEN VALLEY  
HOSPITAL THE HIGHEST RATING. I LIVE IN  
FLORIDA, BUT I WISH I WAS CLOSE ENOUGH  
TO CONTINUE MY CARE IN ASPEN.”

- AVH PATIENT

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## HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The third phase of Aspen Valley Hospital's four-phase construction project is on time and within budget, which is important for the project's fiscal success and for timely completion as we move into fall. Project manager John Schied admits that progress so far is not exactly "thrilling" to most people, but it is essential.

As of press time, John says the following items are complete or near complete:

- Underground drainage has been installed
- We continue to work on underground utilities
- Footers and foundations are almost completed
- The basement slab has been poured
- We have waterproofed new exterior walls
- We continue construction of elevator and stairwell shafts
- Additional major mechanical systems will be installed soon

As the fall wears on, steel will be erected, and then progress will be more visible. We plan to continue work throughout the winter. By spring, we will be very much involved in interior walls and details. That means, in just about a year, we will be opening our much-needed new emergency department, diagnostic imaging area, and surgical services.



After months of earthmoving and site work, footers and foundations have been poured. The tall structures represent two elevators — one from the ER to the rooftop helipad and one from the new lobby to the second floor.

## AVH MAINTAINS INVESTMENT GRADE BOND RATING

A rigorous financial review by Moody's Investors Service this summer affirmed Aspen Valley Hospital's Baa2 bond rating.

Strengths identified include continued strong financial performance, critical access designation, favorable payor composition and service area, successful phasing of the master facilities plan with above average levels of liquidity, and diverse sources of revenues including tax dollars and philanthropy. Risks are the small size of the hospital and its medical staff, seasonality of the ski business, and ongoing large capital outlays for the master facilities plan.

Chief financial officer Terry Collins notes, "This is an excellent outcome for a small community hospital like ours, especially given the turmoil and uncertainty that currently exists in the healthcare industry."

The Moody's report credited the hospital's favorable financial performance to "good expense management" and growth in outpatient visits.

# FROM SKIER'S THUMB TO CARPAL TUNNEL TO TENNIS ELBOW,

## AVH HAND SURGEON URGES PROMPT CARE FOR LOWER-ARM AILMENTS

When you start to fall — on the ski slope, off your bike, or in your home — you instinctively put your hands out to cushion the blow. This reaction may save you from breaking your hip or fracturing your skull, but it also increases the risk of injuring your hands, wrists, or elbows.

Unfortunately, many people try to ignore the pain and swelling that often follows these seemingly small injuries. If not evaluated and treated promptly, however, the damage can cause long-term pain and disability.



### ATHLETES: BEWARE

One of the most common hand injuries in our area is “skier’s thumb.” This occurs when a person takes a tumble on the slope and the ski pole jams into the soft tissue between the thumb and forefinger, tearing the main ligament — the ulnar collateral ligament — in the thumb. (A similar injury can occur when a bicyclist goes over the handlebars.)

“With skier’s thumb, you have to stabilize the joint or you will end up with looseness that will make it difficult to pinch,” says Ann Golden, MD, orthopedic surgeon at Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH), who specializes in treating hand, wrist, and elbow ailments. “Waiting even a few months to seek care makes the repair

more difficult, and over the years, this excess or abnormal motion in the joint can cause arthritis.”

Similarly, many patients shrug off breaks of the scaphoid, a wrist bone, since the pain and swelling soon disappear. Untreated, though, a broken scaphoid can lead to a debilitating form of arthritis.

Because of the risk of serious complications, Dr. Golden recommends that patients see a doctor about hand, wrist, or elbow injuries that result in pain or swelling. “Getting it checked out doesn’t mean you’ll need surgery,” she says, “but it will go a long way toward preventing complications if you do.”

### STAY ALERT TO OTHER CONDITIONS

Athletes aren’t the only people at risk of hand, wrist, and elbow injuries. Anyone who spends a lot of time at a keyboard, suffers a wrist fracture, or has a medical predisposition may be at risk for carpal tunnel syndrome. This condition, which is not always caused by repetitive motion, occurs when the median nerve, which gives sensation to the thumb, index finger, and long finger, gets squeezed out of its space within the carpal tunnel of the wrist.

“In the carpal tunnel, you have the nerves and all the flexor tendons of the hand coming together in a small space,” Dr. Golden explains. “The syndrome results when there is no longer enough room in the carpal tunnel, so the nerve is pressed against and you develop tingling and numbness in your fingers.”

Many people experience their first symptoms during the night, when they wake up with the sensation that their hand is asleep. After a few minutes of vigorous shaking or rubbing, the feeling will go away. Problems can arise if symptoms begin to occur more frequently, become more intense, or spread to other parts of the hand, such as an aching pain in the palm.

"If it becomes progressive — if it's happening monthly, then weekly, and then nightly — then you want to have it evaluated," Dr. Golden says. "If there is enough pressure on the nerve for a long enough period of time, and the condition goes untreated, then the damage can be irreversible."

Arthritis of the hand, specifically at the base of the thumb, is another common condition that Dr. Golden sees among Aspen residents. Pain or difficulty opening a jar is one key symptom, because that motion stresses the thumb joint.

"Arthritis of the hand is probably related to just how active our community is. Over time, you tend to wear out certain joints," Dr. Golden says. "This type of arthritis doesn't always need surgery. Our rehab team can create a custom program to reduce pain and protect the joints. However, if you get to end-stage arthritis where non-surgical treatments are not effective and it's really interfering with your ability to do the things you like to do, there is a very successful day surgery to correct the problem."

### **SURGERY USUALLY NOT REQUIRED**

In fact, only a small percentage of hand, wrist, and elbow conditions overall need surgical repair. Most traumatic injuries such as sprains, strains, and simple fractures can be treated with immobilization, rest, and activity modification. Similarly, mild carpal tunnel symptoms often can be managed simply by splinting the affected wrist at night; more serious cases may require outpatient surgery that typically provides immediate relief.

"People shouldn't think that if they come into the hand surgeon's office, they're always going to need surgery. That's not the case," Dr. Golden says. "So many problems don't require surgery. They require only conservative treatment and periodic re-evaluation."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Golden, call **970.544.1289**.

## **PROTECT YOUR HANDS AND WRISTS FROM INJURY AND OVERUSE**

You take care to protect your head with a helmet when you're bicycling, to use proper posture when sitting at a desk, and to wear the right shoes for running.

In each of these situations, you should think about protecting not only your head, spine, and feet, but also your hands, wrists, and elbows from traumatic and overuse injuries. These tips can help:

### **ON THE GO:**

- When exercising, wear appropriate safety gear for your activity, such as gloves, wrist guards, and elbow pads.
- Move slower and with less force when participating in tennis, racquetball, rowing or other sports that require repetitive movements.
- Check with an occupational therapist about exercises that can strengthen and stretch your hand and arm muscles.

### **AT WORK:**

- Organize your desk or other workspace so you can change position from time to time while maintaining correct and comfortable posture.
- Consider an ergonomic evaluation to ensure your workspace is the right fit for you. Not all "ergonomic" office equipment is perfect for every person and can actually cause problems.
- When typing on a keyboard, use good form: forearms parallel to the floor (or slightly lower than), fingers lower than your wrists, and arms and hands able to move freely.
- During the workday, take breaks often and do a few stretches to relax your fingers, hands, and wrists.

Don't take your hands, wrists, and elbows for granted. Just a little care and attention to them can go a long way!

## MEET ANN GOLDEN, MD

### HAND SPECIALIST



A graduate of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Ann Golden, MD, joined the Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) medical staff in 2013. Since then, she has built a thriving practice specializing in hand, wrist, and elbow microsurgery.

Her fellowship was completed at the Christine Kleinert Institute for Hand and Microsurgery (Louisville, Kentucky). She is board-certified in both orthopedic surgery and hand surgery, and holds a sub-specialty certificate in surgery of the hand.

Just this past July, Dr. Golden became employed by AVH. "I'm very happy to be an employee of the hospital," she says. "It enables me to focus on practicing medicine, not running a business. Also, being part of the same team, the same system, enables me to better coordinate care for my patients."

Dr. Golden sees patients at the After-Hours Medical Care building and Midvalley Ambulatory Surgery Center in Basalt, as well as in Aspen at AVH.

Appointments can be made by calling **970.544.1289**.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY OFFERS A HELPING HAND AFTER ARM SURGERY

Given the active lifestyle that Aspen area residents enjoy, it's no wonder that many of us eventually suffer hand, wrist, and elbow injuries. Whether due to a bad fall on the slopes or bike trails, or to years of repetitive movements on the tennis court, many injuries of the middle and lower arm can be effectively treated with surgery followed by occupational therapy.

Fortunately, Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) has a state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility that offers the latest treatments and technologies to speed recovery after hand, wrist, or elbow surgery.

"We work closely with Dr. Golden, which helps ensure her patients receive synchronized care," says Krista Fox, OTR/L. "Occupational therapy plays a significant role in recovery and return to full activity."

### MORE THAN YOU KNOW

Many people think rehabilitation services are used only for helping patients recover from joint replacement procedures or torn knee ligaments. Actually, "rehab" is helpful in a wide range of medical situations, and occupational therapy helps people of all ages and conditions learn how to perform everyday living skills.

At AVH, our occupational therapists have experience in preventing injuries as well as caring for patients with hand and upper extremity injuries. We even have a certified hand therapist on staff. And because all of our rehabilitation services are provided in a dedicated facility, patients can receive comprehensive rehabilitative therapy for hand, wrist, and elbow injuries.

Please note that therapy services require a physician referral. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **544.1177**.

## COMMON INJURY, UNCOMMON CARE



In April 2015, Shayne Morgan Sledge hit the slopes for a final day of skiing. The snow was icy, but she knew that as the day warmed it would soften. With ski season ending in just a few days, she wanted to get in a few last runs.

Unfortunately, the icy snow created a problem. It prevented her pole from “planting,” she fell, and her thumb and forefinger went in opposite directions. The diagnosis: a torn ulnar collateral ligament (UCL). UCL tears are common enough in skiers to be called “skier’s thumb.” They often require surgical repair, which can help prevent arthritis later.

For Shayne, who plays piano and loves to ride her bike and ski, treating the injury was the only option. “I could have gotten by without surgery,” she says, “but I wanted a full recovery so I could enjoy all the things I like to do. Because of my lifestyle, I was highly motivated.”

Now, several months after the injury and surgery, Shayne reflects on the experience. Surgery was done at Aspen Valley Hospital’s Midvalley Ambulatory Surgery Center, which allowed for a timely repair by hand surgeon Ann Golden, MD.

“The Surgery Center has such a nurturing staff and a quiet, calm environment,” says Shayne. “And Dr. Golden was so personally connected, reassuring, and willing to answer all of my questions. As busy as she was, I never felt she was rushed. Even more important, she is a very progressive expert in her field.” Shayne notes the incision was so precise that, now that it’s healed, it’s nearly invisible. Glue, rather than sutures, was used.

Once Shayne got through the initial phase of recovery, she started occupational therapy with Krista Fox, OTR/L. “I couldn’t have imagined all the exercises I would be doing to regain strength and mobility in my thumb,” Shayne says. “Krista was wonderful and extremely knowledgeable.”

Shayne is back to riding her bike and playing piano, and now she looks forward to another ski season!

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SO PERSONALLY CONNECTED, REASSURING, AND WILLING TO  
ANSWER ALL OF MY QUESTIONS.”

— SHAYNE MORGAN SLEDGE

# AFTER-HOURS MEDICAL CARE

## BASALT CLINIC PROVIDES COST-EFFECTIVE CARE TO PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY

After-Hours Medical Care opened in 2009, and since then it's served thousands of people in need of "after-hours" care from Aspen to Glenwood Springs and beyond. Staffed by a team of emergency and family medicine doctors, registered nurses, and X-ray technologists, the clinic provides needed weekend and evening medical care to both children and adults.



Dr. William Duke is an emergency medicine specialist and has just removed a fish hook from this young fisherman's ear.

"Injury and illness can occur unexpectedly and at any time," says Monica Castaneda, RN, outpatient clinics director for Aspen Valley Hospital. "After-Hours Medical Care provides an option other than a hospital emergency room when doctors' offices are closed. It's faster and more affordable than an ER."

Open Monday through Friday from 5 to 10:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., clinic providers can diagnose and treat a variety of ailments ranging from flu to ear infections, urinary tract infections, lacerations, sprains/strains, simple fractures, and other relatively minor conditions. It is not intended for serious illness or injury — go to the ER instead — nor is it intended as a replacement for primary care through a physician's office.

"Wait times are minimal; the staff is warm, friendly, and experienced; and the facility is very nice. We consistently exceed our patients' expectations," says Monica. "We know we provide a needed service in the mid-valley and are happy that our reputation has extended up and down the valley. We never expected to have patients drive from as far away as Rifle for care."

### PHYSICIAN STAFF INCLUDES:

Steve Ayers, DO

Greg Balko, MD

Bruce Bowen, MD

William Duke, MD

Jon Gibans, MD

Bud Glismann, MD

Kim Levin, MD

Kelly Locke, MD

Dewayne Niebur, MD

Melissa Orman, MD

Elizabeth Tai, MD

Jeff Wuerker, MD

### AFTER-HOURS MEDICAL CARE

Walk-ins are welcomed

234 Cody Lane, Basalt

970.544.1250

Monday - Friday, 5 - 10:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



## AVH BECOMES SMOKE AND TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS

To promote a healthy environment for all, Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) and Pitkin County’s Health and Human Services (HHS) joined forces earlier this year to prepare for and establish a smoke and tobacco free campus.

The campus includes the location of the hospital and assisted living facility/senior center, as well as its associated clinics, office spaces, and housing units. It also includes the property where the HHS building is located. While indoor use of tobacco has been prohibited for many years, the restriction now includes outdoor spaces.

“Smoking is a major cause of preventable death,” says AVH human resources director Alicia Miller. “While smoking on our campus has always been minimal, we wanted to take the next step and completely eliminate smoking from our properties. It’s been great working toward this common goal with staff from the county since AVH and the HHS building are adjacent to one another.”

The policy went into effect on September 1 and has been well received. A good neighbor plan, signage, cessation services, nicotine replacements, and ways to ensure compliance with the policy were all incorporated into the plan.

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— AVH HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR ALICIA MILLER

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Midvalley Health Day

Saturday, October 17  
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
El Jebel Community Center

### Community Lecture Series

Wednesday, October 21  
Thursday, October 29  
Thursday, November 5  
12 noon - 1 p.m.

Topics include: Memory Decline, Resilience, and Emotional Intelligence  
Aspen Valley Hospital

### Senior Health Fair

(for those 60 and older)  
Friday, November 6  
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
Aspen Valley Hospital

### Sally’s Gift Shop

Holiday Bazaar  
Wednesday, November 18  
2 - 5 p.m.  
Aspen Valley Hospital



A knee exam at a recent Health Fair.

For more information, call **544.1296**.

# ASPEN VALLEY HOSPITAL PLANNING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

BY DEBORAH BREEN, FOUNDATION CEO/PRESIDENT

Roaring Fork residents turn to Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) to meet their healthcare needs every day. Private philanthropy helps ensure AVH is there for every patient for life-saving emergency services, state-of-the-art clinical technology, and prevention and wellness services.

Support comes in many ways to AVH. It includes monetary contributions from grateful patients, gifts of tangible property, or simply volunteering time and skills. Philanthropy is essential for AVH to make a difference in the lives of patients and their families every day.

One popular giving tool in recent years is a direct transfer from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Although not yet re-enacted for 2015, the Senate Finance Committee approved an extension of this "IRA charitable rollover" for 2015 and 2016. If adopted into law, this will allow IRA owners age 70½ and older to be excluded from gross income up to \$100,000 per year in distributions made directly from the IRA to qualified public charities such as AVH.

## OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ASPEN VALLEY HOSPITAL INCLUDE:

- **Planned Giving.** Match your personal financial objectives with your charitable goals. Planned gifts include bequests or gifts in estate plans, charitable trusts, gifts of insurance policies or proceeds, and beneficiary designations on retirement plans.
- **Matching Gifts.** Many employers match their employees' and retirees' contributions. It's a great way to leverage your gift's effectiveness.
- **Endowment Gifts.** Some donors enable AVH to make a difference today for years to come by endowing projects and programs that enhance healthcare in the community.
- **Memorial/Honorary Gifts.** A gift in memory or in honor of a friend or loved one can be

made, including gifts in lieu of flowers, gifts to commemorate a special occasion, and gifts to honor special friends. Although the amount of the gift will not be disclosed, a special acknowledgement of the gift is sent to the individual or family named by the donor.

- **Named Gifts.** Gifts made at certain levels can create a lasting legacy to honor an individual, family, business, or organization.
- **Caregiver Gifts.** Gifts can be made in honor of physicians, nurses, and other caregivers to recognize special care to you or your loved ones.
- **Gifts In-Kind.** AVH accepts gifts of certain real estate and tangible property, which may yield significant tax savings for the donor.
- **Appreciated Securities.** Gifts of appreciated securities offer substantial tax advantages and allow a donor to lower the out-of-pocket cost of a gift or to give a larger amount in the end.

"Smart giving is so much more than just writing a check," says Bill Gustoff, estate-planning attorney who consults with Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation (AVHF). "With a bit of creativity, being supportive can also be easy and affordable, and even fun!"

Donations are very personal and can be made to support the Campaign for Aspen Valley Hospital, which has to date raised \$33.8 million towards its philanthropic goal of \$60 million, or they can be earmarked for another specific area of interest. Gifts can also be made as "unrestricted," giving the foundation the most flexibility to direct support to the priority projects and programs where it is needed most.

AVHF has retained Thompson & Associates to provide a values-based estate planning service that helps participants rest assured their plans are tailored to their unique goals and objectives, and that they are

maximizing their family and philanthropic goals, while minimizing losses in their estates to taxes. All information shared with the consultant is held in the strictest of confidence and treated with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

AVHF offers this valuable service **at no charge** to help those who are considering the sale of assets, creating an estate plan for the first time, needing to review and update an existing plan, or simply

desiring a second opinion to provide more peace of mind. Although you will still need the services of your own independent professional advisors, this service will help facilitate your work with them.

For a confidential and complimentary analysis that will help you design a plan to optimize your goals and objectives, please contact the AVHF office at **970.544.1302** or **avhf@aspenhospital.org** to set up an appointment.

“SMART GIVING IS SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST WRITING A CHECK. WITH A BIT OF CREATIVITY, BEING SUPPORTIVE CAN ALSO BE EASY AND AFFORDABLE, AND EVEN FUN!”

— BILL GUSTOFF, ESTATE-PLANNING ATTORNEY



A good time was had by community members, donors, and supporters at Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation’s first Summer Soiree held in August.





This publication in no way seeks to diagnose or treat illness or serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Please see your physician if you have a health problem.

## EXTRAORDINARY CARE CLOSE TO HOME

From our world-class medical services to our focus on patient safety to our goal of improving the greater community's well-being, Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) has proven time and time again that we are a great place for your family's healthcare.

### Consider these facts:

- AVH offers state-of-the-art medical services and renowned physicians close to your home, family, and friends. In fact, we provide some of the most advanced medical technology in the world — all in a friendly, convenient environment. Our physicians have relationships with specialists throughout the country, so when consultations or transfers are needed, we can make it happen.
- AVH continually invests in improving our facilities and technology. Our expansion project is the most obvious example of our commitment to providing world-class services, and behind the scenes we are constantly updating technology to ensure you get the best possible diagnostics and treatment.
- AVH is a crucial partner in improving our community's health and wellness. Through educational classes, blood drives, health fairs, support groups, and other public events, we make our community a better, healthier place to live.
- AVH is an award-winning hospital that has earned numerous national recognitions and honors for its medical services and patient care. We are fully accredited by The Joint Commission and are a designated Critical Access Hospital and Level III Trauma Center.
- AVH voluntarily participates in national, state, and organizational programs to improve patient safety. Did you know that our patient infection rate is only **0.2 percent**, which is significantly lower than the national average of 5 percent?

Why go elsewhere when you can receive the medical services and programs you need right here in your home community? AVH's chief executive officer, Dan Bonk, says: "What we do, we do very well. If we don't do it, we will see that you are transferred to the appropriate facility for the best possible care. As our mission statement says, AVH exists to 'deliver extraordinary healthcare in an environment of excellence, compassion, and trust.'"