

NORTHERN NEVADA'S

MAGAZINE

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

2026

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**PRIMARY CHOICE HEALTH  
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**ELITE HEALTH  
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Comprehensive Care for  
Men and Women in Elko

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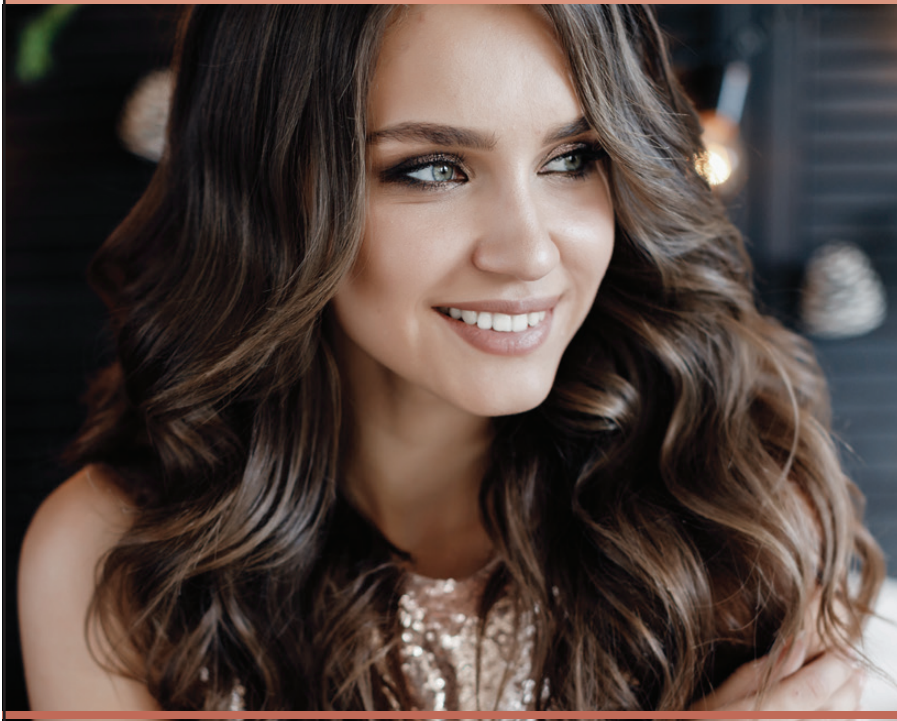
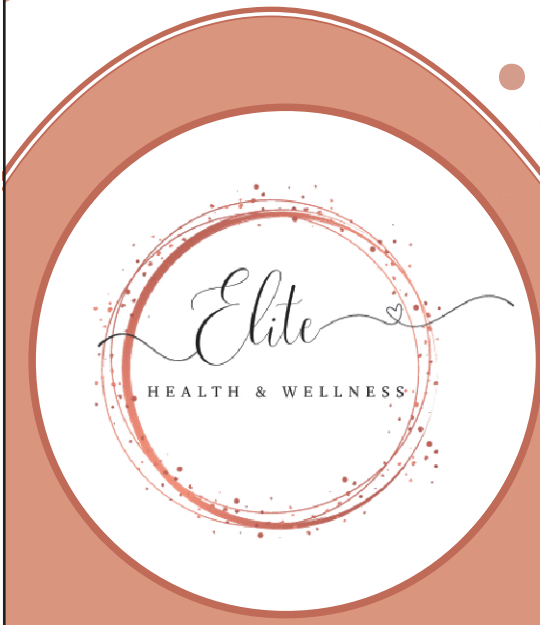
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# HEALTH & WELLNESS

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# After series of delays, **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT** FINALLY OPENS

## STAFF REPORT

ELKO — Months after it was scheduled to open, the behavioral health unit at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital has accepted its first patients and is fully operational.

The first patient was admitted in September, and the hospital said the specialty unit has room for 16 patients.

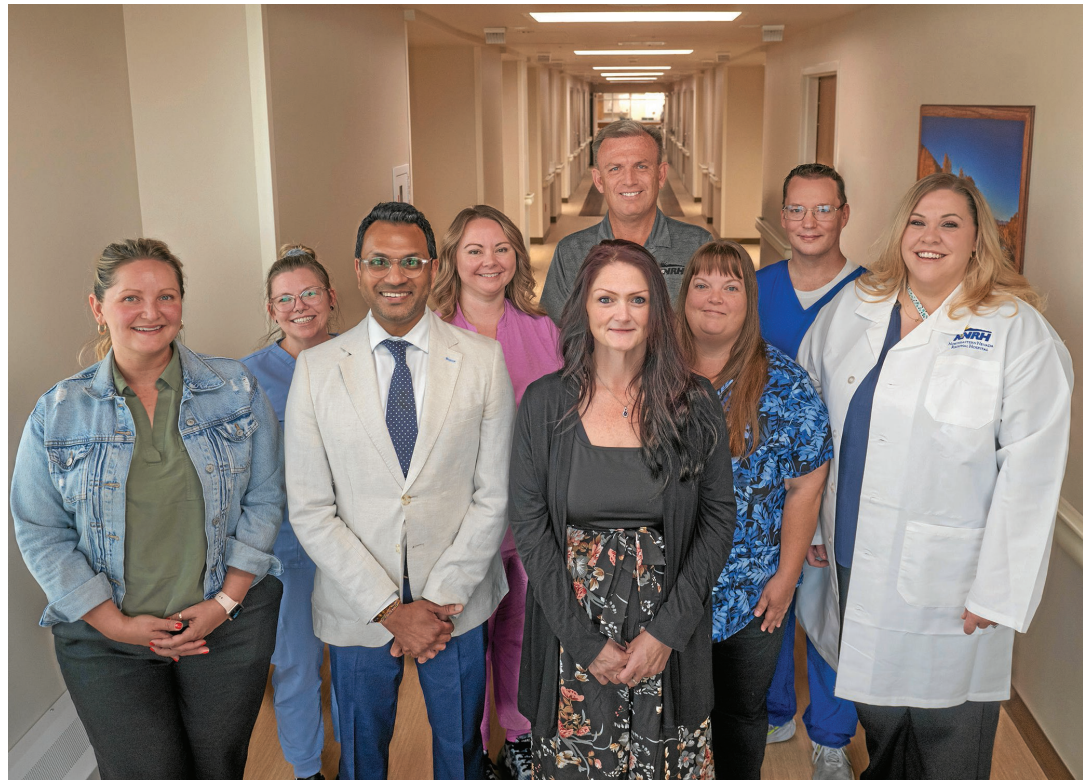
A hospital spokesperson couldn't get into details of that admission or others due to privacy concerns, but said in general the behavioral health unit treats a variety of mental-health issues including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, irritability and agitation, suicidal or homicidal ideation, trauma and PTSD, personality disorders and psychosis.

The behavioral health unit was scheduled to open in January. Its dedication was months earlier in November 2024. But since then, it was delayed several times due to construction issues as a wing on the hospital's third floor was remodeled into the new unit, which took extensive work adding electronics and security features.

The unit was further delayed by "regulatory inspections," the hospital said in a statement on Tuesday.

"We are very pleased the unit is now open to receive patients," Steve Simpson, the hospital's chief executive, said. "This process took longer than we anticipated, but we're happy to now be providing this vital service to our community. We really have a great team in the BHU, and they've been eager to get to work."

A week after its dedication in November, Elko City Council



Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital's behavioral health unit team members stand in the patient hallway in June. Left of center is psychiatrist Dr. Janaka Sarathchandra and at the far right is mental health nurse practitioner Jessica Van Valkenburg.

*"We anticipate admitting our first patient to the behavioral health unit by the end of August."*

**STEVE BURROWS,**  
Director of communications

members approved a revised distribution policy and agreed to release its promised \$500,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to the hospital. The move was days before federal ARPA funding was set to expire.



Steve Simpson, CEO of Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, speaks at the dedication of the inpatient behavioral health unit on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024.



**Above:** Rex Mitchell, director of materials management at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, shows off a patient room in the under-construction behavioral health unit on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024.

**Left:** Rex Mitchell, director of materials management at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, escorts a tour through the incomplete hallway of the under-construction behavioral health unit on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024.

Delays to the unit were frequent points of discussion city and county meetings, with Simpson saying at one point the unit would open a week after it received its final state approval and certificate of occupancy in May.

“We will get it going as soon as we possibly can, probably by

Monday,” he said in late May at a county health board meeting, noting the unit’s staff was “itching to take care of their first patient” so he expects “the first patient will be overwhelmed with love. We are excited for this to finally take fruition.”

But a couple days later, the

hospital said, “While we do not have a definitive opening date, we are completing final preparations and anticipate admitting our first patient to the unit in early June.”

Then, in late August, the hospital said it expected to open by the end of that month.

“We anticipate admitting our

first patient to the behavioral health unit by the end of August,” Steve Burrows, director of communications for the hospital, said. “The unit faced delays with permitting and licensure. However, we have fulfilled all regulatory

► see *Opening*, page 8



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RENDERED FLOOR PATTERN



Work continues in the behavioral health unit's hallway, which has wires, hoses and pipes visible during construction.



An artist's rendering of the hallway of the behavioral health unit shows it will be brightly lit using calm colors.

Floor plan of the behavioral health unit at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital.

**Opening** *continued from page 7*

requirements, and the unit is now ready to open.”

The behavioral health unit’s medical team consists of Janaka Sarathchandra, a board-certified psychiatrist; Jessica Van Valkenburg, a board-certified psychiatric

mental health nurse practitioner; and nurses, social workers, therapists and support staff.

“All of us are here for the patient,” Van Valkenburg said in the news release. “The reason we come to work each day is to help people when they need us most. We’re able to provide them with

support and stabilization when they maybe feel like they can’t go on. Then we’re able to help them develop a plan to move forward toward wellness.”

Van Valkenburg described how treatment plans differ from patient to patient based on each individual’s unique situation.

“Every person who comes to us has a different story and a different set of needs. So, we work with them to find the right treatment options,” Van Valkenburg explained. “While medication might be helpful, so might art

➤ see *Opening*, page 40



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# Elite Health & Wellness: Comprehensive Care for Men and Women in Elko

At Elite Health & Wellness, care extends well beyond traditional office visits. The clinic provides primary care for the whole family, while also offering a wide range of advanced wellness and aesthetic services designed to support both health and confidence at every stage of life.

Medical-grade aesthetic treatments are a key part of the clinic's integrated approach. Advanced body and facial contouring options include InMode BodyTite and FaceTite, which offer minimally invasive solutions for skin tightening, body contouring, and facial rejuvenation, as well as Quantum technology, designed to contour the body without liposuction. Morpheus radiofrequency microneedling is used to improve skin texture, firmness, and overall tone, while CO<sub>2</sub> skin resurfacing—both ablative and non-ablative—addresses deeper skin concerns.

Additional laser-based services include intense pulsed light (IPL) treatments for age spots, acne, and scar reduction, along with laser hair removal. Women's wellness services include Empower radiofrequency vaginal rejuvenation and bladder incontinence treatment, while men's health offerings include shockwave therapy for erectile dysfunction, all provided within a medical setting.

Elite Health & Wellness also offers medical weight loss programs, IV therapy for overall wellness optimization, and advanced hormone replacement therapy for both women

and men, supporting energy, metabolism, and long-term vitality. Injectable services such as neurotoxins (including Botox), dermal fillers, and skin boosters are performed by trained medical professionals to ensure natural, balanced results.

Complementing these medical services, the clinic's advanced esthetics offerings include microneedling with or without PRP, microdermabrasion, specialty facials, and professional-grade skincare, allowing patients to maintain and enhance results through customized care plans.

Together, these services reflect a growing shift toward comprehensive, patient-centered care—where medical treatment, wellness, and aesthetics are thoughtfully connected rather than treated separately.



JANELL ANDERSON, L  
 ELIZABETH SABO, CPC  
 CYNDI ARNETT, CPC  
 HEATHER HOOD, CPC  
 ANTONIA ROMAN, CSW



Sherry Irons, from left, overdose victim Shanell Martin's grandmother; Tanya Harris, her mother; and Stacey Cooper, father of the victim's unborn child, speak at the dedication ceremony of Narcan distribution boxes on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko.

# HONORING VICTIMS



A tabletop memorial honors Shanell Martin and her unborn child with decorations the overdose victim enjoyed, including butterflies, stuffed animals and pink hearts.

**KEITH KOHN**  
 KKOHN@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — The tables held flowers, butterfly cutouts, feathers, dreamcatchers and photos of two Elko residents who perished in recent months due to drug overdoses — deaths that could have been prevented if the rescue medication Narcan had been administered quickly enough.

Behind those tables were piles of boxes holding Narcan, the brand name for the medication naloxone hydrochloride, as well as two gift-wrapped distribution

boxes that would make Narcan available for free to anyone in need of the life-saving treatment.

About three dozen people were on hand on Jan. 31, 2026, as two newspaper-like distribution boxes were unveiled in honor of Samuel Johnny, 23, a member of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone's Elko Band; and Shanell Martin, 35, and her unborn child Armani Cooper.

Speakers included Johnny's and Martin's mothers, as well as the unborn child's grandmother and father.

PHOTOS KEITH KOHN, KKOHN@ELKODAILY.COM



Members of the Elko community gather for a dedication ceremony of Narcan distribution boxes on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko in honor of two drug overdose victims.



Sharon Bachman of NV Support Solutions, from left, Darcy Patterson and Kathie Carstairs, both of Wake Up Nevada, begin a dedication on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko in honor of two drug overdose victims.

The project in Elko was coordinated by the nonprofit NV Support Solutions, which was founded by Brett Badger, a reformed addict and convicted drug trafficker, and his mother Sharon Bachman. Board member Melissa Moore transports the medication to Elko from Las Vegas. They received support

— and the distribution boxes — from Darcy Patterson and Kathie Carstairs, president and vice president of Wake Up Nevada in Reno, who provide similar boxes there.

The ceremony was held under blue skies and warming temperatures outside of LifeQuest Elko, 1515 7th St., whose owner, Janell

Anderson, is providing space for one of the distribution boxes. The other likely will be placed outside of the Te-Moak smoke shop at 1750 Silver Eagle Road, off Ruby Vista Drive. Elko Band chairperson Raquel Yopez said at the event the full band council would first have to approve the placement.

Patterson said Wake Up Nevada started in 2020, “and it was because my daughter died of a heroin overdose in Idlewild Park in Reno in her car, all by herself, and she was 21 and it was her birthday. So that rocked my life. My world changed as I knew it, so I had to do something.”

She and Carstairs, who also lost family members to drugs, launched the group with the goal of saving lives “so not another mother has to feel like we feel, not another father.”

The groups dedicate the Narcan boxes to drug overdose victims, Patterson said, so those victims “carry on.”

“But not just their memory. The fact that they’re saving other lives with the Narcan boxes. We don’t know who we touch. We don’t know who gets Narcan and who shares it with others, but we know what’s happening and it’s working. And we know it’s effective. And there are lives being saved. And we’re grateful for that.”

Jennifer Cooper spoke to the crowd about Martin’s unborn child.

“Shanell was carrying my first grandson. And I was so excited. And through losing Shanell and watching the grief ... I like to stop and think that there’s something good that will come out of it,” she said.

When told of Saturday’s event, Cooper said she cried. “I didn’t cry tears of sorrow, but I cried tears of joy because I’ve been asking myself ... what’s the solution?”

She said she didn’t know what she had until it was gone.

“Fentanyl took something away from me that I never had, but I have inside,” Cooper said. “And, as a teacher, as a mother, as a friend, as a mentor to many teachers, I really do feel that as a member of Elko County — I

► see *Narcan*, page 12

*“If it saves one life, one life, that can maybe ... then it’ll be worth it for Shanell and it will be worth it for Johnny.”*

SHERRY IRONS

live in Spring Creek — I don’t see what people in Elko see. But, I now see it and I now feel it.

“And so as that, as a citizen of Elko County, we do have a responsibility to each other. To educate ourselves.”

She said she and her daughter were in Portland, Oregon, and observed a homeless man being treated with Narcan. “And that hit me in a sense that I was like, ‘I need to educate myself. We need to educate ourselves because you never know.’ You might be walking through the grocery store. And somebody falls in front of you. And now, I’m at the point where I’m like, I need to carry one in my purse just in case. And I’m not saying go out and be hyper vigilant, but we need to be educated and we can share that education.”

Sherry Irons, Martin’s grandmother, and Tanya Harris, the young woman’s mother, spoke together, also standing with Stacey Cooper, father of the unborn child, Armani.

Irons said she isn’t as eloquent as Jennifer Cooper. She said she was mad at her granddaughter, though she still misses and loves her.

“But I just think it’s a crying shame. That this happens in every city. Every small community. Every neighborhood. And



The tabletop memorial for Samuel Johnny included red hearts, feathers, dreamcatchers and other items he enjoyed.



Overdose victim Samuel Johnny’s mother Annie, left, speaks at the dedication ceremony of Narcan distribution boxes on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko in honor of her son and Shanell Martin, who both overdosed in 2025.

people pass it over. There’s no greater love than a mother for her daughter. And we all have our bugaboos. We all have our addictions. If there was a magic pill, we’d all take it. But there’s not,” Irons said. “I don’t know what the answer is, but I think this is a step in the right direction.”

She praised the various organizations and their leaders for the work spent to get the distribution boxes and free Narcan into Elko.

“If it saves one life, one life, that can maybe ... then it’ll be worth it for Shanell and it will be worth it for Johnny.”

Harris said she discovered her

daughter after the overdose.

“When I found Shanell, I didn’t know what to do. And I knew, she showed me where her Narcan was, but I didn’t even know how to use it, and so I threw it to Stacey because I didn’t know what to do. I had no idea even how to use it. And

he tried to and it didn't work because it was too late," she said.

She suggested the organizations offer demonstrations that show people how to administer Narcan. "I didn't know what to do with it. I had no idea."

Johnny's mother, Annie, spoke about her son and her anger.

"Samuel is my baby. Sept. 29th, fentanyl took my son," she said. "I always say hate is a strong, strong word for me. And for my boys. Use it lightly. But I absolutely hate, hate fentanyl and all and people who are bringing it around."

"I always, when Sammy was going through his addiction, I always prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let my son die of an overdose in the middle of the road, alongside the road out in the field in a ditch somewhere, alone.'"

She said he died at home, but Narcan was administered too late to revive him.

"I do want everybody to know that my son, he had the best smile. He never judged anybody. He had friends from young to old, all nationalities. He never judged. His laugh will always live on in me," she said. "Thank you all for being here, for having this come about. Our community is really suffering with this and I



Jennifer Cooper, grandmother to the unborn child of drug overdose victim Shanell Martin, speaks about how Narcan could help save lives.

know it will save lives."

After the heartfelt speeches, the families of both victims cut the ribbons and unveiled the boxes that will distribute Narcan for free to anyone who needs it.

Other collaborators on the distribution boxes include the Elko Band Council, Body, Mind and Soul Support Solutions; and Life Changes in Reno.

Keith Kohn is editor of the Elko Daily Free Press. Reach him at [kkohn@elkodaily.com](mailto:kkohn@elkodaily.com).



Two boxes that will provide the life-saving medication Narcan to anyone in need were dedicated on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko in honor of two drug overdose victims.

## FREE NARCAN BOXES: 5 THINGS TO KNOW

### 1. Free Narcan is now available in Elko.

Two newspaper-style distribution boxes filled with Narcan, a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses, were unveiled Saturday and will provide the medication free to anyone who needs it.

### 2. The boxes honor overdose victims from the community.

The project is dedicated to Samuel Johnny, 23, of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone's Elko Band, and Shanell Martin, 35, along with her unborn child, Armani Cooper. Family members spoke about their losses and the hope that the boxes will save lives.

### 3. Local and statewide nonprofits made the project possible.

The effort was coordinated by NV Support Solutions, with support from

Wake Up Nevada in Reno, which has placed similar Narcan boxes across the state. Volunteers transported the medication from Las Vegas to Elko.

### 4. Where the Narcan boxes will be located.

One box is placed outside LifeQuest Elko at 1515 7th St. The second is expected to be installed near the Te-Moak smoke shop at 1750 Silver Eagle Road, pending approval from the Elko Band Council.

### 5. Families stress education is just as important as access.

Speakers emphasized that Narcan must be used quickly and correctly to work. One mother said she had Narcan available but did not know how to use it in time, calling for public demonstrations and better education on overdose response. —Staff Report



Cartons holding boxes of Narcan were on display at a dedication ceremony of distribution boxes for the life-saving medication on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, outside LifeQuest Elko in honor of two drug overdose victims.

# School nurses keep busy this year with thousands of student cases

**ADELLA HARDING**  
ELKO DAILY CORRESPONDENT

ELKO — School nurses see sick children and children with chronic conditions, but also conduct additional health-screening and health projects throughout the Elko County School District and provide first aid skills.

In the current school year, nurses have handled 12,511 illness or injury office visits through Dec. 17, 2025, with 184 of them leading to referrals to medical providers. They also provided 5,787 scheduled medication administrations, 4,209 medical procedures and 1,843 follow-ups with families, according to district statistics.

The nurses additionally kept their eyes on 48 students with type 1 diabetes, 108 children with life-threatening allergies, 257 students with asthma, 50 children with seizures, 26 with cardiac conditions and 123 with other conditions, a presentation to school trustees showed.

Nurse Skylar Basanez, who is the new district school nurse coordinator following the retirement of Bobbi Shanks, said the “other” conditions can include cerebral palsy and cystic fibrosis, for example.

“We provide direct care for emergent episodic and chronic physical and mental-health needs,” Basanez said, adding nurses collaborate with medical providers and parents to meet students’ needs.

Trustee Teresa Dashrup said there are students in the district with “incredible challenges.”

Basanez and Cami Carr are the two district nurses remaining with the recent retirement of Shanks. Her position is being cut through attrition, spokeswoman



Nurses Skylar Basanez, left, and Cami Carr make a presentation at the Elko County School District Board of Trustees meeting on Jan. 6.

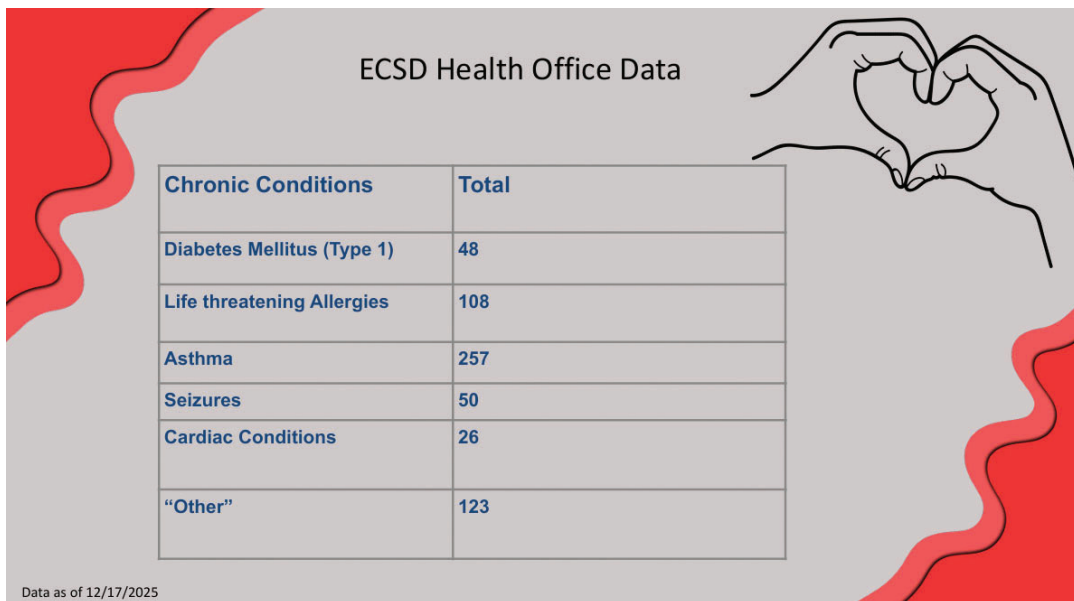


Chart shows some conditions treated by school nurses in Elko County.

Kayla Church confirmed in an email. Shanks is retiring after more than a dozen years with the district.

In addition to the two remaining nurses, there are 17 school nurses throughout the district, Church said.

They conducted 4,732 vision screenings this school year, through Dec. 17, with 844 referrals to providers, and Basanez

said in answer to a question from Trustee Susan Neal the nurses follow up on referrals for glasses.

Nurses also did 3,102 hearing screenings, with 16 referrals, and 985 growth screenings. The growth screenings are for state data, so there are no referrals. They also have done 116 scoliosis screenings of seventh graders.

Projects at different schools vary and the slide presentation

highlighted examples, such as cardiac emergency response education at Spring Creek Middle School in a partnership with a project to achieve a Heart Safe School designation and strengthen life-saving response readiness.

Staff at Spring Creek Middle School also received expanded cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, and Stop the Bleed

training and the pilot Project Marilyn is at that school as well.

Project Marilyn in partnership with Communities in Schools provides feminine products for students; There also is a Project Marilyn at Flag View Intermediate School.

“It comes with dispensers,” Basanez said, and she reminded trustees that state statute requires schools to provide feminine products for those in need.

Another project at Flag View is Level Up4 Health with North-eastern Nevada Regional Hospital, Nevada Health Centers, Kinross Mining Corp., Communities in Schools and other community partners, Basanez said in her presentation to trustees.

Adobe Middle School also offered Stop the Bleed certification and she told trustees the program teaches students how to stop bleeding. She said that is “always a fun class to do with kids.” Students at Adobe also learn about the nursing profession.

Mountain View Elementary School has a partnership with Nevada Health Centers for dental screenings, fluoride varnish, dental sealants, and retention checks and there was a special training camp in the school year.



Through a grant from the American Heart Association and the National Football League, all students experienced the Raiders Junior Training Camp, which was a day filled with physical activity and heart health education, according to the slide presentation.

At Wells, the district partnered with MedX, Elko County Dispatch, the local volunteer fire department and school resource officer for an emergency drill led by staff and students.


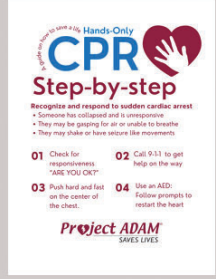

“I believe they had a helicopter land that day for them,” Basanez said.

At West Wendover Elementary School, 12 people were certified to do CPR, there were 348 vision screenings, 150 hearing

## Spring Creek Middle School





- Project Marilyn Pilot**  
 Partnership with **Communities In Schools (CIS)** to help end period poverty, reducing barriers to student attendance and learning.
- Cardiac Emergency Response**  
 Partnership in progress with **Project ADAM** to achieve Heart Safe School designation and strengthen life-saving response readiness.
- Staff Emergency Response Training**  
 Expanded CPR and Stop the Bleed training increases staff capacity to respond quickly and effectively during medical emergencies.







Health programs at Spring Creek Middle School include Project Marilyn pilot, cardiac emergency response and staff emergency-response training, plus CPR training.

## West Wendover Elementary



- CPR members certified 12.
- 348 vision screenings completed
- 150 hearing screenings completed
- Collaborated with the fire department to teach fire safety to the 3rd graders. This will be our 3rd year presenting this class
- Chronic illness education and training
- Member of Wellness committee for staff and students

Numerous events involving school nurses and the local fire department have been held at West Wendover Elementary School.

screenings, and there was collaboration with the West Wendover Fire Department to teach fire safety to third graders for the third year in a row, according to a slide.

Other projects this school year include hygiene education for third and fourth grade and airway and dental screenings and dental and airway education led by Michelle Mahlke at Spring Creek Elementary School.

Basanez said nurses have specialties that they bring to the schools.

The outgoing board president, Matt McCarty, praised the nurses

for their creativity, while Trustee Joshua Byers had questions about the nursing department’s finances in his continuing effort to keep an eye on costs. Trustee Jeff Durham is the new school board president.

Byers questioned funds budgeted for nursing supplies, such as medications for asthma attacks and allergy attacks, remarking \$18,000 is “a huge amount” for EpiPens.

Basanez said usually they obtain the epinephrine pens for allergy attacks for free, but the free program was “backed up,”

and expiration dates led to the decision to buy the pens.

She told the board the school district maintains emergency supplies of EpiPens, albuterol inhalers and Narcan. Narcan is for drug opioid overdoses.

Students with allergies or asthma usually carry their own medication, but they are kids and forget, Basanez said.

“I also have reservations about how big a pharmacy does a school district need,” Byers said.

McCarty said the district “clearly has health concerns, and we are mandated to address that.”

# Access to mental health care expands in Northeastern Nevada

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

CARLIN — Mental health services in rural Nevada have become more accessible in recent years through insurance coverage, telehealth and around-the-clock crisis response teams, two licensed clinical social workers told residents at a public discussion at the Carlin Municipal Courthouse recently.

Michelle Sandoval, a licensed clinical social worker with more than 20 years of experience in Nevada, and Aimee Fitch, a Nevada clinical social worker who specializes in rural communities, spoke on Wednesday about options available to residents who may struggle to access care because of distance, cost or stigma.

Sandoval said a major shift occurred about five years ago, when mental health services were formally recognized as medical services for insurance purposes.

“Thankfully, mental health services were identified as medical services, so insurance does cover any mental health services just like they would medical appointments,” Sandoval said. She said co-pays typically range from \$20 to \$40, with insurance covering the remainder, including psychiatric hospitalization when necessary.

Telehealth has also expanded access to specialized care that was once limited to urban areas, Sandoval said.

“I really highly suggest somebody looking for mental health services to go online and do a Google search for telehealth services in Nevada,” she said. “There are some amazing specialists that maybe specialize in trauma or PTSD or bipolar that we now have access to in Vegas because



There are several ways to access mental health services in Northeastern Nevada.



The Nevada Health Centers office provides many forms of medical services, including pharmacy.

of telehealth.”

Sandoval said many providers offer appointments during lunch hours, making care more accessible for working adults.

Fitch highlighted free crisis-response services available to rural residents, including Children’s Mobile Crisis services and the adult Immediate Care Team.

“Our rural Children’s Mobile Crisis and our adult Immediate Care Team — those are 24/7 hotlines that can be used by anyone, and they’re no cost to individuals using the programs,” Fitch said.

Licensed clinicians are on call seven days a week to respond to crisis situations or help individuals manage difficult periods, Fitch said. Case management services are also available to help people connect with ongoing care.

Sandoval emphasized that a mental health crisis does not have to involve immediate danger.

“Crisis is defined by the individual,” she said. “It doesn’t have to be suicidal, it doesn’t have to be homicidal, it doesn’t have to be an active psychotic episode. If someone is so sad that they’re having a hard time getting out of bed, that

*“Thankfully, mental health services were identified as medical services, so insurance does cover any mental health services just like they would medical appointments.”*

**MICHELLE SANDOVAL,**  
Licensed clinical social worker

could be a crisis to them.”

Fitch said early intervention can help prevent more serious situations, especially for children.

“Your child’s being bullied at school and you just don’t know where to turn,” she said. “Let us help intervene before it gets to that imminent danger situation.”

According to the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, local mental health and substance abuse providers in the area include Acadian Wellness, Allegiant Care Nevada, Balanced Mental Wellness, Christian Anderson, Elko Family Wellness Center, Golden Health Family Medical Center, Hopsage Psychological Services, LifeQuest, Nevada Health Centers, Prevail Behavioral Health, Ruby Mountain Recovery, Rural Clinic Elko, Solution Focused Counseling, The Lilly, Unalome Counseling and Vitality.

Telehealth providers available to Nevada residents include Nevada Virtual Counseling, Blue Skies Psychological Services, Connections Behavioral Health, Pacific Behavioral Health, United Citizen’s Foundation, Your Choice Behavioral Health, Vitality and Well Heard Counseling.



The Nevada Health Centers behavioral health team includes, from left, Sylina Holmes, licensed clinical social worker; Dolly Alejandro-Wilson, the behavioral health case coordinator; and Lisa Pacheco, social services coordinator.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY NEVADA HEALTH CENTERS

# Mental health cases cause havoc, add expenses at Elko County Jail

**ADELLA HARDING**  
ELKO DAILY CORRESPONDENT

ELKO — The Elko County Sheriff's Office regularly deals with mental health issues among inmates at the Elko County Jail and suicides across the county. Domestic violence calls that are on the rise.

Sheriff Aitor Narvaiza said at the January Elko County Board of Health meeting inmates with major mental health issues "are always hurting deputies," running around naked and "they have no clue where they are at, let alone what they are being arrested for."

He also told the board of health, which is comprised of himself, county commissioners and Dr. Bryce Putnam, who is chairman, inmates with mental issues are sometimes spend months in jail until a bed opens for them at a state facility.

Elko County had been taking inmates to the Lakes Crossings mental hospital near Reno, but now must take them to the Muri Stein Hospital in Las Vegas, the sheriff said.

Narvaiza said the trip to Las Vegas costs more in overtime pay because deputies put in 16 to 17 hours to go there and return and they sometimes must stay in a motel because of road conditions.

"One guy has been waiting six or seven months to get into the facility," he said.

Narvaiza said these inmates may be in jail because of a misdemeanor but can't be released because they must be deemed competent to stand trial.

The jail has a medical staff, but the mentally disturbed inmates need the treatment that can be provided at a state hospital. Then, once they are treated, go to court and are released, they stop taking



Elko County Commissioner Delmo Andreozzi, also a health board member, said at Wednesday's meeting the crisis "is getting worse and worse."

*"This is something that is getting worse and worse."*

**DELMO ANDREOZZI,**  
Board member and Commissioner

their meds and "we're back in the same boat," he said.

"We just deal with it. I've got a great staff," the sheriff told the board.

There are 130 inmates in the jail, and "we have a whole block just with mental health people," Narvaiza said.

"This is something that is getting worse and worse," board member and Commissioner Delmo Andreozzi said.

The sheriff also said the problems with mental health issues among inmates is a nationwide crisis and "everyone is in the same boat."

Narvaiza also said most of the mental health issues at the jail are drug-related and he said fentanyl seizures to slow the drug trade can lead to more crime because people are more desperate "to get that fix."

Justice of the Peace Randall Soderquist told the health board there is "just a big backlog" in

court-mandated evaluations for court cases.

The inmates with several mental health issues have warrants out on them, so they can't be patients at the new behavioral health unit at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, but the unit is busy.

Steve Burrows, the hospital's spokesperson, said there have been 90 patients treated since the unit opened in September and these are people who would otherwise have been transferred hundreds of miles from Elko for treatment.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Undersheriff Justin Ames told Elko County commissioners this week "numbers are trending up for domestics and mental health calls, especially suicides," estimating there were about 400 domestic violence calls in 2025.

There were 381 domestic violence calls in 2024. Final figures for 2025 weren't yet available.

Domestic violence can quickly escalate, Ames said.

Regarding suicides, he said there were three suicides over the past weekend and there are 20 to 30 calls a day each on suicide ideation and domestic violence.

He asked commissioners to help spread the word about the

suicide hotline, 988, that helps people contemplating suicide, and Andreozzi said the success rate for 988 calls is over 90%.

Elko County Manager Amanda Osborne said the county has public health funds that could be used to advertise the 988 suicide help line.

"We are crime fighters, not social workers," Ames said, also telling commissioners that deputies carry cards highlighting places to call for help, like Zero Suicide, and the sheriff's office "will help in any way we can."

He said there also are efforts to erase the stigma of mental health issues or suicidal thoughts.

"We're telling people that everyone hits bad points in their lives," Ames said.

Also, at the health board meeting on Wednesday, Putnam said Elko County will follow what happens with the Rural Health Transformation Grant coming to Nevada. The state will get \$180 million the first year of the five-year, \$50 billion federal program and is forming a steering committee.

Andreozzi said he has put his name in the hat to be appointed to the state's steering committee, but hasn't heard whether he's been selected.

The \$180 million doesn't go to Clark and Washoe counties but all of the other counties in the state, and Commissioner Rex Steninger said if split equally, each county would receive \$12 million per year.

"That's a lot of money," he said, stating the challenge will be to invest the money so it doesn't disappear.

Putnam said Elko County's priority for the money will be to recruit and keep medical providers.

# Nursing group helps in domestic violence, sex assault cases

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

CARLIN — Staff from the Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing, a nonprofit that has operated out of Elko since 2020, spoke recently at a community resources meeting at the Carlin Municipal Courthouse about the organization's work providing forensic medical care and advocacy to survivors of violence across rural Nevada.

Norah Lusk, a sexual assault nurse examiner and the organization's director of nursing and education, said the institute was founded to address gaps in care for patients who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, strangulation or abuse — particularly in rural communities.

"We started up our company because we have a lot of patients that come through, especially the emergency department, who have been assaulted or abused," Lusk said. "We found a great need for services."

Lusk said survivors are often referred first to hotlines, which connect them with advocates but not always with specialized medical professionals qualified to conduct forensic exams. In rural Nevada, she said, distance and lack of transportation can prevent people from receiving care at all.

To address that, the organization operates an office in Elko and two mobile units, including a van equipped as a clinic, allowing staff to travel directly to patients.

"Being in a small rural area, we didn't want to just stay with Elko," Lusk said. "We wanted to be able to help anyone in rural areas, so we came up with a wrap-around service."

Lusk said the institute has served patients from across the state, including Winnemucca,

Lovelock, Ely and Owyhee.

"One of the biggest barriers is that many people don't have the time, the mental capacity in that moment of trauma, the finances or the ability to drive all the way to Elko," she said. "So they call us, and we can go to them."

Cynthia Milligan-Lusk, the institute's director of forensic interviewing, said the organization provides ongoing support beyond medical exams, including help with relocation, medical bills, counseling referrals, food assistance and safety planning.

"We stay with them from the time that they walk through our doors until they no longer want or need us anymore," Milligan-Lusk said.

The institute conducts forensic interviews for both adults and children, which are recorded and admissible in court. Milligan-Lusk said that process can reduce the need for survivors, especially children, to repeatedly recount traumatic experiences.

"It allows for a lot of our littles not to have to face their perpetrator in person," she said, adding that staff often testify in court on behalf of child survivors.

Both Lusk and Milligan-Lusk received adult forensic interview training through the Texas Institute of Forensic Nursing, which emphasizes allowing survivors to tell their stories in their own words rather than through rapid yes-or-no questioning.

"We listen to their story, everything they want to say," Milligan-Lusk said. "Then we go back and fill in narrative details."

She said interviews conclude with neutral or positive conversation to help survivors leave in a more regulated emotional state.

"It's nothing like what you see on TV," Milligan-Lusk said.



Norah Lusk and Cynthia Milligan-Lusk from Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing speak at the Carlin Municipal Courthouse on Jan. 7, 2025.

*"We try to call them survivors and not victims."*

CYNTHIA MILLIGAN-LUSK

"These cases get drawn out. Evidence doesn't get done in 24 hours. There is a process."

During that time, she said, staff continue to follow up with survivors, often within 24 to 48 hours of the initial exam, to help connect them with therapy and other resources.

Lusk said the institute also partners with local hotels and motels to provide safe housing for people fleeing domestic violence and supplies medications during exams so survivors do not have to visit a pharmacy.

The organization also offers bedside testing for sexually transmitted infections, with results

available in about 30 minutes.

"That's huge," Lusk said.

Carlin Justice of the Peace Brandy Holbrook said the institute's services can be especially important for adult survivors who are not yet able to leave unsafe situations.

"They can get the forensic interview and the evidence collected," Holbrook said. "Then a safety plan might be put in place, and the mobile units can come back. No one would know it's a hospital room inside — it's literally the ER on wheels."

Milligan-Lusk said all services provided by the Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing are free.

"We try to call them survivors and not victims," she said. "By the time they're able to go out on their own and navigate, we want them to feel like survivors."

The Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing hotline is 775-401-3936.

# State touts progress in 988 hotline performance

APRIL CORBIN GIRNUS  
NEVADA CURRENT

Nevada's 988 call centers are helping tens of thousands of people each year and state administrators are already eyeing ways to improve the system in the upcoming years.

Shannon Bennett, a bureau chief within the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, told lawmakers that since the nation switched to 988 from a 10-digit suicide crisis hotline, there has been an "almost 100% increase" in utilization.

Nearly 42,000 people in Nevada were served by 988 in 2024, according to a state memo. In 2025, Nevada's 988 call centers had already exceeded that number by the end of November.

"We have seen tremendous growth," said Bennett, "and we have a lot more to bring to the table as we move forward into 2026."

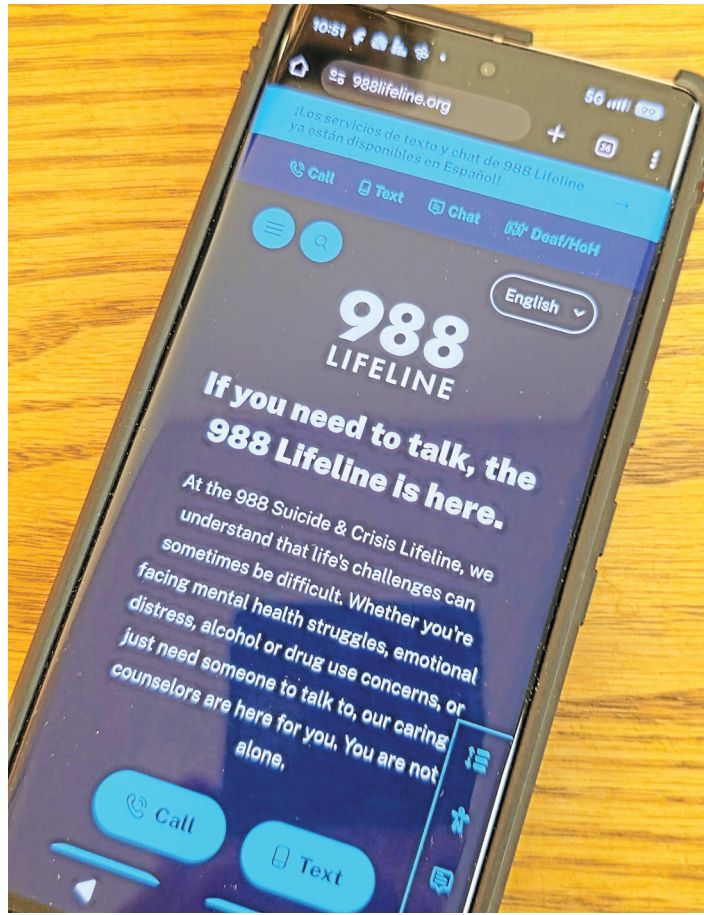
Nevada has made significant progress in raising its in-state answer rate and reducing the amount it takes callers to reach a person. In 2023, Nevada's hotline had among the lowest answer rates in the country.

That's no longer the case.

According to 988 data reports, in November 2025, 4,070 calls were routed to Nevada call centers and 3,525 were answered, resulting in an 87% answer rate. (Calls not answered in state are routed to national call centers.) It took 31.9 seconds on average for the calls to be answered, and conversations lasted an average of 20 minutes.

The state's monthly average answer rate has ranged from 73% to 89% in 2025.

Nevada supports its 988 call centers through a 35-cent monthly surcharge on phone lines billed in



The 988 system is improving in Nevada, where in November the answer rate was 87%.

the state. That fee is set in statute and was approved by state lawmakers in 2023.

Assemblymember Joe Dalia, a Democrat from Las Vegas, asked whether the revenue from that fee is sufficient to cover the hotline's operating expenses.

Bennett responded that the state's current 988 contract costs \$1 million to \$2 million a year more than what the 35-cent fee brings in annually. However, the hotline has funding and reserves to cover the current contract, which runs through 2028.

"Once we get to the end of the contract, or as we start to renegotiate whatever's going to be next,

we're going to have to keep that in mind," she said.

The state may be able to take advantage of Medicaid funding matches.

The state will also have to consider whether it wants to improve the hotline's functionality and add things that it declined to add during the initial setup. That includes fully integrating the 988 system with 911 and 211, the state's referral services focused on social services.

"We want that interoperability with 911, so I think as we move forward we may have to prioritize what is most important to us," Bennett said.

Behavioral health calls inundate

## HOTLINE

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling or texting 988 or by visiting 988Lifeline.org. Conversations are free and confidential.

911 and the long-term goal is for such calls to be seamlessly dispatched to 988. Technology to connect those systems exists, though the state of Nevada has so far not opted to pay for it, Bennett said.

Mental health advocates have long argued that law enforcement officers are not always the proper people to respond to behavioral health crises in the community.

"We are doing a lot of work, and we have a lot more work to do, to really fully integrate the mobile crisis teams," Bennett said. "So, if it is law enforcement responding, perhaps they have a clinician and a peer with them, so then those individuals in the community that may be in crisis are being de-escalated right there and getting the resources they need."

The Division of Public and Behavioral Health's 988 update came last week during a meeting of the Interim Finance Committee. DPBH appeared in front of the money committee to request approval of a transfer of reserve funding to cover costs associated with the hotline's Southern Nevada call center, which is run by Caramel Behavioral Health.

The Southern Nevada call center opened last year. Prior to that, the only call center was in Reno.

Nationwide, the lifeline has answered more than 13 million calls, texts and chats since launching in July 2022. Demand for assistance has continued to grow.



# Haven at Home provides non-medical assistance to homebound clients

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Haven at Home has been in business in the Elko area for over a year, providing living assistance services like transportation, meal planning, laundry and help with other household issues.

“We help with daily living companionship, any and all non-medical needs,” Amanda Bailie, founder of Haven at Home, said.

“I just enjoy taking care of people and I saw the need in our community,” she said.

The business serves Elko, Spring Creek and Wells.

According to Haven at Home’s website, the company provides companionship, meal planning and preparation, assistance with showers and bathing, changing linens, laundry and many other services.

Costs for services range from \$30 per hour for as few as three to six hours a week down



Amanda and Thomas Bailie, owners of Haven at Home. “I just enjoy taking care of people and I saw the need in our community,” Amanda Bailie said.

to \$25 an hour for 60 or more hours a week. Mileage to and from clients’ homes is 72 cents a mile and client transport is \$30 an hour plus the 72 cents per mile.

One client reviewed the business, saying, “Amanda has been so wonderful helping with the care of my 93 years old mother. She is very patient with her still allows mom to feel like she has independence and some control. Mom enjoys chatting with her which is so important to her mental health. I highly recommend Amanda to help with your loved ones.”

Another said, “Haven at Home is the perfect answer if you need an extra hand! Amanda, who helped with my husband on several occasions, was professional and easy to work with! She is knowledgeable and truly cares about the people she is helping! I would not hesitate to recommend her!”

“We do all non-medical, so whatever they need help with that is not medically needed. So, sometimes, if people are recovering from surgery, we can help make meals or things like that,” Bailie said.

TOP PHOTO PROVIDED BY AMANDA BAILIE; BOTTOM PHOTO HAVEN AT HOME



Billie Jean Crawford in a children's grief care room at Horizon Hospice, Nov. 18, 2025.

# Horizon Hospice expands services to community

**LYDIA SNOW**  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Elko end-of-life care nonprofit Horizon Hospice has expanded its services to include grief support.

Twice a month, hospice provides free grief peer group meetings. Program leaders also work with students at Adobe Middle School, Elko High School and Spring Creek Middle School who have lost loved ones.

“The adults meet in one room and the kids meet in the other. They just share about the grief from the death of a loved one

— because there are lots of different griefs,” Director Billie Jean Crawford said.

“We address and we stay with grief that’s associated with a death.”

She said hospice provides a similar program in the schools, giving students journals with question prompts.

“We also provide one-on-one grief support, which is myself. I can work one-on-one if people don’t feel like they are comfortable in a group setting. And we provide all that for free because we’re a nonprofit, fully-volunteer

hospice,” Crawford said.

“We also have our compassionate care program that helps pay for pain medication and skilled care at the end of life, if they meet the criteria,” she said.

“We provide volunteers for people who are terminally ill in their homes. We have our upcoming volunteer training in February, so if people are interested and want to volunteer for Hospice, they can call our office and sign up,” Crawford said.

“We’ve been providing end-of-life care for 37-plus years. We’re solid and we’re strong in

the community — and it’s their community hospice. It’s not run by Medicare or any other insurances. It’s run by a professional governing board and we run all by donations.”

The Nevada Gold Mines Heritage Fund and the annual Souper Bowl are some of the ways hospice stays afloat financially.

She said hospice is always in need of more volunteers and donations.

In addition, hospice plans to expand its compassionate care program and grief groups, she added.

# \$180M federal rural health grant raises stakes for Elko County



Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital staffers provide free flu shots in the hospital's parking lot on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2024.

## *State must reapply annually; local funding details still to come*

**KEITH KOHN**  
KKOHN@ELKODAILY.COM

Nevada will receive nearly \$180 million in federal funding next year to strengthen rural health care — a major investment state leaders say could help address chronic shortages in places like Elko County, where distance, staffing gaps and aging infrastructure continue to strain care.

The funding comes through the new Rural Health Transformation Program, a nationwide initiative administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Nevada's \$179.9 million award covers only the first year, and the state must reapply annually through 2030.

This new funding is part of a five-year, \$50 billion initiative as authorized by Congress earlier this year.

"Thanks to this landmark investment, Nevada is positioned to make meaningful advancements in support of the state's rural health care system," Gov. Joe Lombardo said. "These funds will help connect rural Nevadans to health care by strengthening critical infrastructure,

attracting a more robust healthcare workforce, and accelerating healthcare technology innovation in our rural communities."

Attempts to reach representatives of Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, Elko County commission leaders and Elko's mayor for reaction to the funding were unsuccessful on Tuesday.

### **ELKO COUNTY SHARE UNCERTAIN**

While state officials have outlined broad priorities, exactly how much of the money will reach Elko County — and when — has not been specified.

According to state officials, the funding is intended to:

- Modernize rural hospitals and clinics;
- Address rural health care workforce shortages;
- Expand telehealth and digital health systems; and
- Support emergency and chronic care services.

All funds must be spent in Nevada, but decisions on which communities and providers receive funding have not yet been

announced.

That uncertainty is significant for Elko County, where residents often travel hours for specialized care and emergency responders cover vast rural and frontier territory.

Elko County is home to one regional hospital, rural clinics and EMS providers serving some of the most remote terrain in Nevada. This could put Northeastern Nevada high on the list for investment.

State officials emphasize telehealth expansion, but connectivity remains uneven across Elko County's rural areas. Advocates caution that digital care models may bypass the communities with the weakest broadband access unless infrastructure gaps are addressed alongside health investments.

State leaders say part of the funding will be used for provider incentives, tuition assistance and rural residency programs aimed at attracting doctors, nurses and other professionals to underserved areas.

Rural health advocates caution recruitment efforts have historically struggled to retain workers long-term in Northeastern Nevada, where housing availability,

workload and geographic isolation remain obstacles.

### **WHO DECIDES?**

The Nevada Health Authority will oversee the program and plans to create a Rural Health Transformation Steering Committee to guide spending decisions. Committee members will be appointed by state officials, with applications due Jan. 19, 2026.

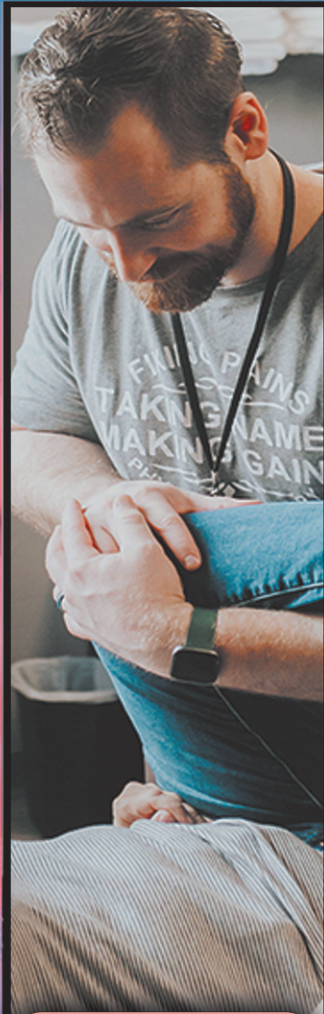
Local leaders say representation from communities like Elko County will be critical.

State officials say more details will be released later this spring and summer, when hospitals, clinics and other providers can apply for funding. A virtual statewide stakeholder meeting is scheduled for Jan. 27.

For Elko County, the funding represents both opportunity and uncertainty — a chance to address long-standing rural health gaps, but only if state-level plans translate into real investment on the ground.

*Keith Kohn is editor of the Elko Daily Free Press. Reach him at [kkohn@elkodaily.com](mailto:kkohn@elkodaily.com).*

# Journey to a Pain Free Life



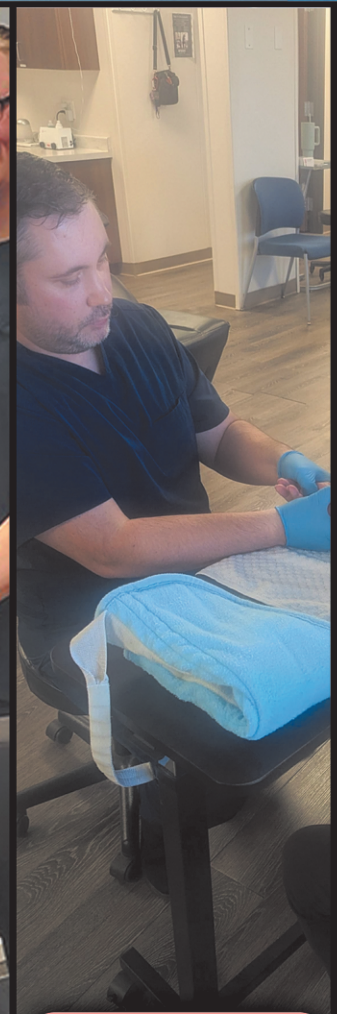
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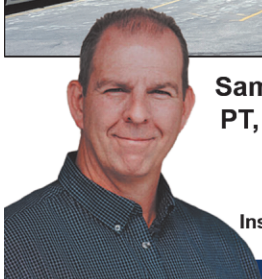


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# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



**JANAKA SARATHCHANDRA**  
MD

**Northeastern Nevada Behavioral Health**  
2001 Errecart Blvd, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 748-2038

**School:** American University of Antigua, College of Medicine  
**Residency:** University of Arizona, College of Medicine,

Psychiatry Residency

**Board Certification:** American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Special Services:** • Currently providing inpatient treatment only • Diagnosis & treatment of mental health & substance use disorders • Medication management  
• Psychodynamic psychotherapy • Psychopharmacology

## CARDIOLOGY



**BRAD S. BURLEW**  
MD, FACC, FCCP

**Elko Cardiology Associates**

1775 Browning Way, Suite 104, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-5100

**School:** Northwestern, Chicago, IL; Residency: Henry Ford, Detroit (Chief Resident); Fellowship Cardiology/Critical Care/Research: Henry Ford, Detroit (Chief Fellow)

**Board Certifications:** Internal Medicine; Cardiovascular Disease; Managed Care/  
Insurance Accepted: Most accepted, including Medicare. Please call to verify.

**Scope of Practice:** General, Preventive and Adult Congenital Cardiology. Holter monitoring. CV risk assessment. Echocardiography, including stress, by RDCS. Treadmill exercise testing.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



**JESSICA VAN VALKENBURG**  
PMHNP-BC

**Northeastern Nevada Behavioral Health**  
2001 Errecart Blvd, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 748-2038

**School:** Undergraduate: University of Wyoming – Bachelor of Science, Nursing; Graduate: University of Wyoming – Psychiatric

Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Doctorate of Nursing Practice

**Board Certification:** American Nurses Credentialing Center

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Services:** • Currently providing inpatient treatment only • Diagnosis & treatment of mental health & substance use disorders • Medication management • Individual therapy • Group & family therapy • Patient & family education

## CARDIOLOGY



**ELIZABETH BURLEW**  
MSN, APRN, ACNP

**Elko Cardiology Associates**

1775 Browning Way, Suite 104, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-5100

**School:** University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, TN.

**Board Certifications:** American Nurses Credentialing Center:

Acute Care

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most accepted, including Medicare. Please call to verify.

**Scope of Practice:** General and Preventive Cardiology. CV risk assessment. Treadmill exercise testing.

## CARDIOLOGY



**JANINE ANDERSON**  
APRN, FNP-BC

**Northeastern Nevada Heart Center**  
1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 748-0704

**School:** Great Basin College – RN & BSN  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Master's Degree

**Board Certification:** American Nurses Credentialing Center

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans

including Medicare, Medicaid and VA

**Services:** • Preventive and general cardiology • Screenings for peripheral artery disease  
• Lipid management • Hypertension management • Heart failure management  
• Treatments for cardiac arrhythmia; atrial fibrillation • Follow-up post-PCI/stent placement

## CARDIOLOGY



**GERSON V. FIGUEROA**  
MD

**Northeastern Nevada Heart Center**  
1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 748-0704

**School:** Medical School: University of El Salvador; Residency: East Tennessee State University, University of Washington; Fellowships: Mount Sinai Medical Center – Interventional Cardiology"

**Board Certifications:** American Board of Internal Medicine

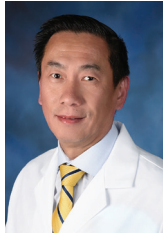
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Services:** • Diagnostic & Interventional Cardiac Catheterizations • Cardioversion  
• Implanted Cardiac Monitors & Pacemakers • Peripheral Angiography • Stress Testing & Echocardiography • Transesophageal Echocardiograms (TEE) • Available for General Cardiology Consultations

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## CARDIOLOGY



### THOMAS N. TRUONG DO

**Northeastern Nevada Heart Center**  
1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 748-0704

**School:** Medical School: Kansas City University of Medicine & Biosciences; Residency: University of Oklahoma College of Medicine; Fellowships: Oklahoma State University – General Cardiology, Largo Medical Center – Interventional Cardiology

**Board Certifications:** American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine  
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA  
**Services:** • Diagnostic & Interventional Cardiac Catheterizations • Cardioversion • Implanted Cardiac Monitors & Pacemakers • Peripheral Angiography • Stress Testing & Echocardiography • Transesophageal Echocardiograms (TEE) • Available for General Cardiology Consultations

## DENTIST



### DR. DIEHL

**Marina Hills Dental**  
282 Spring Creek Pkwy., Spring Creek, NV 89815  
900 E. 5th Street, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-3110

**School:** University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV)  
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Delta Dental, Metlife, Anthem BCBS, Aenta, Guardian, Cigna, Health Scope,

UMR, GEHA, Ameritas, Reliance Standard, UC Health, Assurant, KCL Group, United Concordia, United Health Care

**Special Services:** Dentures, Implants, Endodontics, Cosmetic Dentistry, Veneers, Smile Design

## DENTIST



### DR. RUSS DIEHL

**Marina Hills Dental**  
282 Spring Creek Pkwy., Spring Creek, NV 89815  
900 E. 5th Street, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-3110

**School:** UNLV School of Dental Medicine, 1001 Shadow Lane, Las Vegas, NV

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Accept Most

Insurances  
**Special Services:** Family Dentistry, root canals, cosmetics, implants, braces.

## FAMILY PRACTICE



### OLYNA AGEE

MSN, APRN, FNP-C  
**Elite Health & Wellness**  
160 12th Street, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 372-7444

**School:** Rocky Mountain University of Health Professionals, Salt Lake City, UT

**Board Certification:** FNP-C with American Academy of

Nurse Practitioners  
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Medicare & Medicaid; Cherry  
**Services:** Womens Health. Primary Care. Hormone Therapy. IV Therapy. Weight loss; Aesthetics, Morpheus 8; Bodytite +Skintite; Femtite; Hair Loss Restoration, CO2 Resurfacing

## DENTIST



### DR. WEBER

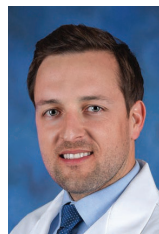
**Marina Hills Dental**  
282 Spring Creek Pkwy., Spring Creek, NV 89815  
900 E. 5th Street, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-3110

**School:** University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV)  
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Delta Dental, Metlife, Anthem BCBS, Aenta, Guardian, Cigna, Health Scope,

UMR, GEHA, Ameritas, Reliance Standard, UC Health, Assurant, KCL Group, United Concordia, United Health Care

**Special Services:** Dentures, Implants, Endodontics, Cosmetic Dentistry, Veneers, Smile Design

## FAMILY PRACTICE



### ALEX DUTSON

DO  
**Northeastern Nevada Primary Care**  
1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-2061

**School:** Touro University Nevada  
**Residency:** Community Memorial Health System, Ventura, CA  
**Board Certification:** American Board of Family Medicine

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA  
**Services:** • Sick and well exams for all ages • Physicals for work, school, scouts, etc. • Treatment of chronic diseases (arthritis, COPD, etc.) • Diabetes management • Treatment of thyroid disorders • Management of high blood pressure • Women's wellness exams • Aging support • Preventive medicine

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## FAMILY PRACTICE



### NIK HIRSCHI

MSN

#### Primary Choice Health and Wellness

1910 Idaho Street, Suite 101, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 299-2820

**School:** Graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2017

**Board Certifications:** In Family Practice by AANPCB

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Not contracted with insurance. Serves an underserved community in Eureka, Crescent Valley Medical Clinic, Crescent Valley.

**Special Services:** Functional Health, Infusion Therapy, Direct Primary Care, Kids' Healthcare, Men's and Women's Health, Family Planning Services, LARC, Hormone Replacement, ED, Chronic Disease Management and Prevention, Aesthetics, PDO Threads, Fillers, Neuromodulators, Laser and Plasma Therapy, Medical Peels and Facials, Microneedling RF, PRP, Exosomes and Cellular Regenerative Therapy, HIFU Skin Tightening, Cryotherapy, and Electrocautery, non-opiate pain therapy, Lymphatic drainage, Ozonotherapy, Prolotherapy.

## OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY



### ALLYSON C. WALDRON

DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

#### Northeastern Nevada Women's Health

1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 202, Elko, NV 89801, (775) 748-0701

**School:** Undergraduate: College of Southern Nevada – Associate of Applied Science, Nursing; Great Basin College – Bachelor of Science – Nursing; Graduate: University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Master of Science, Family Nurse Practitioner, Doctorate of Nursing Practice

**Board Certification:** American Nurses Credentialing Center

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Services:** • Routine Well Exams • Referrals for Diagnostic Screenings or Specialized Care • Gynecological Exams • Cervical Cancer Screenings • Breast Cancer Screenings • Contraceptive Management & Family Planning

## FAMILY PRACTICE



### STARLA RICKS

MSN, APRN, FNP-C

#### Elite Health & Wellness

160 12th Street, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 372-7444

**School:** Medical School: University of Nevada Las Vegas

**Board Certifications:** ANCC

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Medicare & Medicaid;

Cherry

**Services:** Womens Health. Primary Care. Hormone Therapy. IV Therapy. Weight loss; Aesthetics, Morpheus 8; Bodytite +Skindite; Femtite; Hair Loss Restoration, CO2 Resurfacing.

## OPTOMETRIST



### COLBY B. CURTIS

OD

#### Total Eyecare

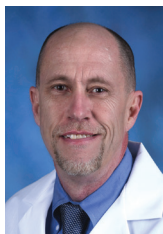
2209 N. 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-8491

**School & Credentials:** Southern College of Optometry-Memphis, TN-Doctor of Optometry (OD), Nevada Board of Optometry-Certified to Administer or Prescribe Therapeutic

Pharmaceutical Agents, Certified in the Treatment of Glaucoma; Certified in Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease.

**Special Services:** Optomap Retinal Imaging; Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration; Contact Lens Fitting (Regular & Specialty); OptiLight Dry Eye Treatment; Large Optical offering a wide range of frames and sunglasses, including designer brands.

## GENERAL SURGERY



### KEVIN G. HIBBETT

MD

#### Northeastern Nevada Surgery

1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-1729

**School:** University of Pennsylvania

**Residency:** Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown, PA

**Board Certification:** American Board of Surgery

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid and VA

**Procedures Include:** Appendectomy, Bowel surgery, Endoscopy, Gallbladder surgery, Hernia repair, Reflux surgery, Skin lesion excision, Thyroid & parathyroid surgery, Treatment of colon and bowels cancers, Specializing in minimally-invasive surgery

## OPTOMETRIST



### THOMAS D. GALL

OD

#### Total Eyecare

2209 N 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-8491

**School & Credentials:** AZ College of Optometry, Glendale, AZ-Doctor of Optometry (OD), Nevada Board of Optometry-Certified to Administer or Prescribe Therapeutic

Pharmaceutical Agents; Certified in the Treatment of Glaucoma; Certified in the Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease.

**Special Services:** Optomap Retinal Imaging; Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration; Contact Lens Fitting (Regular & Specialty); OptiLight Dry Eye Treatment; Large Optical offering a wide range of frames and sunglasses, including designer brands.

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## OPTOMETRIST



**SPENCER J. MCCONKIE**  
OD

### Total Eyecare

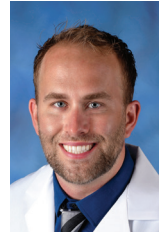
2209 N 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-8491

**School & Credentials:** Southern College of Optometry, Memphis, TN-Doctor of Optometry (OD), Nevada Board of Optometry-Certified to Administer or Prescribe Therapeutic

Pharmaceutical Agents; Certified in the Treatment of Glaucoma; Certified in Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease.

**Special Services:** Optomap Retinal Imaging; Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration; Contact Lens Fitting (Regular & Specialty); OptiLight Dry Eye Treatment; Large Optical offering a wide range of frames and sunglasses, including designer brands.

## ORTHOPEDECS



**CHAD EDWARDS**  
DO

### Pinion Orthopedics

1995 Errecart Blvd. Suite 203, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-3535

**School:** Midwestern University, Glendale, AZ

**Residency:** Larkin Community Hospital, Miami, FL

**Board Certification:** American Osteopathic Board of

Orthopedic Surgery

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Services:** • Total Joint Replacements for Knees, Hips & Shoulders • Arthroscopy / Minimally-Invasive Surgery • Sports Medicine • ACL Reconstruction • Rotator Cuff Repair • Carpal Tunnel Release • Trigger Finger Release • Treatments for Sprains, Strains & Fractures

## OPTOMETRIST



**MICAH L. WILLIAMS**  
OD

### Total Eyecare

2209 N. 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-8491

**School & Credentials:** Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science, School of Optometry-Doctor of Optometry (OD), Nevada Board of Optometry-Certified to Administer or

Prescribe Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agents; Certified in the Treatment of Glaucoma; Certified in Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease.

**Special Services:** Optomap Retinal Imaging; Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration; Contact Lens Fitting (Regular & Specialty); OptiLight Dry Eye Treatment; Large Optical offering a wide range of frames and sunglasses, including designer brands.

## ORTHOPEDECS



**STEVEN GUNNELL**  
DO

### Pinion Orthopedics

1995 Errecart Blvd. Suite 203, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-3535

**School:** University of Health Science, Kansas City, MO

**Residency:** Medical Center of Independence, MO

**Board Certifications:** American Osteopathic Board of

Orthopedic Surgery

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid and VA

**Special Services:** • Knee and hip replacements • Shoulder, wrist and knee arthroscopy • ACL Reconstruction

## ORAL SURGERY



**JAY K. SELZNICK**  
ADSA, DMD, MD

### Selznick Oral Surgery

247 Bluffs Ave., Suite 103, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-2622

**School:** University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. SUNY Downstate School of Medicine

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most Insurance Plans

including Medicaid

**Special Services:** Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

## ORTHOPEDECS



**RUSS MORRILL**  
PA-C

### Pinion Orthopedics

1995 Errecart Blvd. Suite 203, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-3535

**School:** Master of Medical Science - Physician Assistant from Saint Louis University, MO

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans

including Medicare, Medicaid and VA

**Special Services:** • Treatment of torn ACL and Meniscus • Treatment of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome • Sports Medicine - Rotator Cuff Repair - Trigger Finger Release - Treatments for Arthritis - Treatments for Sprains, Strains & Fractures

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## ORTHOPEDICS



### TIMOTHY PHIPPS

DO

#### Pinion Orthopedics

1995 Errecart Blvd. Suite 203, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-3535

**School & Residency:** University of Health Science, Kansas City, MO

**Board Certifications:** American Osteopathic Board of

Orthopedic Surgery

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid and VA

**Special Services:** • Knee and hip replacements • ACL reconstruction • Treatments for strains and sprains • Sports medicine • Hand surgery • Treatments for arthritis

## MEDICAL AESTHETICS



### JOSIE D. CERVANTES

MSN, APRN, FNP-C

#### Elko Replenish Med Spa

1825 Pinion Rd., Suite E.  
Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 400-1660

**School:** The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston  
**Board Certifications:** MSN, APRN, FNP-C

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** HSA, FSA, Care Credit, Cherry Financing, Affirm Financing

**Special Services:** Weight Loss Therapy, IV Vitamins, Hormone Replacement, Health Wellness, Peptides, Aesthetics, Rejuvenate Medicine.

## MASSAGE THERAPY



### JAYME ARNOLD

LMT

#### Full Range Physical Therapy

620 S 12th St., Suite 110, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 438-0818

**School:** Carrington College, Boise

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Swedish Massage, Deep Tissue, Hot Stone, Prenatal, Custom

## PAIN MANAGEMENT



### STAR CHENOWETH

PA-C

#### Elko Spine and Rehabilitation

2219 N. 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-9669

**School:** University of Washington

**Board Certifications:** NCCPA

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most accepted

(including Workers Comp and VA)

**Special Services:** Specializing in musculoskeletal medicine, spinal, joint, tendon injections, and medication management.

## MASSAGE THERAPY



### NADJA MAHONEY

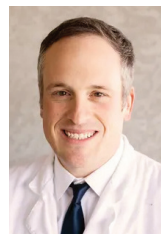
#### Elko Replenish Med Spa

1825 Pinion Rd., Suite E., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 400-1660

**School:** Nevada School of Massage Therapy

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** HSA, FSA, Care Credit, Cherry Financing, Affirm Financing

## PAIN MANAGEMENT



### DR. ANDREW GEISLER

MD

#### Elko Spine and Rehabilitation

2219 N. 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-9669

**Board Certifications:** Physiatrist, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Electrodiagnostic Medicine, Brain Injury Medicine, Musculoskeletal Ultrasonography, Independent Medical Examiner

**Special Services:** Chronic pain medication management and various interventional pain procedures such as guided peripheral joint injections, nerve blocks, radiofrequency ablation, epidural steroid injections, and spinal cord stimulation

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## PAIN MANAGEMENT



**DR. CHAD JENSEN**

DO

**Elko Spine and Rehabilitation**

2219 N. 5th St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-9669

**School:** Des Moines University

**Board Certifications:** Pain Medicine and Anesthesiology

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most accepted

(including work comp and VA)

**Special Services:** Chronic pain medication management and various interventional pain procedures such as guided peripheral joint injections, nerve blocks, radiofrequency ablation, epidural steroid injections, peripheral nerve stimulation, and spinal cord stimulation.

## PHYSICAL THERAPY



**JEFFREY M. ECKERT**

PT, DPT

**Full Range Physical Therapy**

620 S. 12th Street, Suite 110, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-0818

**School:** University of Utah

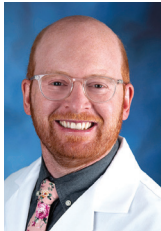
**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:**

Most insurance plans including Workers Comp, Medicare,

Medicaid and VA

**Services:** Sports/Orthopedic; Balance/Fall Risk, Industrial/Functional Capacity Evals; Pediatrics, Post Surgical, Dry Needling, Blood Flow Restriction

## PEDIATRICS



**ZACHARY FEATHERSTONE**

DO

**Northeastern Nevada Pediatrics**

1995 Errecart, Suite 202, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-3654

**School:** Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences;

Residency: University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Medicine; Fellowship: Gallaudet University

**Board Certifications:** American Board of Pediatrics

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicaid

**Services:** • Total health management for infants, children & teens

• Immunizations • Treatment of illnesses, injuries & behavioral issues

• Nutrition & exercise consultations • Well-visits & check-ups

## PHYSICAL THERAPY



**THOMAS LAND**

PT, DPT

**First Choice Physical Therapy**

248 Country Club Pkwy, Spring Creek NV, 89815 & 617 Main, Carlin NV, 89822  
(775) 777-1276 (both locations)

**School:** Franklin Pierce University, Goodyear, Arizona

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans

including Medicare, Medicaid, and VA

**Special Services:** Sports Rehab - Strength and Sports Performance

- Spine Pain - Post OP Rehab

## PHYSICAL THERAPY



**JASON CUTLER**

**First Choice Physical Therapy**

2072 Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-1276

**School:** University of Utah

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including medicare, medicaid, and VA

**Special Services:** Pediatrics, Neuro Rehab, orthopedics, vertigo, geriatric, wound care, manual therapy

## PHYSICAL THERAPY



**SAMUEL MOORE**

PT, DPT

**First Choice Physical Therapy**

2072 Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-1276 Option 2

**School:** University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Medicare, Medicaid, VA, Auto, and most medial plans

**Services:** Spine Care, Pain Management, Post-operative rehabilitation, Orthopedics/ Sports, Lymphedema Management, Wound Care, Vertigo/BPPV, TMJ, Balance/Fall Prevention, Trigger Point, and Dry Needling

# ELKO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS PROFILES



## PHYSICAL THERAPY



### DALLAN VALLE

PT, DPT

#### First Choice Physical Therapy

248 Country Club Pkwy, Spring Creek, NV 89815  
(775) 777-1276 Option 1

**School:** Touro University, Henderson, NV

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:**

Most Insurance Plans including Medicare, Medicaid, and VA

**Services:** Pediatrics, Spine Care, Pain Management, Post-Operative Rehabilitation, Orthopedics/Sports, Vertigo/BPPV, Lymphedema Management, Wound Care, Balance/fall prevention, and Dry Needling

## URGENT CARE



### MICHELLE WEEKS

FNP-BC

#### Morning Star Urgent Care

247 Bluffs Ave. Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 515-7332

**School:** University of Nevada, @Las Vegas

**Board Certifications:** AANC

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** All Major Insurance

## PHYSICAL THERAPY



### TREVOR WOODHOUSE

#### First Choice Physical Therapy

2072 Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-1276

**School:** Idaho State University

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance Plans

including Medicare, Medicaid, and VA

**Services:** Post-Op Rehabilitation, Athlete Rehabilitation, fall prevention

## URGENT CARE



### DR. KAREN WRIGHT

#### Morning Star Urgent Care

247 Bluffs Ave. Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 515-7332

**School:** University of Nevada, Reno

**Board Certifications:** Fellowship Integrative Medicine, University of Arizona, Tucson

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** All Major Insurance

## URGENT CARE



### MELISSA KNOX

FNP-C

#### Morning Star Urgent Care

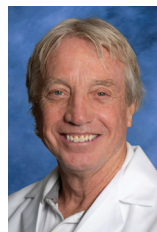
247 Bluffs Ave. Suite 102, Elko, NV 89801  
(530) 320-6519

**School:** University of Texas at Arlington

**Board Certifications:** FNP-C with American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** All Major Insurance

## UROLOGY



### JOSEPH DREW

MD

#### Northeastern Nevada Urology

1995 Errecart Blvd, Suite 110, Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-2600

**School:** University of California, Irvine, and Universidad de Autonoma de Guadalajara

**Residency:** The Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

**Board Certifications:** American Board of Urology

**Managed Care/Insurance Accepted:** Most insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid & VA

**Special Services:** • Prostate health • Vasectomies • Testosterone supplements • Urinary tract infections • Kidney & bladder stones • Urinary incontinence • Erectile dysfunction



From left, nurse practitioners Janie Owen and Sarah Draves and Dr. Christine Potterjones from Nevada Health Centers.

# Nevada Health Centers adds 4 to medical, dental staff

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Nevada Health Centers has three new medical providers and a new dentist.

Dr. Christine Potterjones is a board-certified family physician with over 20 years of experience. She graduated from the Temple University Lewis Katz School of Medicine in Philadelphia in 2000.

Potterjones, in an online biography, said, “I really enjoy teaching my patients about their health and try to always take the time to explain what is going on inside the body. This is especially important for issues like blood pressure, where the patient may feel fine, yet are being told they need to take medication.”

She said she always tries to “remember my own personal experiences as a patient and as the mother of a child with special needs and treat every patient with the respect, compassion and

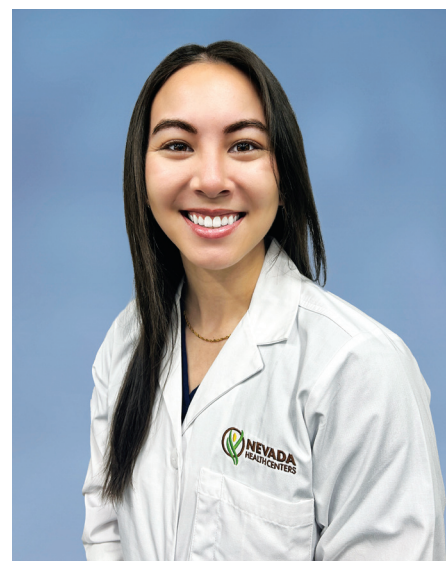
excellence in care that they deserve.”

Nurse practitioner Janie Owen, MSN, APRN has about a decade in family practice experience and a strong focus on women’s health. She’s worked in Elko and Winnemucca and also practices via tele-health.

Nurse practitioner Sarah Draves, MSN, APRN, FNP-C has a background in emergency and family medicine and serves patients of all ages. She’s worked at Aspen Quick Care and has been affiliated with Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital

Dr. Lavinya Yap is the new dentist at Nevada Health Centers, and is a recent graduate of the Roseman School of Dentistry in South Jordan, Utah.

In her LinkedIn page, Yap said she takes pride “in what I do and I believe that it shows in my strong resume built upon teamwork, interpersonal relationships and community service.”



Dr. Lavinya Yap is the new dentist at Nevada Health Centers.

# Vitality Unlimited expands services to primary care in Elko

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Vitality Unlimited is moving towards expanded in-person primary care.

Most recently, the nonprofit hired Rebecca Durocher, an in-person therapist with several years of experience as a licensed clinical social worker.

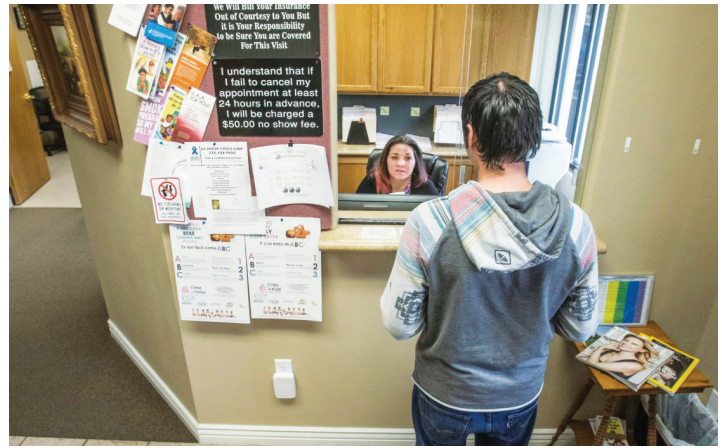
“She also has experience working with veterans, so she used to be a substance-use counselor for the Army,” Vitality outreach coordinator Marianne McKown said.

At their outpatient clinic, they have a new advanced practice

registered nurse, Aaron Winters, who was hired in October.

“He can provide, not only the psychiatric and medication assisted therapy for substance use, he also can provide primary care,” McKown said. “But people can come to us for just primary care. So, if somebody’s out there and they can’t find a doctor who accepts Medicaid or Medicare or any of the private insurances or they’re just looking for a new primary care provider, they can come to Aaron just for that.”

Vitality Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides behavioral



Vitality Unlimited provides substance abuse treatment in Elko in this 2019 file photo.

health, substance use disorder treatment and primary care services throughout Nevada. It’s been around since 1971, when its first clinic opened in Elko.

McKown said patients don’t have to have mental health care or substance use treatment at Vitality Unlimited to access primary care.

“We’ve had services before, but it was really difficult,” McKown

said. Beforehand, most services went through an advanced practice registered nurse in Carson City, who managed care at all the agency’s clinics, “so it was very difficult for her to work in primary care.”

“But, now we can even take walk-ins. If somebody wants to walk in for a primary care visit, that is also possible right now in the Elko clinic,” she said.



## Nevada Behavior & Autism

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) behavioral treatment of autism & other developmental disabilities for children and adults

**We offer:**

- In-home therapy
- School-based services
- Center-based therapy in Elko, Wendover, and Winnemucca
- Job coaching
- Parent training

**Learn more:**

- 775-927-5535
- nevadabehavior.com



## Functional Health & Wellness Clinic

Your wellness, our focus.

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**CHOOSE US FOR:**

- ☑ Functional Health
- ☑ Detox Therapies
- ☑ Auto-Immune Diseases
- ☑ Heavy Metal Chelation
- ☑ Mold & Fungal Infections
- ☑ Hormone Replacement Therapy
- ☑ EBOO - Ozone Therapy
- ☑ MAH Therapy
- ☑ Regenerative Peptide Therapy
- ☑ IV Nutrient Therapy
- ☑ Food & Environmental Allergy Testing
- ☑ Weight Loss
- ☑ Gut Health Detox
- ☑ Nutritional Evaluations
- ☑ Specialty Functional Labs
- ☑ Aesthetics




**PrimaryChoice**  
Health and Wellness

- 📍 1910 Idaho St Suite 101 Elko, NV
- 🌐 primarychoicehealthwellness.com
- 📞 **775.299.2820**

# Focus Eye Care opens new, larger office

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Focus Eye Care and Optical Lab opened its new facility on Idaho Street near Burger King in early February.

Manager Thomas Leaverton said customers can expect “the same service and same quality that we had at the other place — but we should be able to serve the patients better, because it’s bigger.”

The new office, at 2210 Idaho St., has a larger lab, more exam rooms and more room for the operation to fabricate lenses, he said.



Focus Eye Care's new office is larger, as seen on Feb. 2, 2026.



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775-389-2100



PHOTO LYDIA SNOW



Elko VA Clinic exterior in the Elko Junction shopping Center, Jan. 12, 2026.

# New VA clinic now seeing patients

**LYDIA SNOW**  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — The new Elko VA Clinic held a soft opening in late January, welcoming its first patients to the office in the Elko Junction plaza off Mountain City Highway. Staff moved in on Friday.

The new clinic's space is twice that of its previous location on Argent Avenue, going from 2,433 square feet to 5,300 square feet — and from two exam rooms to six, plus two consultation rooms,

increasing the number of patients who can be seen. It also has a new lab space and a tele-retinal room.

The clinic also is an outpatient center for the Salt Lake City VA healthcare system.

Initially, the new clinic's soft opening was expected in October, according to the Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

The grand opening is planned for March 26.

The new clinic's address is 2767 Mountain City Highway. It can be reached by phone at 775-738-0188.



**ABOVE:** The waiting room at the new Elko VA Clinic on Mountain City Highway has some bling for patients, Jan. 12, 2026. **FAR LEFT:** The reception desk. **LEFT:** One of the exam rooms at new Elko VA Clinic.

PHOTOS LYDIA SNOW

# Primary Care, Reimagined: A Smarter Approach to Health in Elko

At Primary Choice Health & Wellness, healthcare starts with holistic functional care — a personalized, root-cause approach that looks beyond symptoms to understand how the whole body is working together. By combining functional medicine principles with full-service primary care, the clinic helps patients move from reactive treatment to proactive, sustainable health.

Rather than addressing issues in isolation, the team takes time to evaluate lifestyle, nutrition, hormone balance, metabolic health, and long-term goals. This deeper understanding allows providers to design individualized care plans that support energy, longevity, and overall well-being — not just short-term fixes.

Traditional primary care is the backbone of the practice, providing patients with trusted medical support for annual wellness visits, chronic condition management, sick visits, lab work, medication management, and preventive care for the whole family. What makes Primary Choice Health & Wellness different is how seamlessly this medical care is integrated with advanced functional and wellness services.

In addition to comprehensive primary care, the clinic offers functional health evaluations, hormone optimization, IV nutrient therapy, medically guided weight-loss programs, and regenerative treatments. These services are not trendy add-ons — they are medically guided, evidence-based tools used to support the body's natural ability to heal and function optimally.

Patients value having access to holistic solutions without sacrificing the security of a true

medical clinic. Whether managing chronic conditions, navigating hormone changes, improving energy levels, or taking a proactive approach to long-term health, care is tailored to meet patients where they are.

Select aesthetic services are also available, allowing patients to support confidence and wellness in a safe, professional medical setting. Every service reflects the same philosophy: thoughtful care, medical integrity, and individualized attention.

In a healthcare landscape that often feels rushed and fragmented, Primary Choice Health & Wellness offers a more intentional model — holistic functional care, supported by trusted primary medicine, all under one roof.

Because better health isn't about choosing between traditional medicine and wellness — it's about integrating both, the right way.



# Convergence Health expanding services

LYDIA SNOW  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — Convergence Health has announced several updates to its services.

First, the company is developing an expanded healthcare space planned to open this spring.

It also is introducing primary care services, with family medicine practitioner Dr. Terry Nevins joining the team later this year.

Convergence also plans to open a new specialty clinic this year.

Aspen Quick Care has also joined the team, allowing patients to “benefit from a broader range of services” according to Convergence. Names and locations of Aspen services will not change.



Interventional cardiologist Dr. Alban De Schutter performs an arterial balloon procedure at Elko Community Health Center on Feb. 27, 2025. The medical facility later rebranded itself Convergence Health.

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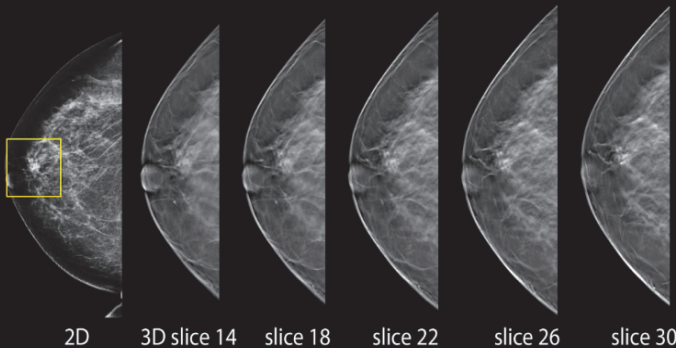


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## Behavioral Health Update



Janaka Sarathchandra, MD  
"Dr. J."  
Board-Certified Psychiatrist



Jessica Van Valkenburg  
Board-Certified Psychiatric  
Mental Health Nurse Practitioner



Dr. Janaka Sarathchandra, left, who goes by Dr. J, is the behavioral health unit's psychiatrist. Jessica Van Valkenburg is the board-certified mental health nurse practitioner.

### Opening *continued from page 8*

therapy, or group counseling sessions. We really take a multi-disciplinary, evidence-based approach. Ultimately, it's all about what's best for the patient."

Simpson said the behavioral health unit in Elko means fewer patients need to be transferred out of town for care.

"The good news is we can keep more folks close to home,"

Simpson said. "It's never ideal to be transported out of town for healthcare, but especially when someone's already experiencing a mental health crisis, sending them hundreds of miles away just adds more stress on them and their family."

He said this way "our most vulnerable patients can get the care and support they need right here in our community. That's really what it's all about."



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### AA CARLIN BAPTIST CHURCH

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1795 Ruby Vista Drive,  
Elko, NV 89801

### AUTISM - PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

(775) 388-4161  
Heather Monger –  
[monger@gmail.com](mailto:monger@gmail.com)

### CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

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Debbie Anderson, MS, LPC, NCC

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[alz.org/norcal](http://alz.org/norcal)

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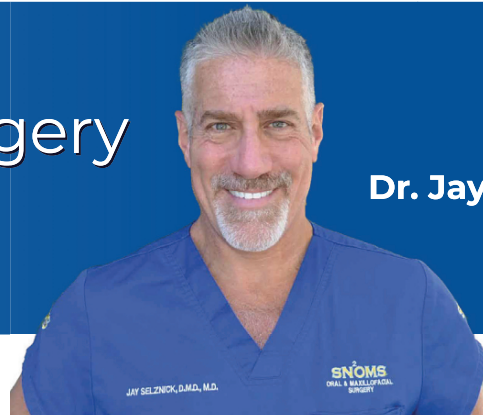


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(800) 787-2568  
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Jackpot, NV 89825  
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(775) 777-1818

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Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 753-6400

### HORIZON HOSPICE

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### HUMBOLDT GENERAL HOSPITAL

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www.fullrangeptnv.com

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(775) 400-1660

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Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 777-9622

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