

Winter 2013

Health Matters

at Aspen Valley Hospital



Photo by Bruce Bowen, MD
Sopris Medical Practice

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*"I attest that AVH
is the best hospital!"*

– AVH patient



Don't let winter ailments keep you down

Winter is why many people choose to call Aspen home. So you don't want to be sidelined with a cold, flu, or other seasonal ailment when you should be skiing, snowboarding, and having fun.

It's no coincidence that viral and bacterial infections are more common during cold weather. "We're all inside and having closer contact with each other," explains Physician Assistant Shari Kiehnbaum, PA-C, of Aspen Medical Care. That means more exposure to germs.

Colds and flu are often talked about in the same breath but are distinctly different. "A cold is relatively mild," says Shari. "You're going to have a sore throat, mild fever, congestion, coughing, sneezing, and sniffing. It might lay you up in bed for a day, but you're generally going to bounce back quickly. Keep in mind, however, that a cold generally lasts 7 to 10 days."

"With the flu, you're going to be very ill," she continues. "It won't go away in a day or two." Flu symptoms include fever, coughing, headache, and body aches. Even worse, the flu can "morph" into secondary bacterial infections, including pneumonia.

Vaccination is the best protection

A yearly flu vaccine, either a "shot" or nasal mist, is the best protection. The vaccine is especially important for children, older adults, and anyone who has contact with a vulnerable person. Note that, even now, it's not too late for a vaccine. Other ways to protect yourself from flu and colds include washing your hands often. And even with clean hands, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Paying attention to diet, exercise, and sleep can help, too. "This is a busy time of year," says Shari. "We often don't get proper sleep, we don't eat well, we're not getting exercise, our stress levels are high. All of those factors are going to keep our immune systems from operating at peak performance and predispose us to getting ill."

If you do get a cold, your mother's advice is best: rest, drink fluids (including warm liquids with honey to soothe a sore throat), and use saline rinses or steam to clear nasal passages.

Over-the-counter (OTC) cold medications may help, but avoid giving them to children younger than six unless directed by a healthcare provider, and look for products that address a specific symptom. "Five-medications-in-one is overkill, and we don't have good data to support that it actually helps," advises Shari.

With the flu, early identification is important because an antiviral medication can speed recovery if given within 48 hours. Otherwise, symptom management should emphasize rest, fluids, ibuprofen or Tylenol for fever, nasal rinses, and a humidifier or steam.

Keep in mind that colds and flu are viral infections, and antibiotics are effective against only bacteria. Also, be careful when taking vitamin C, zinc, Echinacea, and similar products, as they aren't proven to prevent or treat colds and flu. "These products have side effects," warns Shari, "so be cautious."

Other winter ailments

Pneumonia causes coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, high fever, and severe fatigue. Pneumonia should be treated before it leads to even more serious problems. Vaccination is recommended for people over 65 and anyone who smokes, suffers from asthma or cardiopulmonary disease, or has a compromised pulmonary system.

Strep throat is a bacterial infection that causes an extremely sore throat and fever. Antibiotics are recommended to fight strep throat in children because the infection raises the risk for rheumatic fever. However, adults can opt to endure the discomfort and let their bodies clear the infection.

Sinus and ear infections lasting for less than 10 days without a high fever are usually viral, so antibiotic therapy may not be appropriate. To alleviate symptoms, try using a humidifier, steam, saline nasal rinses, and OTC medications such as Advil or Tylenol for the discomfort.

Acute bronchitis, a viral infection, causes inflammation of the lungs' airways, resulting in coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, and chest tightness. Rest, fluids, OTC medicine,



a humidifier, and steam may help. A call to your doctor is also in order. Symptoms usually resolve within several days, although the cough can continue for weeks.

Protecting yourself can help minimize the impact of winter illnesses. If you or a loved one needs preventive or medical care, Aspen Valley Hospital physicians and physician extenders like Shari, emergency services at the hospital, and After-Hours Medical Care in Basalt are all here to help.

Tip when using antibiotics

When using antibiotics to fight pneumonia, strep throat, or another bacterial infection, change your toothbrush, wash bedding, and take other steps to eradicate the bacteria within a day or two of starting the medication. If not, you may pass bacteria back to yourself after it is cleared from your body.

Exceeding Expectations: After-Hours Medical Care

When After-Hours Medical Care opened in Basalt four years ago, Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) was counting on it to help meet the needs of the mid-valley community. Little did we know that patients would come from both ends of the valley — Aspen and Glenwood Springs — for care.

"I think it's safe to say that our expectations of the facility, and the expectations of the community, have been far exceeded," notes Bart Outzen, Manager of After-Hours Medical Care. Bart attributes the success to a number of factors: demand for urgent care when doctors' offices are closed (evenings and weekends); the need for an alternative to a hospital emergency room; a modern, professional facility; physicians well-suited to the urgent care environment; and an outstanding staff of nurses and radiology technologists.

AVH surveys its After-Hours patients and is pleased to report very positive feedback. "We really shine in a lot of areas according to our patients," says Bart. "Most notable are

the short wait times, teamwork, nursing and physician care, compassion, attention, pain management, and problem resolution. It's been a great service to the community."

After-Hours Medical Care

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

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

Walk-ins welcome

234 Cody Lane, Basalt

(Across from High Tone Auto Body)

544.1250

Medical Staff

Steve Ayers, DO

Greg Balko, MD

Catherine Bernard, MD

Bruce Bowen, MD

Jon Gibans, MD

Bud Glismann, MD

Kim Levin, MD

Kelly Locke, MD

Chris Miller, MD

Dewayne Niebur, MD

Melissa Orman, MD



Comfortable waiting lounge at After-Hours Medical Care.



Melissa Orman, MD, examines a patient.

"After-Hours staff and physician provided prompt, courteous, and professional service. I've recommended them to others and would return without hesitation!"

– After-Hours Patient

How healthy is our community?

New study reveals information about our collective well-being

Most of us in Pitkin County think we're a pretty healthy group. We're active during all seasons, we're careful about our diets, and we enjoy life. But how healthy is our community? That is the question Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) hoped to answer by commissioning a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment — a systematic, data-driven study by Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

In many ways, the findings confirm what many of us suspected: Compared to state and national standards, area residents are healthier and have access to high-quality medical care. But there are some surprises, too, that can help us improve our individual and collective health.

Key findings

Access to care — Most people in the study area have health insurance, but 12.9 percent of residents between ages 18 and 64 do not (compared to 21 percent statewide). Most people in our community with Medicare also have supplemental insurance (93.9 percent compared to only 75.5 percent in the nation). Approximately 10 percent of survey respondents said that inconvenient office hours prevented them from having a doctor visit within the past year, while more than 24 percent said cost had stopped them from visiting a doctor. From 75 to 78 percent of respondents have a specific source of ongoing care (comparable to the national average).

Health conditions — Many major health conditions are less prevalent here than elsewhere — while a few are more common. Less than 20 percent of residents suffer with

arthritis/rheumatism, compared to more than 35 percent of U.S. residents overall. Osteoporosis (8.5 percent locally vs. 11.4 percent nationally), heart disease (2.4 percent vs. 6.1 percent), and diabetes (3.1 percent vs. 10.1 percent) follow this trend.

Rates of chronic back pain, however, are higher in Pitkin County (nearly 24 percent) than in the nation as a whole (21.5 percent), and skin cancer rates are much higher: 12.6 percent locally vs. 6.1 percent in Colorado and 8.1 percent nationally. This could be due to the fact that many area residents participate in physical activities and spend a lot of time outside.

In general, though, our health is better. Only 5.5 percent of local residents report being in fair or poor physical health, while 13.8 percent of all Colorado residents and 16.8 percent nationally rate their health as fair or poor. Mental health trends follow a similar pattern; Pitkin County has significantly lower rates of major depression and high stress.

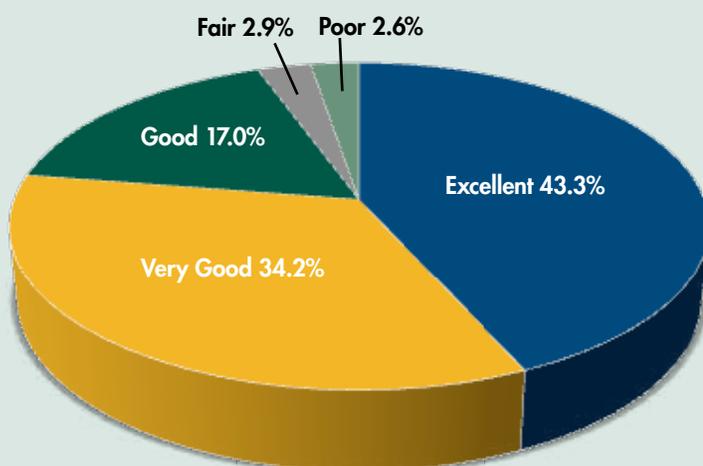
Healthy lifestyles — Locals tend to be very active. Less than 10 percent of Pitkin County residents say they have no time for leisure activity, compared to nearly 29 percent nationally. Nearly 57 percent of area residents meet standards for healthy body weight — much better than the national average of less than 32 percent. While more than 28 percent of U.S. residents are obese, only 4.3 percent of local residents are. Childhood overweight rates are also significantly lower than the national average.

Tobacco use is also comparatively low locally. Less than 8 percent of survey respondents said they are current smokers, while nearly 17 percent of U.S. residents and more than 18 percent of Colorado residents overall smoke.

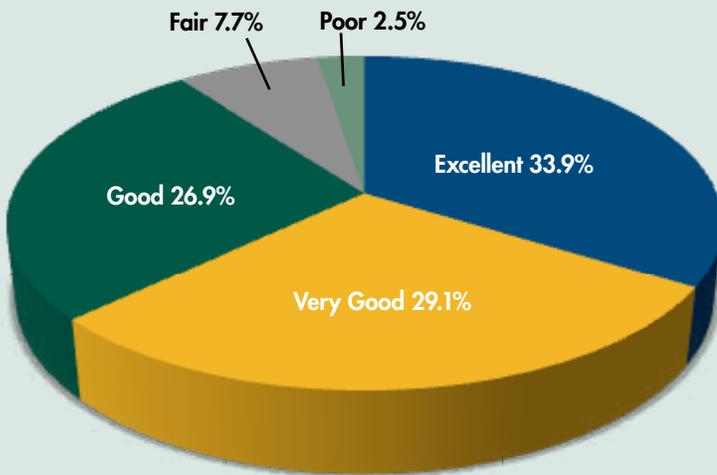
More Pitkin County residents have been tested for HIV (64 percent vs. 55.5 percent nationally) and use condoms (49.6 percent vs. 18.9 percent), but a higher percentage have had three or more sexual partners in the past year (19.4 percent vs. 7.1 percent).

Finally, rates of substance use are higher in Pitkin County than nationally. Alcohol consumption of 2+ drinks per day on average is 14.2 percent here vs. 5.6 percent in the U.S. Illicit drug use reported for the previous month was 8 percent in Pitkin County compared to 1.7 percent in the nation. Yet

Self-Reported Health Status
(Pitkin County, 2012)



Rating of Overall Healthcare Services Available in the Community (Pitkin County, 2012)



fewer area residents have sought help for an alcohol or drug problem (2.7 percent compared to 3.9 percent).

Awareness and prevention — Education and preventive care is a mixed bag. For example, only 61 percent of us had a medical checkup within the past year, compared to a national average of over 67 percent. However, more than 88 percent of children had an annual checkup, slightly higher than the national average. About 46 percent of local residents — more than double the national average — attended a health event in the past year. AVH is proud to provide ample opportunities and to see that the community responds.

What the numbers mean

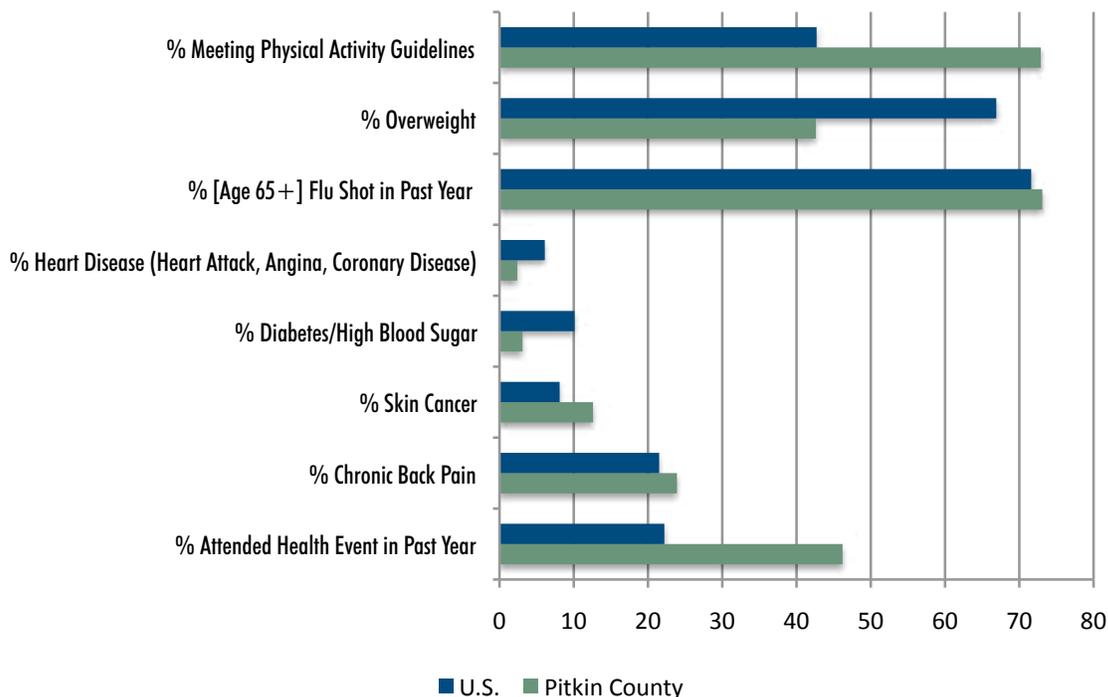
AVH is already working to put the assessment findings into action. Areas of focus being pursued include:

- Developing the “medical home” concept for ongoing, comprehensive, and preventive care
- Assuring access to affordable healthcare services, particularly among the elderly and lower-income residents
- Continued partnering and coordination with other agencies to assist low income populations* and to address mental health and substance abuse issues
- Using prevention, early detection, awareness, and other programs to improve health overall, working in conjunction with employers and the community at large
- Meeting the increasing medical care needs of a local population that is aging and ethnically diverse

As we develop programs and services, results of the assessment can guide us in improving residents’ health status and quality of life, reducing health disparities, and increasing life spans and access to preventive care.

*Mountain Family Health Center (MFHC), through an affiliation with AVH, operates a clinic in Basalt to help ensure quality care for the medically indigent in the mid- and upper-valley. Sharing space with After-Hours Medical Care, MFHC is open four days a week during daytime hours, and there is always someone on staff who speaks Spanish. They accept private, Medicaid, Medicare, and Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP) insurance. A sliding scale and other assistance programs help the uninsured. They can be reached at **945.2840**.

Summary of Health Assessment Findings for Pitkin County Compared to the National Average





Grand opening

After years of planning, months of site work and construction, weeks of moving in, and several days of "sneak previews" for staff, volunteers, local media, and supporters of the Aspen Valley Hospital Foundation, a Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting event for Phase II(A) was held on November 10, 2012.

Although it was cold and cloudy, there were bright spirits as approximately 150 people toured the facility throughout the day. Repeatedly, the good work of our planning, architectural, and construction teams was reinforced.



Here are just a few of the comments we heard over and over again:



- "It's just beautiful."*
- "It's everything a hospital should be."*
- "The private rooms will make the hospital experience so much better."*
- "What a great place to rehab after surgery."*
- "This is such a big improvement."*
- "If I have to be in the hospital, this is where I want to be."*
- "The cafeteria is such an inviting gathering place, and the food is healthy and delicious."*



Phase II(A) includes a new inpatient unit, oncology/infusion services, the offices of Aspen Orthopaedic Associates, rehabilitation services (physical, occupational, and speech therapy), a new cafeteria, and a parking garage. Affordable housing on the campus is underway and will be finished this spring.



Awards and recognition keep rolling in!

Overall Best Performer

Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) has been recognized once again as "Overall Best Performer" by Avatar International, a research and consulting firm specializing in healthcare quality improvement. This award is given to the top facilities in Avatar's national database with the highest overall combined scores for inpatient, outpatient, emergency, and ambulatory surgery departments.

Exceeding Patient Expectations

The hospital also received an award for exceeding patient expectations. This award is based on the three critical survey items gauging patient expectations about quality of care, reliability, and customization before the visit.

Pain Management

Finally, a best performer award was extended specifically for pain management related to inpatient care. "Pain is the fifth vital sign, and if not managed properly can cause an exacerbation of other problems," says anesthesiologist Chris Beck, MD. "We have a lot of tools to help manage pain and a full staff of anesthesia/analgesia experts who are available 24/7."

"We place great value on the patient experience," says Elaine Gerson, RN, Chief Clinical Officer at AVH. "Being in the top 5 percent of Avatar's database of hospitals throughout the nation is rewarding, but our real motivation is simply to provide exemplary service to our patients."

Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals

The National Rural Health Association named AVH to the top 20 list of Critical Access Hospitals for patient satisfaction.

"We're proud of the efforts of our physicians and staff who have contributed to our hospital achieving this designation," says AVH CEO Dave Ressler. "The results mean our community can count on us for a quality experience when healthcare is needed." AVH is the only Colorado hospital to be named to the list for patient satisfaction.

Bruce Bowen, MD, achieves subspecialty certification



Dr. Bruce Bowen, family medicine physician on staff at AVH recently received board certification in obesity medicine. Dr. Bowen is a family medicine physician who has been in practice at the Midvalley Medical Center for 14 years with a career spanning over 30 years.

His interest in obesity and weight management comes from a strong belief that weight management is critical to optimum health and well-being. As an affiliate of the Center for Medical Weight Loss, he works one-on-one with patients to create a plan that's medically tailored to their body. The plan also includes the support necessary for staying motivated to safely lose weight, and then — more importantly — to keep it off. For more information about Dr. Bowen's services, call **927.1444** or visit **www.SoprisMedical.com**.

Construction update

With the completion of Phase II(A) comes the beginning of Phases II(B, C, and D). Currently, the demolition of recently vacated spaces is underway in preparation for the relocation of the following services: same-day surgery, cardiopulmonary diagnostics, and intensive care. Minor revisions to the



admissions area are being made to improve privacy until more significant improvements can be made in Phase IV.

Then, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, diabetes education, and medical office space for general/trauma surgeons, obstetricians, cardiologists, and visiting specialists will be constructed. Phase II will be completed by fall of 2013.

Currently, the hospital is seeking final approval for the last two phases (III and IV) of the Master Facilities Plan from the Planning and Zoning Commission and Aspen City Council. The final phases include surgery services, laboratory, diagnostic imaging, emergency care, admissions/registration, and more medical offices.

For more information about the project, contact community liaison Frank Goldsmith at **FGoldsmith@aspenhospital.org**.



ASPEN VALLEY HOSPITAL

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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.



Hospital Foundation President named

After a nationwide search, Aspen Valley Hospital (AVH) is pleased to announce that Deborah Breen has accepted the position of President of the hospital's newly-formed Foundation. Deborah joined the hospital's executive team

in mid-January and heads up development efforts for the organization.

Deborah and her family are most recently from Rhinebeck, N.Y., where she served as the Executive Director of Northern Dutchess Hospital Foundation for the past 13 years. In that position, she launched the foundation in its newly-defined role as the dedicated fundraising arm for Northern Dutchess Hospital and its affiliate, The Thompson House Residential Care Facility. Prior to that, Deborah spent two years at The Foundation for Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

"Deborah's experience and skill set are really well suited to our needs," says AVH CEO Dave Ressler. "In addition to having expertise starting a foundation — much like we're doing here now — she has worked extensively with capital campaigns, major gift cultivation, annual giving, special events, and grateful patient programs. We're very excited to have her on board."

With a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and experience in marketing and strategic planning, along with a love of everything outdoors, Deborah is certain to find her niche in Aspen. "I fell in love with Aspen and the hospital on my very first visit. I knew this was an incredible opportunity in an incredible community. When I returned with my husband and we discussed a potential move with our two children, we were all convinced this was where we wanted to be," says Deborah.

Deborah plans to spend her first few months getting to know the community, organizing a new foundation board, and creating a comprehensive development program to include implementation of a major capital campaign in support of the final two phases of the hospital expansion and renovation project. She can be reached at **544.1303** or DBreen@aspenhospital.org.

Calendar of Events

"Matters of the Heart" Heart Health Screening

Wednesday, February 13
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

After-Hours Medical Care
234 Cody Lane, Basalt
Call **544.1296** for
more information.

Community Blood Drive

Tuesday, March 5
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Mobile Donor Van
Aspen Valley Hospital
Call **970.244.2555**
for information.

Heartsaver CPR

Thursday, March 28
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Call **544.1235** for
information/registration.