



# HEALTH MATTERS



Convenience,  
cost-savings  
& care in Basalt

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## A doctor patient and his care team

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### AVH Spotlight: Diagnostic Imaging

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From the Cover



*Pictured left to right: Dr. Charles Abramson; Brooke DelGrasso, RN; Dr. Michael Goralka; Dr. Steven Venticinese; Kate Korbet, RN; Dr. Chris Beck; Mary Frances Powell, RN; and Heather Lauritzen, RN.*

# 'It was the best!'

A physician and professor at the University of Texas Health in San Antonio, Steven G. Venticinese, MD, tells the story of his surprising and impressive experience at Aspen Valley Hospital on Page 8.

## Save the Dates

### Senior Health Fair

**Friday, November 3**

8 - 11 a.m.

Seniors age 60 and older

Aspen Valley Hospital

Blood draw, flu shots, plus free health screenings and information stations.

### Holiday Bazaar

**Thursday, November 16**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sally's Gift Shop

Aspen Valley Hospital

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### OUR MISSION:

To deliver extraordinary healthcare in an environment of excellence, compassion and trust.

### OUR VALUES:

Integrity, Teamwork, Accountability, Respect for Others, and Patient-Centered Care



## ASPEN VALLEY HOSPITAL

## Aspen Valley Hospital non-discrimination statement

With regards to employment, access to, or provision of care, Aspen Valley Hospital District (AVHD) shall provide all individuals with the full and equal enjoyment of the services, privileges, facilities, advantages, and accommodations without discrimination, as required by Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010. AVHD shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (which includes gender-based discrimination), disability, religion, age, or veteran status. Gender-based discrimination includes discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and nonconformity with sex stereotypes.

# Your community. Your local hospital. Your local healthcare system. Your health.

## To our community members,

Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) exists because of your support and to meet your needs for good health and a healthy lifestyle. This is a responsibility we take seriously and are working hard to fulfill through the delivery of high-quality medical care.

We provide comprehensive preventative services and support to manage disease and illness when they strike. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, which provides an excellent opportunity to shine a light on our efforts to prevent and treat breast cancer, and support our patients every step of the way.

mid and upper Roaring Fork Valley are part of this solution. Get to know our clinics in Basalt — After-Hours Medical Care, the Midvalley Surgery and Midvalley Imaging Centers — on the pages ahead.

Patient-centered care is at the core of our mission. We are pleased to share with you one patient's unique experience and perspective on the care he received at AVH.

With a wonderful summer now in the rear view, we look forward to the winter season ahead. I hope you find this issue of *Health Matters* to be helpful and interesting as we provide some further insights into our work on your behalf.



We understand healthcare must be accessible in order for it to be helpful. For this reason, we are building a system of care with a large array of services that will be there — when and where you need them. Our clinics throughout the

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Ressler".

Dave Ressler,  
Chief Executive Officer

## New AVH initiative helps keep Aspen clean & green

On average, hospitals generate nearly 29 pounds of waste per day for every occupied bed. Such a high volume of refuse has a big impact on the environment, including taking up space in local landfills.

Last December, employees Amy Behrhorst and Karra Sabol saw an opportunity to improve Aspen Valley Hospital's (AVH) recycling efforts. The pair, who lead the hospital's wellness program, named their vision "Green Up, Clean Up," and began promoting efforts to recycle as much waste as possible.

"We've focused a lot of effort on education," Behrhorst said. "As we transition from sorted

recycling to single-stream recycling, we had to learn what does and does not go in a recycle can."

The hospital-wide initiative launched in August 2017. Already, more than 30 staff members have stepped up to help.

"As a leader in fostering a healthy community," Sabol said, "we should all be good stewards of our natural resources and the beautiful place we live."

To learn more about what you can do to help the environment, visit [www.usa.gov/green](http://www.usa.gov/green).



Karra Sabol and Amy Behrhorst, RN, spearhead AVH's recycling initiative.

“We’re a great asset to the community. Local doctors know their patients have access to care in the evening and on weekends without having to go to the ER, and patients don’t have to drive 20 miles in a snowstorm to the nearest emergency room.”

— Joshua Seymour, MD, Medical Director, After-Hours Medical Care



Dr. William Duke; Maxine McCowan, RN; and Dr. Joshua Seymour, Medical Director, After-Hours Medical Care

# After-Hours Medical Care

## in Basalt saves time, money and worry

Sprained ankles, strained muscles, strep throat and ear infections don’t happen only during regular business hours. That’s why Aspen Valley Hospital’s After-Hours Medical Care offers prompt attention for minor illnesses and injuries in the evenings and on weekends, when most doctors’ offices are closed.

“Not every patient requires emergency care, but not every patient can wait until they get an appointment with their regular doctor,” said Joshua Seymour, MD, Medical Director of the Basalt-based clinic. “We are a gateway for those times when you need basic medical care right away.”

## After-Hours Medical Care

**Walk-ins are welcome!**

234 Cody Lane, Basalt  
970.544.1250  
Monday - Friday, 5 - 10:30 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Opened in 2009, the clinic has treated thousands of valley visitors and residents from Aspen to Rifle to Edwards and beyond. Many of them come because the clinic’s services are not only more affordable and convenient than emergency care, but also faster in many cases. The staff strives to provide excellent patient care in the most efficient manner possible.

After-Hours Medical Care provides a range of basic services for adults and children. For example, a skier who suffers a simple fracture can have X-rays performed onsite, with the results ready in 10 to 15 minutes. The physician can stabilize the bone, provide a limited supply of pain medication, help the patient set up a follow-up orthopedic appointment and coordinate care with his or her primary doctor.

For more serious conditions, the After-Hours Medical Care staff can triage patients and direct them to the right place for treatment. The clinic also offers basic

lab tests to diagnose conditions such as strep throat, influenza, mononucleosis and urinary tract infections. Clinic staff can send out samples for testing other bacterial and viral infections, with results usually available in a few days. (The clinic does not provide blood testing.)

Along with Dr. Seymour and other board-certified physicians, After-Hours Medical Care staff members include an experienced emergency care nurse and a radiology technician. On busy days, additional personnel can be on hand to reduce wait times and provide support for patients.

“A lot of what we do is give patients peace of mind,” Dr. Seymour said. “People will come in very concerned over something relatively minor. So, a big part of medicine is just reassuring them: ‘We can help you,’ ‘You’re going to be OK,’ ‘Yes, you will be able to ski again.’”

# Great care, lower cost, greater convenience: The benefits of Midvalley Surgery and Imaging Centers

If you think going to a healthcare appointment has to involve long drives, long hours in a waiting room and high costs, you probably haven't visited Midvalley Surgery Center and Midvalley Imaging Center in Basalt. Owned by Aspen Valley Hospital, the centers offer fast, lower-cost services in convenient locations — without compromising quality of care.

## Staff expertise, 'personal touch' set Midvalley Surgery Center apart

In a community as active as ours, falls on the ski slope and bike trails are an unfortunate reality. For non-emergency injuries such as torn rotator cuffs and ACLs (anterior cruciate ligaments), Midvalley Surgery Center offers specialized outpatient care without the fuss and cost of hospital-based treatment.

"We make our services as simple as possible for patients," said Evalee Malespini, RN, Surgical Services Manager at the center. "We're conveniently located, we have an easy check-in and check-out system, and we give you medication so you don't have to stop at the pharmacy on your way home. We try to provide everything you need."

The center's orthopedic specialists perform many surgeries arthroscopically to speed recovery, reduce infection risk, and minimize scarring. They also treat some non-emergency traumas and wear-and-tear injuries, as well as conduct endoscopic procedures.

While cost and convenience are important benefits, the center's greatest asset is its nurses and surgeons, whose expertise covers an array of orthopedic specialties. "Because we are a small facility, we're able to provide a personal touch," Malespini said. "From the time you come in until the time you leave, you will see us working as a team and living our mission to provide high-quality, cost-effective care."

*The Midvalley Surgery Center, at 1450 E. Valley Road, Suite 202, Basalt, is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.*

## Relax ... you're in good hands at Midvalley Imaging Center

Healthcare doesn't get more one-on-one than at Midvalley Imaging Center. The center typically has a single employee handling all services from sign-in to check-out — and that's exactly how most people like it.

"I go through the paperwork with the patients, perform their scans and collect any funds," said Natalie Johnson, RT, Lead Technologist, who has worked at the center for nearly a decade. "Patients appreciate having truly one-on-one care."

The center offers MRI scans for many muscular, skeletal and neurological conditions, with costs up to 50 percent less than similar services in a traditional hospital setting. Each appointment is scheduled for a full hour, allowing Johnson time to answer questions.

Often, she said, patients ask about the center's MRI scanner. Because it is a "closed" design, the unit tends to provide better image resolution than models with open sides, but some patients are concerned about feeling "closed in." "Most people get through it fine, and with others I need to talk them through the process," Johnson said. "I assure all of our patients that they always have contact with me — even if it's just to say they are chilly and need a blanket."

*Midvalley Imaging Center, at 1460 E. Valley Road, Basalt, is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.*



*Natalie Johnson, RT, Lead Technologist, and the MRI scanner available at the Midvalley Imaging Center.*



*The Midvalley Surgery Center offers specialized outpatient care for non-emergency injuries.*

# AVH Spotlight: Diagnostic Imaging

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series on AVH departments and services you may not know about.*

Walk into the Diagnostic Imaging Center at Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) and you may wonder if you're inside a medical facility at all. The walls are papered with photos, cartoons, inspirational quotes and thank you notes from patients. The lighting and the chairs are soft. And the staff is likely to greet you with a hug and a cup of herbal tea.



*Heather Milne, RN,  
Nurse Navigator, and  
Debbie Demeulenaere,  
Lead Mammography  
Technologist*

Along with the cozy atmosphere, however, is a steely determination to provide great breast health services.

"We're serious about providing great care in an atmosphere that is positive, encouraging and supportive," said Debbie Demeulenaere, the center's Lead Mammography Technologist. "Everyone who comes to us is in a unique situation, but they all need help — that's why we're here."

## Promoting awareness and testing

Most of us know the importance of breast health screenings. Yet only about 65 percent of all U.S. women age 40 or older had a mammogram in 2013-14, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

## Breast screenings save lives

Women with average risk of breast cancer should have a comprehensive breast screening, including a mammogram and clinical breast exam, every year starting at age 40. Women with increased risk should speak with their physician about starting screenings earlier or having them more often. Many experts also encourage women to perform breast self-exams and report any changes to their physician.



*Scheduling a mammogram is one of most essential lifesaving actions women 40 years and older can take.*

Busy lifestyles, perceptions about discomfort during screening, and the fear of "finding something" are common reasons women don't stay current with screenings. While those are understandable concerns, they should not stop any woman from potentially lifesaving screenings.

"A mammogram takes only 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and the discomfort is short and very tolerable," said Lora Barke, DO, Section Chief for Breast Imaging for Radiology Imaging Associates (RIA), which provides diagnostic imaging services for AVH. "Even more important, AVH's 3D digital mammography provides unprecedented image quality for more accurate results."

In most cases, the patient's referring physician has the results in a few days. If the screening reveals an area of concern, AVH staff will work with the patient and her physician to schedule further testing.

"The vast majority of patients don't need additional screenings, so annual screenings simply offer peace of mind," said Louie Enriquez, MD, Medical Director of Breast Imaging at AVH. "For the small percentage of

women who do need additional treatment, the 3D technology helps us find areas of concern early, when they are more treatable."

When a patient needs additional care, AVH contracts with physicians in Denver who visit Aspen two days per week to help with next steps in the patient's care plan. AVH also offers the services of a nurse navigator, Heather Milne, who defines her role as "guiding patients through the cancer process, whatever that may be."

**FACT:** The Breast Health Center at AVH offers a free screening mammogram to any woman during the year of her 40th birthday.

Among their other efforts, Milne and Demeulenaere create opportunities for peer support, such as inviting current and former patients to social gatherings. "For many women," Milne said, "it's important to have that camaraderie, to share experiences, and to network so they don't feel alone after a cancer diagnosis."



*Left to right: Winning Travieso teammates Nacho Novillo Astrada, Tony Calle, Marc Ganzi and Teo Calle; presenters Amy Phelan, Nancy Rogers, Dallas Snadon and Kathleen Hutchinson; and Mexico teammates Carlos Gracida Jr, Juan Bollini Jr, Grant Ganzi and Guillermo Steta stand in front of the Mount Sopris Cup at the awards ceremony.*



*Summer Soirée, July 18, 2017: Dave Ressler, AVH CEO; Dr. Mike Murphy; Dr. Heather Murphy; Deborah Breen, AVHF President & CEO; and Archer Bishop, AVHF Chairman of the Board*



*Summer Soirée, July 18, 2017: John Sarpa and Chuck Frias, AVHF Board Members; and Mike Kaplan, AVHF Capital Campaign Executive Committee Member*



*Chukkers, Champagne & Caviar, benefit polo match, August 13, 2017: Regina Yunami, Heather Milne, Sandy Klausman, Debbie Demeulenaere and PJ Wallace*

## Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation hosts high visibility, high interest SUMMER EVENTS

Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation (AVHF) continues to build momentum and recently held two successful events — the Summer Soirée in July and the Chukkers, Champagne & Caviar benefit polo match in August. Both were highlights of the summer season.

The Summer Soirée, held on July 18, recognized over 150 loyal supporters who gathered at The Little Nell to attend AVHF's third annual recognition event. Dr. Archer Bishop, AVHF Chairman of the Board, opened the evening by welcoming the group of friends and supporters. Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) CEO Dave Ressler presented an overview of the hospital and the new facilities that have come online as a result of the community's support.

The keynote speakers of the evening were new AVH physicians, Dr. Michael Murphy and Dr. Heather Murphy, who specialize in ophthalmology and otolaryngology, respectively. Deborah Breen, AVHF President & CEO, closed the evening with a sincere expression of gratitude to each and every supporter, noting that of the \$40.5 million raised to date, just 14 generous benefactors made up \$35.8 million of that number.

The 2017 Chukkers, Champagne & Caviar fundraising event, hosted by Marc and Melissa Ganzi and the Aspen Valley Polo Club, was held on August 13 and raised over \$365,000 for AVHF. With a sold-out crowd of 225 guests, event goers enjoyed a lavish menu expertly prepared by Caribou Club Catering of Aspen. With several courses and white-glove butler service in the VIP tent, tables fetched from \$10,000 to as much as \$50,000! Guests enjoyed an incredible four-course menu, and of course, a roving caviar cart and bottomless champagne.

The highlight of the event, outside of the incredible play on the field, was the live auction. Guest auctioneer John Sarpa, AVHF Vice Chairman of the Board, created lively bidding between matches. The event attracted many sponsors, to whom the Foundation is most grateful.

Watch for announcements on future Foundation events, or call the Foundation to be added to their invitation lists. To reach Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation, call **970.544.1302**, email **avhf@aspenhospital.org**, visit the website at **supportaspensvalleyhospital.org** or use the remittance envelope enclosed in the center of the newsletter to send in your gift!



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This publication in no way seeks to diagnose or treat illness or serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. Please see your physician if you have a health problem. Aspen Valley Hospital respects your privacy. If you prefer not to receive communications from us, please call **970.544.1296**.

# 'It was like flying first class'

## Texas physician impressed — and a bit surprised — with AVH experience

Even physicians sometimes ignore symptoms of illness before finally seeking medical help. Case in point: Steven G. Venticinque, MD, Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology and Surgery and a practicing physician at the University of Texas Health in San Antonio. This past summer, Steve was vacationing in Aspen when some recurring abdominal pain finally became intolerable, and he went to the emergency room at Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH).

Because he works in a major medical center, Steve had some concerns: *Will the staff at a small hospital be able to help me? What if something goes wrong? Should I just take some antibiotics and try to get home?*

Steve's concerns were soon put to rest.

"From the minute I walked through the door, I was so impressed with everyone, from the receptionist and the phlebotomist to the nurses and doctors," Steve said. "Everyone was super-friendly and made me feel very comfortable and cared for."

Initially seen by Charles Abramson, MD, in the Emergency Department and admitted by hospitalist Mike Goralka, MD, Steve was diagnosed with severe cholecystitis (inflammation of the gall bladder). General surgeon Joe Livengood, MD, removed Steve's gall bladder laparoscopically, assisted by anesthesiologist Chris Beck, MD.

In a letter to AVH CEO Dave Ressler afterward, Steve wrote, "Each of these physicians provided superb care and demonstrated the utmost competence and professionalism. Their bedside manner was superb. My wife, Amy, and I felt 100% confident in their ability and judgement."

Steve was also impressed with the nursing staff. "I had the privilege of being cared for by some of the finest nurses whom I have ever encountered. They are who really served as the foundation of what was a great experience. I would be proud to work with any of them," he wrote.

After he returned to San Antonio, Steve told his colleagues about his experience, and some questioned why he had elected to have the surgery in Aspen. Steve, however, assured them that he had made the right decision.

"I told them it was like flying first class." Steve says. "I am a physician who has been in practice for 20 years, so I know what quality care looks like. My wife and I come to Aspen often, and it's comforting to know that we have such an excellent hospital in our community here."



*Dr. Steven Venticinque and his wife, Amy, are frequent visitors to Aspen.*