HEALTHY

Journey

Aspen Valley Health



Nature's Prescription

Healing from the outside in

What's in a Name? | Staying at Your Peak | The Gut-Health Connection

WINTER 2025-2026

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HEALTHY Journey
Aspen Valley Health

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A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We Flourish Together

At Aspen Valley Health (AVH), our vision to foster our community as the healthiest in the nation is more than a guiding principle—it's a commitment that touches everything we do, including this publication.

With this edition of *Healthy Journey*, we mark a moment of transition. Our longtime CEO, Dave Ressler, recently announced his retirement after nearly two decades of dedicated leadership. His vision helped shape the strong foundation upon which we now build, and we are deeply grateful for his service to our community. As the Board of Directors, we remain steadfast in our support of the organization's direction, and we're excited to carry this momentum forward.

We're pleased to welcome two new members to our Board: **Dr. Joseph Ruzbarsky**, a skilled orthopaedic surgeon and respected voice in advancing clinical excellence, and **John Sarpa**, a long-time Aspen Valley Health Foundation and previous AVH Board member, and leader with deep roots in Aspen's civic and philanthropic life. Their expertise and passion for community wellness strengthen our collective vision and will help guide the next chapter of AVH.

This magazine reflects our shared commitment to proactive, person-centered care. Within these pages, you'll find stories and resources that will empower you and your family to live longer, stronger and healthier lives.

As a Board, we are honored to support the remarkable work of our dedicated staff and talented physicians. We invite you to join us in this ongoing journey toward a healthier, more connected community.

With gratitude,

Your Aspen Valley Health Board of Directors



Aspen Valley Health

Roaring

In this beautiful place, we come together along a river. Here, hope and health connect and wellness flows.

At Aspen Valley Health, our priority is the community we serve. You'll find a network of services not only for the sick and injured, but for the lovers of life—patients who seek to live life vibrantly—people just like you.

With convenient locations in Aspen, Snowmass, Basalt and the Midvalley, world-class healthcare is in your neighborhood.

For you. For life.

Over 25 specialties represented throughout the Roaring Fork Valley.

ASPEN
Medical Center

DOWNTOWN ASPEN
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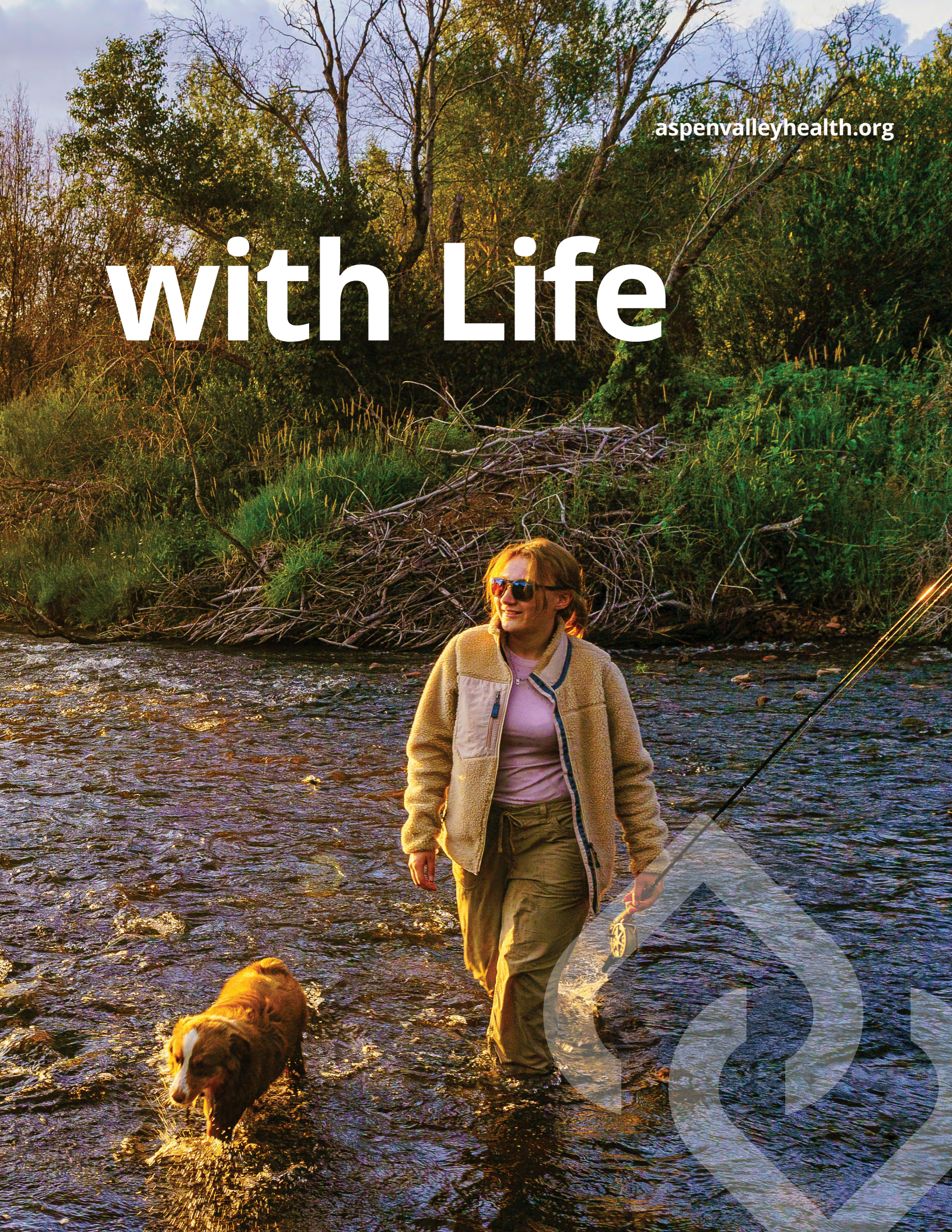
BASALT
After-Hours Medical Care
Cardiology, Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine

MIDVALLEY
Laboratory
Primary Care
Surgical Specialists
and more

SNOWMASS
Snowmass Clinic
Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine

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with Life





What's in a *Name*?

From Hospital to Health, Our New Brand Represents Unwavering Commitment to Your Wellbeing

You've probably heard we changed our name to Aspen Valley Health.

With such a big change, we think it's important to share why we made the shift from "Hospital" to "Health." Changing just one word has a significant impact on who we are and what we represent.

It's so much more than new signs on buildings. The change reflects how we care for people, where we meet them on their path to wellness, and what it means to thrive in the Roaring Fork Valley. It's not just care for the sick and injured, but for the lovers of life, too.

This new name matches the work we are already doing. We're delivering care far beyond hospital walls and through services built around access, prevention and whole-person health.

We've grown as our community continues to evolve and grow. This new name better aligns with our mission, our vision and the needs of the people who we serve. Because health doesn't begin when something goes wrong. It begins right where you are.

Why the Change Matters

For years, the name "Aspen Valley Hospital" didn't tell the whole story. Care was happening in more places, across more specialties, with more focus on staying well. And it was not just about getting treated. It was about primary care, diagnostic imaging, rehabilitation and sports medicine and additional specialty clinics—all reaching people beyond the Medical Center in Aspen.

Inside the organization, leadership knew the name had to catch up with the mission.

"We weren't just adding services," says Jennifer Slaughter, chief growth and marketing officer at Aspen Valley Health (AVH). "We were shifting how we deliver care. Where we deliver it. How people access it. 'Aspen Valley Health' now more clearly represents that story."

The name also reflects a broader goal: AVH is working to help make the Roaring Fork Valley one of the healthiest communities in the nation. That means more prevention, more support and more tools to help people live well before anything goes wrong. It's care designed for a lifetime, not just a moment.

> **“Everything we do is for our community. And we depend on our community’s support to keep delivering the care we all expect and deserve.”**
>
> **JENNIFER SLAUGHTER** | CHIEF GROWTH AND MARKETING OFFICER AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH



What the New Brand Says

The AVH brand was built to say something—visually and emotionally—about what healthcare feels like here. It had to reflect the region, it had to reflect the people and it had to feel personal.

At the heart of the logo are two bonded leaves: one shape, two parts. They represent the connection between provider and patient. The trust. The partnership. The shared investment in living well.

Aspen Valley Health

“The bonded leaves are my favorite part of the new brand,” Slaughter says. “There’s so much meaning in the symbol they create. The more you spend time with it, the more you see, and the layers begin to unfold.”

Some see mountains. Some see an “A” and a “V.” Everyone sees something that belongs here in this place we call home. The logo colors were pulled straight from our natural landscape—golden fall leaves, deep blue skies and clear rushing water. Every choice had a purpose.

And the tagline does, too.

For you. For life.

That’s the promise. To care for this community, in every season, for every stage of life.

Rooted in History, Focused on What’s Next

“Aspen Valley Health” didn’t appear overnight. It grew from a legacy of care that stretches back to 1891.

For more than a century, AVH has served this valley as an independent, not-for-profit healthcare system. That independence still matters. It means decisions are made here and for the people who live here.

While the name may be new, the commitment is not.

The shift to “Aspen Valley Health” comes at a natural turning point. This year also marks the completion of our organization’s 20-year modernization plan. That effort added new facilities and expanded services, and it made space for what comes next.

“We didn’t want a name that looked backward,” Slaughter continues. “We wanted one that honors our history but lets us move forward.”

That future includes broader access, stronger partnerships and more care delivered close to home. It also includes housing for staff, support for prevention and services that reflect the way people live today.

And it includes keeping healthcare local—always.

Care That Reaches Further

Today, AVH is more than a singular hospital. It is an integrated network of care that includes primary care offices in Aspen and the Midvalley. It also brings specialty services like cardiology, orthopaedics, diagnostic imaging, laboratory and rehabilitation and sports medicine to more people—all accessible without having to travel far.

That extended reach is part of what shaped the new brand.

The name “Aspen Valley Health” includes everyone—not just those in need of acute care. It speaks to the bigger picture: physical health and long-term wellness. The things that help people stay well instead of waiting to get sick.

That’s why the brand feels personal. It’s not about a system. It’s about the people it serves.

“This is a community where health matters,” says Slaughter. “People are active. They’re engaged. They care about staying healthy, and our job is to support that.”

By creating more access points, AVH helps lower the cost of care and improves outcomes across the community. That’s not just a healthcare strategy, it’s a local one.

> **"This is a community where health matters. People are active. They're engaged. They care about staying healthy, and our job is to support that."**
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Rollout and Reception

Changing an established name is a big deal, and we made sure to get it right.

Early in the process, we brought in voices from across the valley: staff, donors, patients and community leaders. This input shaped the brand from the ground up, from the message to the colors to the way it was introduced.

When it was time to launch, a group of AVH employees from across the organization—our Brand Ambassadors—stepped up to help. They reviewed early drafts, gave feedback and offered insight. Their involvement made the rollout feel earned, not imposed.

The new brand was revealed during National Hospital Week, a time dedicated to recognizing our healthcare workers. A special ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the opening of the new main entrance and the next chapter in AVH's story.

"When our CEO, Dave Ressler, mentioned the new name at our ribbon-cutting, people didn't just clap," Slaughter says. "They cheered. You could feel the pride. And you could feel the new brand taking root in real time. It's a moment I will never forget."

The response confirmed what we hoped: The new name felt right. It reflected the work already happening across the valley, and it honored the people doing it.

The Big Picture

"Aspen Valley Health" is more than a name. It's part of a bigger plan to keep healthcare local, strong and sustainable.

As a not-for-profit, AVH doesn't answer to shareholders. It answers to the people who live here. That independence means AVH can focus on what this community needs most, even as the healthcare industry becomes more complex.

But staying independent takes planning. In 2023, the Board of Directors approved a five-year financial strategy. A big part of that plan is building housing for staff—because recruiting great people is one thing, keeping them here is another.

That's why AVH is prioritizing new housing projects for its team. The goal is to create living spaces that are affordable, close to work and designed for long-term stability. When staff can live in the valley, they stay longer, build stronger relationships and provide more consistent care.

That's where the brand helps.

"A strong identity builds confidence," says Slaughter. "People want to work for an organization that knows who it is and why it matters."

The new brand also helps raise awareness. Many locals didn't realize AVH is a not-for-profit, community-supported health system. Now, the message is clear.

That clarity matters as AVH seeks community support through the mill levy and private donations: The mill levy helps fund essential operations, and philanthropy helps fund expansion and innovation. Both are vital to AVH's future, and both depend on community trust.

"Everything we do is for our community," Slaughter says. "And we depend on our community's support to keep delivering the care we all expect and deserve."





Located in AVH's main entrance, this colorful wall and pillars display the names of donors who gave at least $10,000 to the Master Facilities Plan capital campaign. The wall mimics the colors of a fall hillside.

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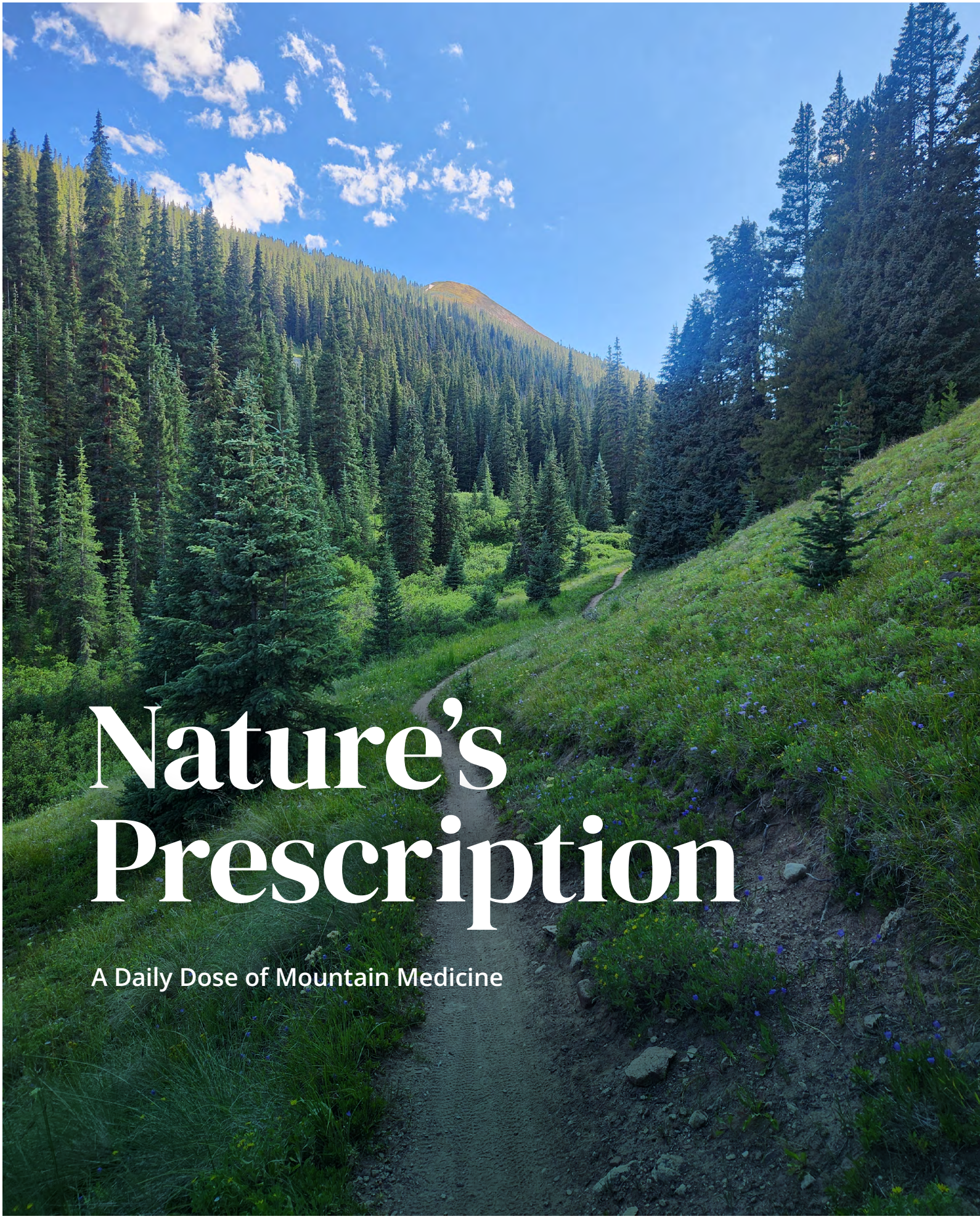
All your health information can be seen in one place by using the MyChart app. Access your medications, test results, upcoming appointments, medical bills, price estimates and more. Even if you've been seen at multiple healthcare organizations, you'll have full access to a snapshot of your healthcare journey.



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Nature's Prescription

A Daily Dose of Mountain Medicine



Something amazing happens when you step outside, take a deep breath and feel the sunshine on your skin: Your body gets a powerful dose of natural medicine.

"The outdoors is our most accessible pharmacy," says Catherine Chamberlin, DO, family medicine physician at Aspen Valley Health (AVH) Primary Care. "The physical and mental health benefits of simply being in nature are profound. I consider time outside an essential part of preventive healthcare."

A 2024 study from Harvard found that just 20 minutes in nature significantly reduces stress hormones like cortisol.[1] Another recent study showed that regular outdoor activity can lower blood pressure as effectively as some medications.[2]

For those of us living in Aspen and Pitkin County, nature's healing powers are right at our doorstep. With over 300 miles of trails connecting federal, county and city lands, our vibrant valley inspires us with crisp air, world-class adventure and extraordinary beauty every day.

The Science Behind Nature's Healing Touch

The health benefits of being outside go far beyond physical activity. Research suggests that nature itself, even without exercise, powers wellbeing.

In a 2023 study about the health benefits of nature[4], people in natural settings had more brain waves linked to relaxation and creativity than people in urban settings. They also showed less activity in brain regions tied to worry and anxiety.

"When we spend time outdoors, especially in the beautiful landscapes of the Roaring Fork Valley, our bodies respond in many positive ways," Dr. Chamberlin explains. "Vitamin D levels improve, helping bone health and immunity. Sleep gets better thanks to natural light that regulates our body's clock. And physical strength improves through movement on varied terrain."

Michelle Coombs, a behavioral health specialist at AVH Primary Care, focuses on the mental benefits in her practice.

"Being in nature helps us appreciate the beauty around us and keeps us in the present moment," she says. "This often buffers emotional stress. For those with busy minds, taking a break to enjoy the outdoors helps with mental grounding, emotional release, physical activity and spiritual connection."

The Japanese practice of "forest bathing" has gained scientific backing in recent years. It involves spending mindful time among trees to slow down and calm your nervous system. Some studies show that 15 minutes of walking through the woods can relieve stress and anxiety.[5] Regular, longer forest baths may bring even greater reward: stronger immune function, lower blood pressure and fewer stress hormones.

> **"I consider time outside an essential part of preventive healthcare."**
>
> **CATHERINE CHAMBERLIN, DO** | FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH PRIMARY CARE



> **"Balance among nature, ideas and culture is very important for mental and emotional health."**
>
> **MICHELLE COOMBS, MA, LPCC** | BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH PRIMARY CARE



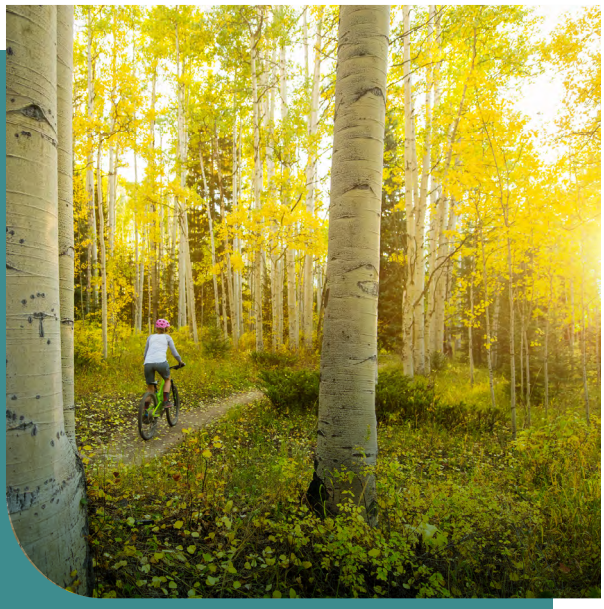
For Pitkin County residents, these health benefits show up in real ways. According to recent data, Pitkin County ranks as the third healthiest rural county in the United States.[6] This achievement comes in part from embracing our active, nature-oriented lifestyle—and from people working together to build a vibrant community where everyone can flourish.

Take Advantage of Our Easy Access to Nature

Curious about how to maximize nature's healing potential? Plan daily and weekly outdoor escapes.

"Walking on a lunch break or stepping outside for a few minutes of meditation or deep breathing can make a difference in creating daily habits," Dr. Chamberlin says. "What's special about Aspen is you don't have to wait for the weekend. Nature's benefits are accessible seven days a week, whether it's a quick midday break or a weekend adventure."

Access in the Roaring Fork Valley isn't just about being close to nature. It's a careful result of community planning that prioritizes trail networks and outdoor spaces as essential infrastructure. This ensures we can include natural movement in our daily commutes and recreation.



This accessibility extends to people of all abilities and experience levels. The **Rio Grande Trail** (5.5 miles, wheelchair accessible) offers a gentle, paved path perfect for casual walks, family bike rides or adaptive recreation. For those seeking moderate challenge, the **Hunter Creek Trail** (2.4 miles each way, 740-foot elevation gain) provides a beautiful forest experience with manageable ascents. Meanwhile, advanced outdoor enthusiasts can tackle iconic routes like the **Ute Trail** (1 mile, 1,000-foot elevation gain) or the **Arbaney Kittle Trail** (1.75 miles and about 2,000 feet of elevation gain), pushing physical limits while surrounded by stunning scenery.

Investment in outdoor infrastructure aligns with research from Blue Zone communities—places worldwide where people live exceptionally long, healthy lives. In all Blue Zones, environments are designed to make natural movement an inevitable part of daily life.

Outdoors = Body, Mind and Spirit Enrichment

Locally, the connection between nature and wellness traces back to the 1940s vision of Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke, founders of The Aspen Institute. This inspiring couple reimagined Aspen as a place that would nourish the body, mind and spirit.

This whole-person view of wellbeing—balancing physical activity, intellectual stimulation and spiritual nourishment—shaped our unique culture and contributed to its current health-focused identity.

"I would say balance among nature, ideas and culture is very important for mental and emotional health," Coombs explains. "When engaging in nature, ideas and culture, we foster deeper connections while enhancing personal health to continue thriving not only individually, but also as a contributing member of a community."

The Paepckes' vision planted the seeds for a community that prioritizes health at every level, from its world-class medical facilities to its commitment to environmental preservation, cultural enrichment and social connection.

This approach to wellbeing aligns remarkably well with Blue Zone characteristics. While Pitkin County isn't officially designated as a Blue Zone, it shares many key traits with these longevity hotspots.



"The natural beauty, fresh air and access to a large range of outdoor activities in Aspen, along with our small, close-knit community, all contribute to our wellbeing," Coombs notes. "Combined, these factors provide personal and social benefits similar to those of recognized Blue Zones like Sardinia, Italy, and Okinawa, Japan."

The Social Side of Outdoor Wellness

One of the most powerful aspects of outdoor activity in Pitkin County is its social component. While exercise itself delivers health benefits, research shows that exercising with others amplifies those benefits significantly.

A landmark study found that people exercising in groups experience greater improvements in mental health than those exercising alone, even when controlling for total exercise time and intensity.[7]

"Socially engaging in outdoor recreation can enhance feelings of connection and wellbeing overall," Coombs explains. "Often, having company while active strengthens relationships and encourages communication. This greatly decreases feelings of depression or loneliness, especially if there are limited chances to engage socially or there is a tendency to isolate."

The social bonding that happens on trails, ski slopes and sidewalks contributes to what psychologists call "social capital"—the networks of relationships that help us function effectively. Communities with high social capital consistently show better health outcomes across numerous measures.

"Outdoor activities foster social connection because there's often a common goal," Coombs says. "For example, scoring during a team sport activity or reaching the top of the mountain with your friends when hiking. Since the activity itself presents a focus for wellbeing, our defenses are lowered to be able to engage more personally with others, which may not feel as comfortable in other settings."

The Science Behind Nature's Health Benefits

Blood Pressure Reduction: Research shows that spending time in forest environments significantly lowers blood pressure compared to urban settings.[8] A review of multiple studies found an average decrease in blood pressure, contributing to improved heart-health outcomes associated with forest exposure.

Improved Mental Health: Research shows that regular access to natural spaces is consistently linked with reduced levels of depression and anxiety.[9] The findings indicate significant mental health benefits for individuals who frequently engage with nature, highlighting nature's essential role in psychological wellbeing.

Enhanced Immune Function: A 2023 review confirmed that forest environments increase natural killer-cell activity, a crucial part of the immune system that helps fight cancer and viral infections.[10] A single day in forest surroundings boosted immune-cell activity by about 50%, with effects lasting up to 30 days.

Brain Benefits: A Stanford University study found that walking in natural settings decreased negative thought patterns and activity in brain regions associated with mental illness.[11] It also improved memory and attention by up to 20% compared to urban environments.

Stress Hormone Reduction: Cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone, shows measurable decreases after exposure to nature.[12] A meta-analysis found an average 15% reduction in cortisol after 20 to 30 minutes in green spaces.

Inflammation Reduction: Emerging research indicates that exposure to natural environments can reduce inflammation markers in the body.[13] Lower levels of these inflammatory markers are linked to a reduced risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.[14]

Better Sleep Quality: A 2024 study found that people who spent at least two hours weekly in natural environments reported 37% fewer sleep disturbances and an average increase of 46 minutes in nightly sleep.[14]

> **"Notice how much better you feel after a day outside with sunshine on your face. Notice how much better you sleep, how your mood improves, how much better your body feels."**
>
> **CATHERINE CHAMBERLIN, DO** | FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH PRIMARY CARE

Get Going On Your Path to Outdoor Wellness

For longtime local residents, making outdoor activity part of daily life might seem natural. But for newcomers or those looking to get outdoors more, our experts say consistency is key.

"Walk every day. Explore new areas," Dr. Chamberlin advises. "Then slowly advance the duration, speed and elevation gain. Before you know it, you're at the summit! Creating habits is such a great way to take advantage of the nature-based amenities. Consistently go for a walk outside at lunch. Meet friends to ski every morning at 9 am."

To support mental health, Coombs recommends mindful engagement: "Light stretching and short walks, like around a nearby park, is a good start. Simply sitting outside to take in the surroundings, enjoying the sun, listening to the sounds, touching the grass, watching the river or meditating can make a big difference in improving mood."

Both experts emphasize that outdoor activities needn't be extreme to be beneficial. Simple activities like these can deliver significant health benefits when done regularly:

- Take a 10-minute "fresh-air break" during the workday.
- Enjoy a meal outside.
- Walk instead of drive for short errands.
- Meditate beside the Roaring Fork River.
- Stretch in a local park.

Joining community-based outdoor groups can also ease the transition into a more active lifestyle. From the free weekly Aspen Parkrun to guided nature walks, beginner ski lessons and gentle yoga in the park, the Roaring Fork Valley offers numerous entry points to outdoor wellness.

Preserving Nature's Healing Power

As our extraordinary valley continues to evolve, preserving access to nature's healing powers remains a priority for community leaders and healthcare providers alike.

"There's so much we can do as a community to protect our extraordinary natural world." Dr. Chamberlin says. "Inspiring each other to step up to help preserve and protect it is a great start."

Aspen and Pitkin County's thoughtful integration of nature into daily life—from community planning to healthcare practices—put us at the forefront of a growing recognition that our wellbeing is linked to the natural world. Here, the mountains aren't just a beautiful backdrop; they're active partners in creating healthier, happier and longer lives.

As you step outside today—to conquer a 14,000-foot peak, enjoy a gentle stroll along the river or simply sit for a moment in the sunshine—remember, you're not just enjoying the Roaring Fork Valley's beauty. You're participating in one of the most powerful, accessible and enjoyable forms of preventive healthcare available.

"Notice how much better you feel after a day outside with sunshine on your face," encourages Dr. Chamberlin. "Notice how much better you sleep, how your mood improves, how much better your body feels."

In our mountains and valleys, the prescription for better health is all around us. We need only step outside to fill it.

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How to Forest Bathe

The Japanese practice of forest bathing involves mindfully engaging with natural surroundings using all five senses. Unlike hiking or other goal-oriented activities, forest bathing focuses on being present rather than reaching a destination.

Choose a Suitable Location. Ideal spots include the Hunter Creek Trail, Maroon Creek Trail or the Tom Blake Trail in Snowmass—anywhere with tree cover and relative quiet.

Disconnect. Leave your phone behind, or at minimum, switch it to airplane mode.

Move Slowly. Walk no faster than two miles per hour, much slower than a typical hike.

Engage Your Senses

- Listen for birds, rustling leaves and other natural sounds.
- Touch tree bark, rocks and plant life.
- Smell the distinctive scents of pine, soil and clean mountain air.
- Look for colors, patterns and wildlife.

Breathe Consciously. Practice deep, slow breathing to enhance relaxation.

Sit in One Place. Spend at least 20 minutes sitting silently in one location, observing the environment around you.

Notice Your Body. Pay attention to physical sensations: feet on the ground, air on your skin, tension releasing from your muscles.

Several organizations in Pitkin County offer guided forest bathing experiences, including the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies and the Aspen Shakti wellness center. These guided sessions are ideal for beginners or those wanting to deepen their practice.



Staying at Your Peak

Year-Round Fitness for Mountain Living

BY JOE KAGAN, PT, DPT, CSCS
PHYSICAL THERAPIST AND CERTIFIED STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING SPECIALIST AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH

Getting outside in the mountains to stay in shape isn't just for ski season. Keep your body strong all year to protect your joints and muscles and to be ready for whatever adventure comes next—whether that's powder days, trail runs or dog walks.

Training in the "off-season" helps you move better, feel stronger and bounce back faster year after year. It keeps your body prepared for the big moves—carving turns, riding singletrack or scrambling up rock—and the small steps of everyday life. Thankfully, in the Roaring Fork Valley, there are tons of ways to stay active that also happen to be fun.

SPRING AND SUMMER
Build Your Winter Foundation

Mountain Biking: *Leg Strength, Core Stability and Reaction Time*

Mountain biking is one of the best ways to train for ski season. It builds strong legs and core stability while keeping your heart and lungs in shape. Navigating technical trails improves dynamic balance and reaction time—crucial skills for handling unexpected bumps, ice patches and variable snow conditions when winter arrives. The core stabilization required on rocky terrain directly translates to maintaining an athletic stance while absorbing terrain changes on the slopes.

Hiking and Trail Running: *Endurance and Stability*

Hiking works your glutes and quads through a full range of motion, which helps power strong ski turns. Running on trails builds ankle stability and improves body awareness, so you're ready to react to icy patches, moguls or uneven terrain. Downhill hiking, in particular, helps train the kind of muscle control that protects your knees during ski descents.

Rock Climbing: *Core Strength and Mental Focus*

Climbing builds grip strength, core control and mental focus—all useful when you're navigating tricky tree runs or variable snow. It teaches you to problem-solve quickly and shift your balance smoothly, just like you do while skiing technical terrain. Even a few climbing sessions a month can improve your awareness and coordination.

Paddleboarding: *Core Strength and Balance*

Balancing on water helps strengthen the deep muscles in your core, hips and ankles—the same ones that keep you upright on skis. Paddling also builds rotational strength and shoulder stability, which support efficient pole plants and strong turns. Bonus: It's a great way to cool off on hot summer days.

FALL AND WINTER

Stay in Shape for Summer

Skiing and Snowboarding: *Lower Body Power and Endurance*

Once snow falls, winter sports are the perfect way to keep your fitness going. They build leg strength, endurance and quick reflexes, and help you stay agile and mobile for summer biking and climbing. Skiing at altitude keeps your cardio strong and navigating different snow textures sharpens your reaction time.

Indoor Rock Climbing: *Year-Round Cross Training*

Can't get outside to climb? Indoor gyms keep your upper body strong and your brain engaged. Very few activities challenge your hand and forearm strength as much, making indoor climbing a great year-round option. Additionally, the full-body tension needed on overhanging walls keeps your core working hard. It's a great way to cross-train during cold months.

Weight Training and Cardio Workouts: *Targeted Strength*

Strength training keeps your joints safe by building specific muscle groups, strengthening tendons and making ligaments more resilient. Exercises like squats, lunges and planks support functional movement patterns and prevent injuries. Cardio and interval training boost endurance so you can stay out longer, whether you're skiing or biking. Add plyometrics (jumping drills) for faster reaction time and better control on uneven ground.

Yoga: *Mobility, Stability and Recovery*

Yoga improves flexibility, balance and body awareness. Regular practice opens your hips and shoulders, keeping you mobile for every kind of mountain movement. Stretching also helps reduce muscle soreness and speeds up recovery, especially after long ski days or intense summer climbs.

Mindfulness Matters

Your mind matters just as much as your muscles. Practices like meditation and breathwork improve focus, reduce stress and help you stay calm under pressure—whether you're descending a technical trail or navigating a steep ski line.

Year-Round Habits, Season-Long Results

The secret to staying at your best isn't training harder—it's training smarter. When you move regularly, challenge your body in different ways and listen to how it feels, you build a base of strength, mobility and confidence that carries you through every season of life.

Make movement a part of your lifestyle—not just your ski prep. Your joints will feel better, your balance will improve and you'll be ready for your next adventure.

Quick Tips to Stay Active All Year

Pick a few of these activities each season to stay ready for whatever's next!



Spring/Summer Ideas

- Mountain biking
- Hiking and trail running
- Paddleboarding
- Rock climbing
- Tennis or pickleball



Fall/Winter Options

- Skiing and snowboarding
- Mountain biking
- Weight training
- Indoor rock climbing
- Yoga and stretching
- Ice hockey or group fitness



Year-Round Training Tips

- Mix strength, cardio and mobility
- Start slow each season and build gradually
- Cross-train to reduce injury risk
- Stay consistent
- Train with friends to stay motivated



Built to Persevere

Tyler Williams Battles a Rare Brain Condition with Help from Aspen Valley Health

Tyler Williams remembers the exact moment his life changed. He was skiing Aspen Mountain in 2010 when he looked down and noticed something missing: his ski pole.

"I looked back and saw it sitting in the snow 40 yards behind me," he says. "I didn't feel it drop. I couldn't feel it in my right hand."

For most people, that might be alarming. For Tyler, a professional big mountain skier, seven-time X Games competitor and Skier Cross Tour veteran, it marked the beginning of a life-changing journey. Now more than 15 years later, he remains determined to reclaim his strength, mobility and the thrill of the mountain.

> **"I'll never be what I once was. But I want to be the best I can with the cards I've been dealt."**
>
> **TYLER WILLIAMS**

A Long Road to Answers

Tyler's symptoms worsened over time, without a clear diagnosis. He had hand surgery thinking it would help, but it didn't. Eventually he lost control of his right side and still didn't have answers. Finally, in 2017 an MRI confirmed what he'd suspected: Something was wrong with his brain. He was diagnosed with a rare cerebral arteriovenous malformation (AVM) growing in the left side of his brain, which was impairing the entire right side of his body.

"It wasn't good news," Tyler says. "But at least it gave me something to fight."

From Surgery to Setbacks

He underwent three sessions of gamma knife radiation and multiple surgeries. The most recent, in October 2024, left him with more than 13 staples in his scalp. Just months earlier, he had been airlifted by Flight for Life to Denver after a brain-bleed episode.

Recovery has not been linear.

"There were days I didn't know if I'd make it back to the slopes or on the bike. Or even back to walking steadily," he says, noting the emotional toll often eclipses the physical pain.

"It's the...isolation," he says emotionally. "Watching everyone else ski while you sit in a chair at the bottom...that's a tough place to be."

And yet, his passion for skiing and biking remains unshaken. It's why he goes to therapy nearly every day. It's why he still believes in himself.

"I just want to feel it again," Tyler says with vigor. "Skiing powder. Oh, man, that's the goal."

The Heart of Rehab

That passion is what drives him to show up, to push, to progress. He's basically relearned how to use the muscles on his right side—twice now. Despite the setbacks, Tyler maintains a competition-driven edge.

"I've been training my whole life," he says with a fierce glint in his eye. "As a ski racer, you train when you're tired. When you're sore. When no one's watching. So, I show up to PT the same way—every day, ready to work."

Tyler now lives in an ADA-accessible apartment directly across from Aspen Valley Health (AVH), where his recovery is supported by a team that has come to feel like family.

"It's my second home," he says. "PT, my heart doctor, my general doc; they're all right there. It's where I rebuild."

Every Wednesday, he meets with occupational therapist Krista Fox. She's been with him for over seven years, a steady presence in a turbulent journey. She pushes him. He asks for more. Together, they've made tremendous progress.

"Like many athletes," Krista says, "Tyler has an unrelenting drive for improvement, a focus on excellence. And he weathers any challenges that arise with positivity."

Krista incorporates a range of therapies to help Tyler regain strength and control—including work in the water, where his body can move more freely.

The SwimEx pool at AVH uses water current to support resistance exercises and stationary swimming, much like an underwater treadmill. For Tyler, the buoyancy allows him to jump and move in ways he can't on land, where gravity works against him. It gives him the freedom to move his body—something especially valuable for people with neurological conditions.

"In the water, I can feel my right side again," he says. "It's like it wakes up. I do things in that pool I can't do anywhere else."

He also trains with physical therapist Matt Michael, focusing on core strength and leg drive. With every session, he reclaims a bit more of the balance and power that once came so naturally.

"He recently hit a new milestone on the squat rack: his heaviest lift since we started working together," says Matt, who has witnessed significant progress in Tyler's power,

coordination and balance. "His commitment makes it easy to root for him. He inspires people every day with his grit and determination."

The Aspen community's support for Tyler has been phenomenal. From his sponsors, supporters, fans and physical therapy teams, he is forever grateful.

"The support means everything...everything," Tyler says, voice cracking. "Krista and Matt are my superheroes. I wouldn't be where I am without them."

One Step at a Time

Progress isn't always visible, but it's always there. Tyler's right side of his body remains numb, and he must visually confirm where it is before using it. Riding a bike means adapting—installing a dual-sided brake, adjusting his grip, staying laser-focused.

Tyler at a Glance

Hometown: Aspen, CO

Claim to fame:
Seven-time X Games competitor, professional big mountain skier, mountain biking competitor

Diagnosis: Arteriovenous malformation (AVM)

AVH Support team:
Krista Fox, OTR/L, CBIST
Matthew Michael, PT, DPT

Top goal: Ski powder again—frequently



Tyler 1998

"It's not about perfection," he says. "It's about showing up and getting better, inch by inch."

This past winter, he managed five ski runs. "I want more," he says. "I want to ski powder like I used to. Not once. I want to go after it every chance I can get."

His summer plans revolve around strength building and long rides. He recently installed a custom brake system to give him more control.

"If I can grip the handlebar and stay upright, I can ride," he says. "And when I ride, I feel like myself again."

When he's not training, Tyler nurtures another passion: the Goat House, the ski and bike shop he helped build. The shop, like Tyler, is fueled by resilience.

"It's where my friends—some of the best athletes in the world—hang out," he says. "It's more than a shop. It's a symbol that I'm still in the game."

Living with Purpose

There's power in Tyler's voice when he talks about Stella, his 4-year-old dog, and the '65 Mustang he restored with his dad.

"Stella and the Mustang are my babies," Tyler says with a grin. "Nothing beats a fall drive through the mountains with the roof down and Stella riding shotgun. It's another form of therapy for me."

Tyler knows his journey is far from over. He knows potential setbacks are always looming, but he is determined to finish on his terms.

"I know I'll never be elite again, not like I was," he says. "Winning now simply means having a chance to do the things I love."

How long will it take to get there?

"I thought I'd be done with PT by now," he adds. "But I've learned that healing isn't about finishing. It's about continuing. It's about believing there's still more to come."

Tyler doesn't just push himself; he inspires others. One look at his Instagram page (@freeridesports) and you quickly understand that he's documenting his journey for himself and those who need an extra push to keep going.

"You gotta have goals when you become disabled," Tyler says with conviction. "Otherwise, you've got nothing."

When asked what he'd say to others navigating a health crisis, his answer is immediate: "Don't stop. No matter how dark it gets. There's always a way forward. Even if it's just one ski run, one bike ride or one swim lap at a time."

And with the support of his team at AVH, Tyler Williams isn't just chasing powder. He's chasing a world of possibilities.



‘What’s Inside’ Word Find

Test your knowledge of this issue’s contents. Read up on nature’s prescription, gut health, staying at your peak, the new “Aspen Valley Health” name and tasty recipes. Then scavenge the puzzle below to see which terms catch your eye.

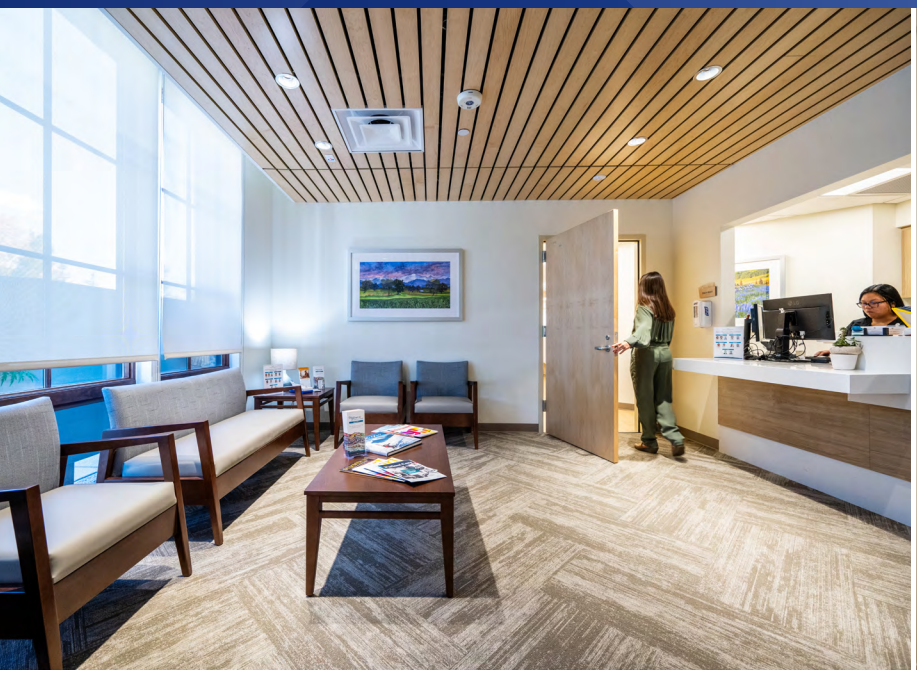
How many words can you spot?

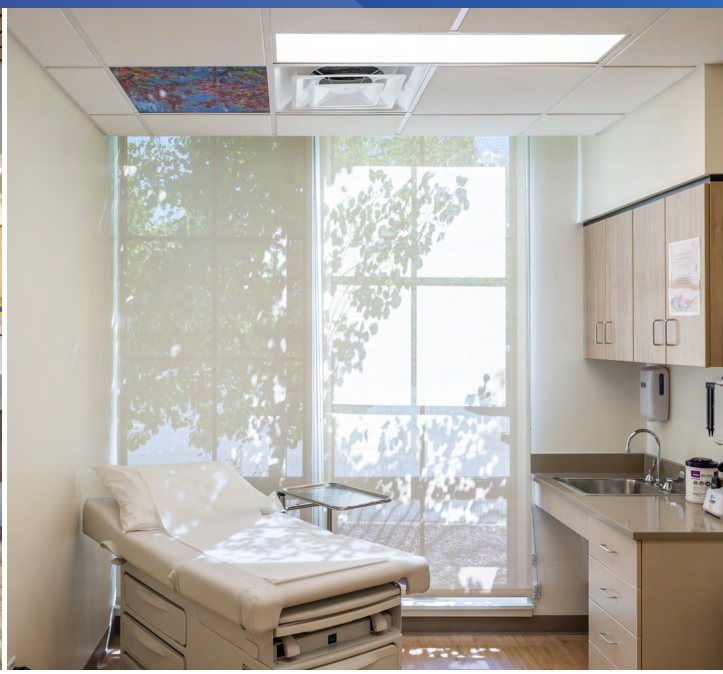
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F G I Y L N P R E H U U C M I N D F U L Y A U V
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P Y X S H E N D O F L I P T E C H N O L O G Y H

Forest bathing
Paepcke
Pitkin County
Outdoor wellness
Fresh air break
Mindful
Cortisol
Gastrointestinal
Microbiome
Colonoscopy
Gastro reflux disease
Celiac disease
EndoFLIP technology
Ski racer
X Games
SwimEx pool
Stella
Mustang
Trail running
Core strength
Paddleboarding
Plyometrics
Rock climbing
Mountain biking
Aspen Valley Health
For you. For life.
Ribbon cutting
Deep blue skies
Bonded leaves
Community trust
Shishito peppers
Summer salad
Antioxidants
Pumpkin spice
Coconut water

Healthy Challenge

Find a new adventure in our beautiful Roaring Fork Valley. Plan your next hike at aspentrailfinder.com.





Aspen Valley Health's new Primary Care clinic opened in the Midvalley in fall of 2024, providing greater access for patients in Basalt and Carbondale and strengthening our Network of Care.

A Year of Remarkable Progress

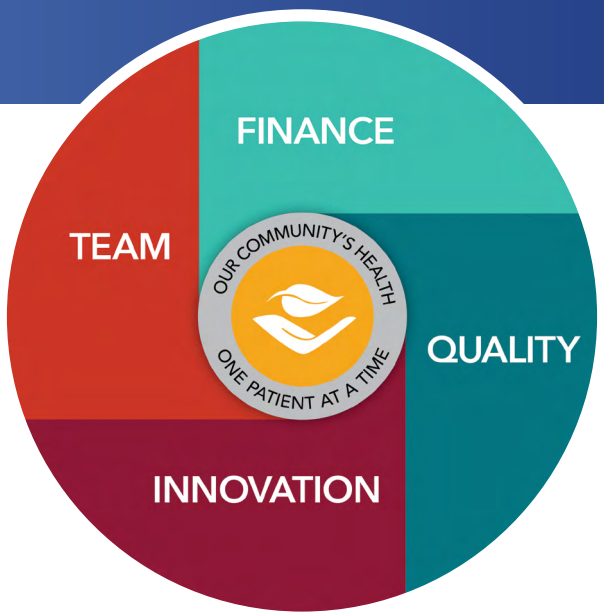
As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with gratitude for everyone who contributes to our mission of providing extraordinary healthcare in an environment of excellence, compassion and trust. Each day, we remain guided by our vision of fostering a community that is among the healthiest in the nation. It is my privilege to share a few highlights from a year that truly demonstrated the strength and dedication of our team:

- This was the first year of our **five-year financial plan**, approved by our Board of Directors in 2023, and I am pleased to report we are right on track. Careful planning and disciplined execution have positioned Aspen Valley Health (AVH) to continue investing in services and programs that meet our community's evolving needs.
- We also **welcomed Dr. Alexandra Kovar** to our Surgical Specialists team. Trained at Stanford and highly skilled in robotic-assisted procedures, Dr. Kovar brings expertise in diagnosing and treating complex upper-digestive conditions. Her arrival further expands our ability to deliver advanced care close to home. (For more on Dr. Kovar, see the article on page 36.)
- We moved into our **new Primary Care clinic in the Midvalley**, creating greater access for patients in Basalt and strengthening our Network of Care. This welcoming space is an important step in our commitment to whole-person healthcare, helping people stay healthy and connected to preventive services.
- Finally, 2024 was an **exceptional year for recognition**. We earned the Press Ganey Pinnacle of Excellence Award for Patient Experience in Urgent Care, as well as Guardian of Excellence Awards in our Emergency Department and Inpatient Services. We were named a Top 100 Critical Access Hospital and received the Performance Leadership Award for Excellence in Patient Perspective from Chartis. In addition, we proudly earned a Five-Star Rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for Patient Experience. These honors place us in rare company and reflect the extraordinary efforts of our physicians, nurses and staff.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to our dedicated team, talented physicians and my fellow board members for making 2024 such a remarkable year. We are building on this momentum in 2025 and look forward to enriching our community for decades to come.



MELINDA NAGLE, MD | CHAIR OF THE AVH BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MEMBER OF THE AVH FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS



2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT

1,731
Health Fair blood draws

598
people employed, making AVH one of the largest employers in our community

$8,609,930
in Medicaid subsidies

$3,515,379
of uncompensated healthcare services provided to patients in need

$669,366
in direct financial support to outside agencies for programs that serve the needs of our most vulnerable community members

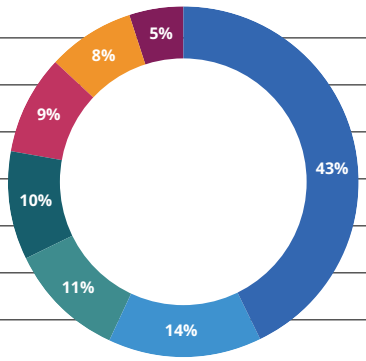
We help support:

- Aspen Community Health Services
- Recovery Resources Colorado (Withdrawal Management and Unsheltered Outreach)
- Mountain Family Health Centers
- Pitkin County Vital Mental Health Services

2024 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

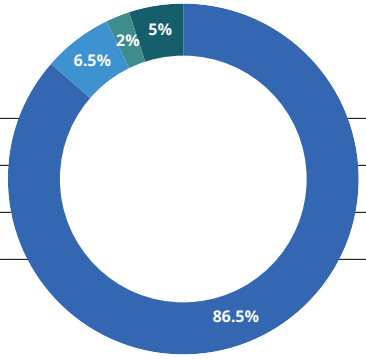
Guided by our strategic plan, Aspen Valley Health remains committed to delivering high-quality, community-based healthcare while preserving our independence. Our dedicated team of healthcare professionals continues to provide extraordinary care as we work to enhance access, improve operational efficiency and ensure long-term financial health.

2024 EXPENSES



Salaries & Wages	$72,113,902
Supplies	23,800,335
Depreciation & Amortization	18,043,338
Maintenance, Utilities & Equipment	15,810,893
Employee Benefits	15,319,748
Contracted Services	7,824,434
Other	13,143,974
Total Expenses	**$166,056,624**

2024 REVENUE



Net Patient Services	$150,513,422
Property Taxes	11,392,504
Contributions/Grants	3,030,625
Other	8,960,801
Total Revenues	**$173,897,352**

Where Community and Care Connect



When Health Systems, Partners and Neighbors Come Together, Wellness Becomes a Shared Pursuit

Aspen Valley Health (AVH) exists for one reason—to care for you.

As a not-for-profit health system, we provide high-quality care to everyone who walks through our doors. We also support the health of our entire community. That's part of our mission and what makes us unique. It's also why we're focused on being the healthiest rural community in the nation.

A Network of Care and Compassion

Health doesn't begin and end in a hospital or a doctor's office. That's why AVH supports and is part of a larger network of local organizations across the Roaring Fork Valley: to make care more accessible and community focused.

In our role as a community health system, we help financially sustain and sponsor those organizations doing great work that complement our own services and provide an extended safety net for our most vulnerable community members.

These organizations include Aspen Community Health Services, Recovery Resources' Withdrawal Management and Unsheltered Outreach, HeadQuarters, Pitkin County Vital Mental Health Services and Mountain Family Health Centers, to name a few. These organizations also help support our neighbors who may be under- or uninsured. Together, we help people before their needs become critical.

"Ensuring that all residents of the Roaring Fork Valley have access to high-quality healthcare requires collaboration and partnership," says Dustin Moyer, CEO at Mountain Family Health Centers. "Aspen Valley Health's commitment to this joint endeavor should be celebrated. AVH's generous financial contributions support Mountain Family's effort to provide care for our community's uninsured patients and those who might not otherwise be able to access medical, dental and behavioral healthcare services."

Bringing Health Within Reach

One of our most impactful community programs is Aspen Valley Health's Health Fair held twice a year, in spring and fall. These weekend events offer affordable lab tests and health education—all in one visit. Nearly 2,000 people come through the Health Fair in a given year, and many attendees set their clocks to it. The Fairs offer a chance to check in with your health for a fraction of the cost. While not every attendee will need every test offered, the savings can amount to hundreds of dollars. Participants throughout the Western Slope are drawn to the event because of this tremendous value.

"We're the last healthcare provider within 90 minutes still offering these health fairs," says Diana Bulman, president of the Aspen Valley Health Foundation. "Many attendees tell us it's one of the last good deals in the valley—a way to get real answers and take control of their health."

Partnering for Better Health

Aspen Valley Health supports organizations across our region to care for the health of all residents. Here are just a few of our community partners:

Aspen Community Health Services
A non-profit clinic offering affordable public health services, such as women's health, prenatal health, dental health and immunizations.
aspencommunityhealth.org

HeadQuarters
Engages, educates and empowers people to build and enjoy Mental Fitness in Pitkin, Eagle and Garfield counties. Offers a comprehensive provider directory for those seeking behavioral health support and funding for those on a sliding scale.
headq.org

Mountain Family Health Centers in Basalt
After-hours, non-emergency medical, behavioral and dental healthcare services for all community members.
mountainfamily.org

Pitkin County Vital Mental Health Services
A broad range of quality mental health and substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare services available for youth, adults and families.
pitkincounty.com

Recovery Resources Colorado
A safe, therapeutic environment offering evidence-based clinical care for clients and their families. Outpatient programs and support services guide people through the process of transition and/or recovery in the following areas: withdrawal management, individual therapy, life skills development, street outreach and unsheltered services, DUI classes and more.
recoveryresourcescolorado.org

Results are delivered quickly and shared with your provider. It's a practical way to take charge of your wellness.

The Foundation's Role: Filling the Gap

While AVH's community benefit exists with or without fundraising, the Aspen Valley Health Foundation (AVHF) helps make many services sustainable.

With nearly half of AVH patients on Medicare or Medicaid, and many services operating at a financial loss, gifts from local donors help close the gap between what insurance reimburses and what care actually costs.

"When people give to the Foundation, they're helping us close that gap," Diana says. "Their support ensures we can continue delivering high-quality services."



The Foundation also supports educational opportunities for nurses and medical assistants, workforce housing initiatives and equipment upgrades that ensure quality care.

Empowering Proactive Wellness

AVH is expanding preventive testing options so patients can take a more active role in their long-term health. Offerings include MRI, hormone testing, cardiac CT scans and more—available on-demand and reviewable with a provider of your choice.

"Our community is focused on staying well for the long run," Diana says. "These tools help people take action before a problem becomes serious."

From screenings to support services, AVH stands beside every resident in the valley. We're not just here to treat illness. We're here to help you thrive.

Sharper Imaging. Greater Comfort. Better Care.

AVHF recently received a generous grant from The Diane & Bruce Halle Foundation to support the Hologic breast mammography machine. The 3Dimensions™ Mammography System features higher resolution to better spot masses and calcifications, and curved paddles for improved patient comfort during compression. The grant helps AVH bring in state-of-the-art technology to complete 4,000 mammography studies annually for members of our community (and free mammograms for those in their 40th year).



Healthy Journey Symposium

Spirited Fundraiser Supports the Latest Healthy Aging Research

In February, the second annual Healthy Journey Symposium welcomed more than 175 guests for vibrant discussions about the science behind healthy aging.

Keynote speaker Rick Klausner, MD, a pioneer in cancer research and former director of the National Cancer Institute, presented the latest scientific advancements in aging research. Dr. Klausner, who is the chief scientific advisor and founder of Altos Labs, shared data and insights on longevity and reversing cellular aging.

A founder and director of Juno Therapeutics and Director of GRAIL, Dr. Klausner was appointed by Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush as the 11th Director of the National Cancer Institute and served from 1995 to 2001. After his talk, Dr. Klauser joined a panel of Aspen Valley Health (AVH) physicians, surgeons and CEO Dave Ressler to answer questions from guests. Seventeen AVH physicians, surgeons and medical staff also sat at guest tables for discussions over a healthy meal.

In a separate talk, Ressler presented AVH's vision to make our rural community the healthiest in the nation. He detailed the challenges hospitals face to stay independent and fiscally strong, and the vital role philanthropy plays in supporting our mission to empower the wellbeing of all our residents.

The fundraiser, held February 20, 2025, at Aspen Meadows, supported Aspen Valley Health Foundation (AVHF). Cori Berger and Lisa Guth, along with their husbands Seth Berger and Bill Guth, co-chaired the event. They were assisted by host committee co-chairs Meredith Loring and Sami Inkinen and Laura and Michael Paulus. The evening included a spirited paddle raise led by AVHF trustee John Sarpa.

AVHF is grateful to the host committee and all attendees. The event raised over $525,000 because of the generosity of those who bought tickets and tables and made donations. This financial support will help AVH continue to provide the depth and breadth of healthcare services that our community trusts us to provide.













1: Tiffany Phipps, Emily Farrell, Jacqueline Duba, Marina Sharpe and Casey Patak. **2:** Noah Bremen. **3:** Dr. Rick Klausner; Dr. Rebecca Laird; Dr. Catherine Chamberlin; Dave Ressler, AVH CEO; Dr. Melissa Somers; Dr. Alexandra Kovar; Dr. Kris Alden. **4:** Marina and Oliver Sharpe. **5:** Laura Paulus, Meredith Loring, Cori Berger and Lisa Guth.

Letter from the Foundation



DIANA BULMAN |
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER OF THE ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH FOUNDATION

As an independent not-for-profit health network, Aspen Valley Health (AVH) relies on philanthropy, property tax revenue (mill levy) and fiscal prudence to fulfill its mission. Anyone who comes through our emergency room doors will get extraordinary healthcare, regardless of their insurance status.

For more than half the patients who come to us for outpatient services, AVH isn't fully reimbursed for the costs. Providing care in advance of payment or knowing that you might not get paid isn't "good business," but it's what not-for-profit hospitals do.

Our community expects the most skilled medical professionals, clean and updated facilities, the latest technology and short wait times for appointments. Philanthropy enables AVH to continue to bridge this gap between the costs of operating a health system in the Roaring Fork Valley and its vision to foster this community as the healthiest in the nation.

AVH could not provide convenient access to care without the donors listed here. Thank you.



Lisa Aanonsen Kellogg
Daniel Abrutyn
Scarlett and William Adams
Brandon Ader
Rita and Jeffrey Adler Family Foundation
Dr. Stephen Adler and Sarah Brett-Smith
Emily and Jon Albers
Kris Alden, MD
Pamela C. Alexander Advised Fund at Aspen Community Foundation
Patricia and Richard Allen
Sally Allenpotvin
Robert Alpert
Alpine Bank
Altec / Styslinger Foundation
Jose Antonio Amaya
Abby and Steve Anderson
Dr. Dustin and Sarah Anderson
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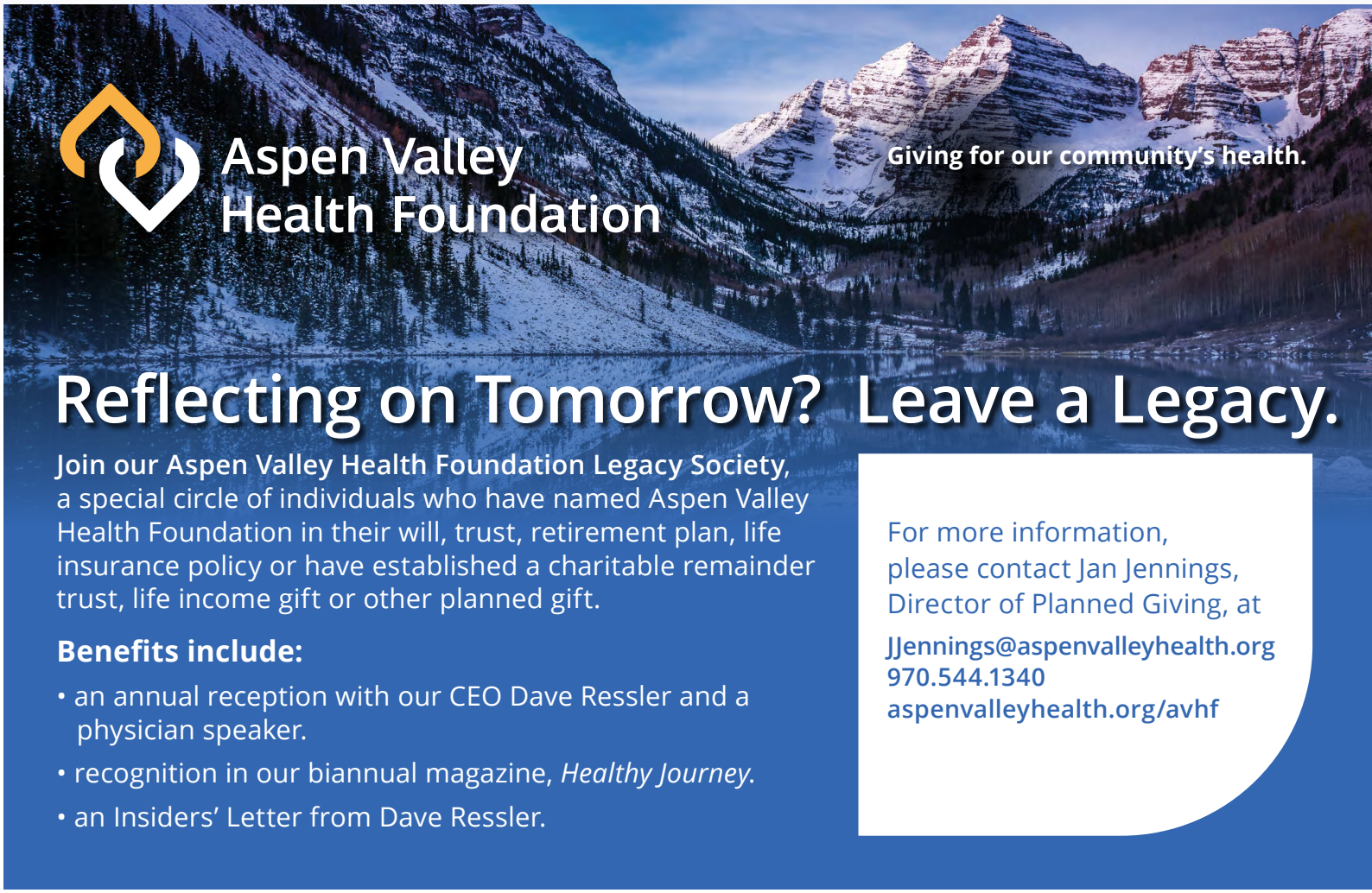
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We thank our Aspen Valley Health Foundation (AVHF) Legacy Society members, a special circle of individuals who have named AVHF in their will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or have established a charitable remainder trust, life income gift or other planned gift.

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Reflecting on Tomorrow? Leave a Legacy.

Join our Aspen Valley Health Foundation Legacy Society, a special circle of individuals who have named Aspen Valley Health Foundation in their will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or have established a charitable remainder trust, life income gift or other planned gift.

Benefits include:

- an annual reception with our CEO Dave Ressler and a physician speaker.
- recognition in our biannual magazine, *Healthy Journey*.
- an Insiders' Letter from Dave Ressler.

For more information, please contact Jan Jennings, Director of Planned Giving, at

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2025

Polo Recap

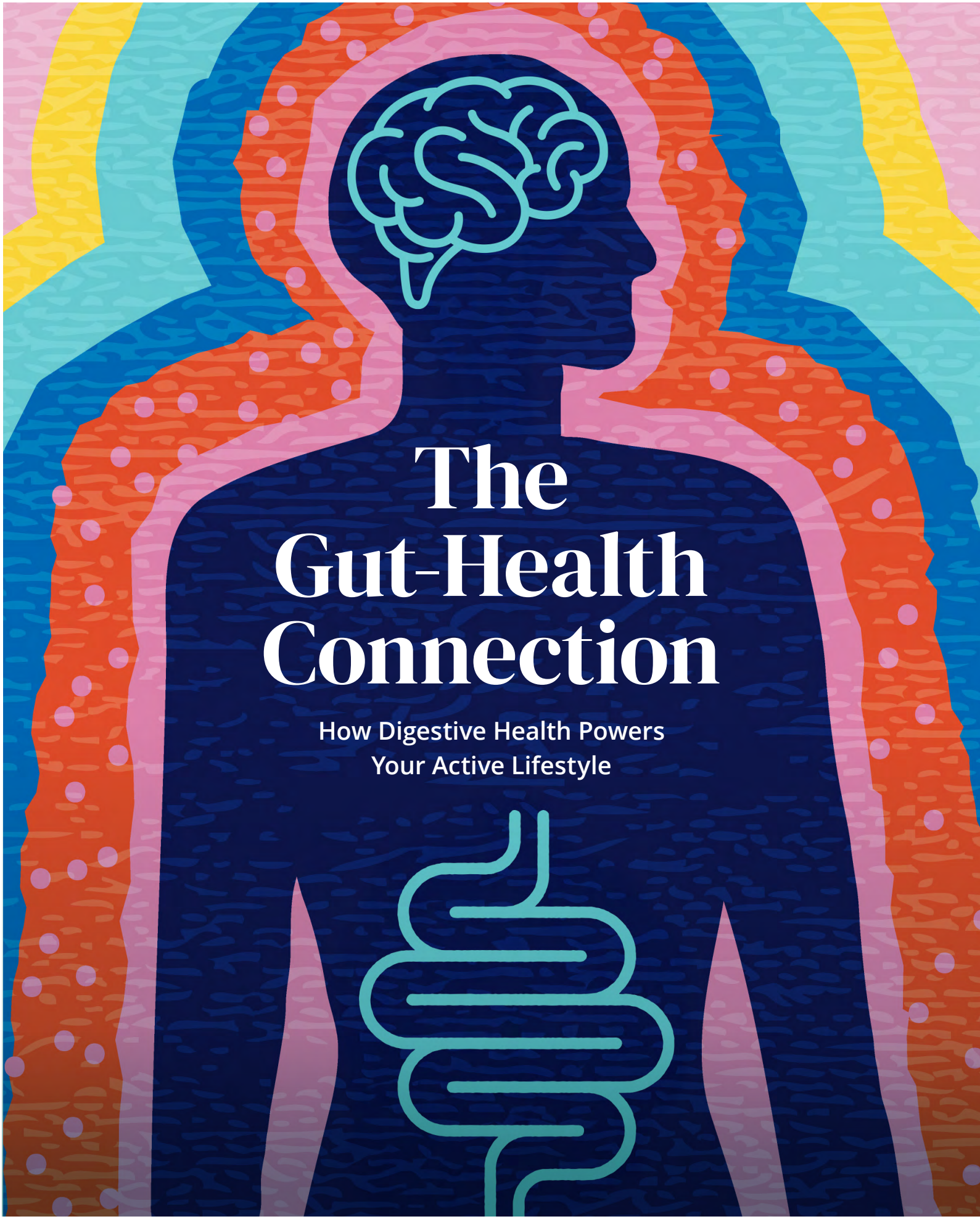
On August 17, over 200 guests gathered to watch polo at the Aspen Valley Polo Club in Carbondale and to support the Aspen Valley Health Foundation. It was a beautiful day at the polo club's grandstand.

Platinum sponsors included Vectra Bank and Lugano. Silver sponsors were Kemo Sabe, Jack and Michele Lafield, Rancho Los Amigos, Clark's Market and Martin Engineering. Silver sponsors included Scarlett and Bill Adams, Chalet Alpina, Haselden Construction, Pam Alexander and Alpine Bank. Members of the medical staff supported the event, as well. It was a fun and festive way to enjoy a Sunday, watch exciting and fast-paced polo and support Aspen Valley Health (AVH). The amount raised was $675,000, with over $328,000 going to support AVH and its ability to continue to remain independent and provide the high-quality healthcare for which AVH is known.

We are grateful for the guests who raised their paddles and bid generously. Philanthropy from our community comes in many forms, and events such as these contribute close to one-third of the amount that AVH needs to supplement its annual operating budget.

TOP: Zach Mobilian, Andrew Sova, Allie Sova, Francesca Mobilian, Beth Mobilian, Diana Lane, Sunni McBride, Carlie Umbarger, Mark Umbarger and Cole Bond
MIDDLE: Wendy Kunkle, Maureen Raynaud, Jen Demers and Maryanne McKenzie
BOTTOM: Zac Zachary, Melanie Sturm and Cari Kuhlman





The Gut-Health Connection

How Digestive Health Powers Your Active Lifestyle

Believe it or not, much of your vibrant mountain lifestyle is powered by the amazing system inside your gut.

"Your digestive system does much more than process your morning coffee or evening meal," explains Alexandra Kovar, MD, gastrointestinal surgeon at Aspen Valley Health (AVH). "It's linked to your immune system, energy levels, mood and even how long you live. Your gut health is the hidden engine that powers everything you do."

Recent research backs this up. A major 2024 study in *Nature Medicine* found that gut bacteria can predict endurance and recovery time with 83% accuracy.[1] This matters for those of us who love Roaring Fork Valley's active lifestyle.

Beyond Digestion: Your Gut as Mission Control

"Gut health" means more than digestion. It refers to how well your entire gastrointestinal (GI) system works—from esophagus to intestines—and the trillions of helpful bacteria living there. These bacteria, called your microbiome, work day and night to keep you well.

"Your microbiome is like the town square of your body," Dr. Kovar explains. "When it's healthy and diverse, it boosts immunity, helps control weight, lifts moods and reduces inflammation." When your gut balance is off, it can lead to problems like obesity, diabetes, autoimmune diseases and even anxiety or depression. This makes gut health essential to your overall wellbeing.

Dr. Kovar joined AVH in 2024 after completing special training at Stanford University. She brings top-notch expertise in gastrointestinal health to our valley. "I was drawn to Aspen because people here value healthy living," says Dr. Kovar. "It's the perfect place to practice medicine that focuses on quality of life and longevity."

She uses gentle surgical approaches and advanced robotic methods to treat acid reflux disease (GERD), obesity and digestive cancers. Her goal is to help patients heal faster and flourish.



Positive Daily Habits Make a Difference

Creating intestinal health starts with diet—especially foods rich in fiber that feed beneficial bacteria.

"Fiber is your gut's best friend," Dr. Kovar emphasizes. "Vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains fuel your good gut bacteria while keeping you regular and possibly lowering colon cancer risk."

Current guidelines from the American Gastroenterological Association (updated in early 2024) suggest 25-30 grams of fiber daily for adults.[2] Most Americans eat less than half that amount, which leads to more digestive problems nationwide.

Drinking enough water is just as important.

"Water helps fiber do its job and prevents constipation," notes Dr. Kovar. "For active Aspen residents exercising at altitude, staying hydrated is even more crucial for digestive health."

> **"Your gut health is the hidden engine that powers everything you do."**
>
> **ALEXANDRA KOVAR, MD** | GASTROINTESTINAL AND MINIMALLY-INVASIVE ROBOTIC SURGERY SPECIALIST AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH





Mindful eating habits also boost digestion. Taking smaller bites, chewing well and eating slowly—instead of rushing meals between activities—greatly improves how your body absorbs nutrients.

"When patients tell me about digestive discomfort, I first ask about their eating habits," Dr. Kovar shares. "Rushing meals or eating right before bed disrupts your digestive rhythm, often causing discomfort, reflux and poor nutrient absorption."

Regular activity, something most locals naturally include in their routines, helps digestive health by promoting movement in the intestine and reducing stress. Research published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* in 2024 found that even moderate exercise can increase gut bacteria diversity by up to 30% over six months.[3]

Why Preventive Gut Care Matters

Perhaps most vital to GI health is preventive care, especially regular screenings like colonoscopies and endoscopies. These procedures aren't just for diagnosis. They prevent serious illness by finding and removing potentially dangerous growths before they become cancerous.

"Many GI issues develop silently, with few or no early warning signs," warns Dr. Kovar. "By the time symptoms show up, conditions may already be advanced. That's why routine screenings are so crucial. They catch problems before they become serious."

According to 2024 guidelines from the American Cancer Society, colonoscopies are now recommended for everyone starting at age 45, or earlier for people with family history

or concerning symptoms. With colon cancer rates rising in younger adults, this preventive approach has never been more important.[4]

"I often see patients who've delayed screenings because they feel healthy or their schedules are too busy," Dr. Kovar notes. "But these procedures truly save lives. At AVH, we've created efficient protocols to make screenings as comfortable as possible, respecting your active life while protecting your long-term health."

Advanced Care Helps Address Common Conditions

When digestive issues do arise, Dr. Kovar and her team at AVH offer leading-edge treatments, including simple surgical approaches for best outcomes.

Acid reflux disease (GERD) and Barrett's esophagus are two of the most common conditions Dr. Kovar treats. GERD happens when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus, causing heartburn and potentially leading to Barrett's esophagus, a precancerous condition.

"Early warning signs of GERD include persistent heartburn, trouble swallowing, nausea and unexplained weight loss," explains Dr. Kovar. "Spotting these symptoms early and seeking prompt medical care prevents complications and greatly improves treatment results."

For obesity, which is directly linked to digestive health, Dr. Kovar offers both surgical and non-surgical options. As one of the few surgeons in western Colorado with specialized fellowship training in weight-loss procedures, she brings advanced expertise to our mountain community.

"The link between obesity and gut health goes both ways," she notes. "Excess weight raises risks for diabetes, heart disease, cancer and liver problems. At the same time, an imbalanced gut microbiome can contribute to weight gain. Today's treatments are effective, minimally invasive and empowering—helping patients achieve lasting health improvements."

> **"Today's treatments are effective, minimally invasive and empowering—helping patients achieve lasting health improvements."**
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> GASTROINTESTINAL AND MINIMALLY-INVASIVE ROBOTIC SURGERY SPECIALIST AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH

Common GI Conditions Explained

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD): A chronic condition where stomach acid flows back into the esophagus, causing heartburn, regurgitation and potential damage to esophageal tissue. While lifestyle changes and medications help many patients, advanced cases may benefit from surgical procedures that strengthen the valve between the esophagus and stomach.

Barrett's Esophagus: A serious complication of chronic GERD where normal esophageal tissue is replaced with tissue resembling intestinal lining. This precancerous condition affects up to 15% of GERD patients and requires regular monitoring. Research published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology* (2024) found that early endoscopic intervention reduced cancer development by approximately 76% over a five-year follow-up period.[5]

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS): A common disorder affecting the large intestine, causing abdominal pain, bloating, gas, diarrhea and/or constipation. While IBS doesn't damage the digestive tract, it significantly impacts quality of life. Management typically includes dietary changes, stress reduction and sometimes medication.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD): Includes conditions like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis that cause chronic inflammation in the digestive tract. Symptoms include persistent diarrhea, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, fatigue and weight loss. Treatment usually involves anti-inflammatory medications, immune system suppressors and occasionally surgery.

Diverticulitis: Occurs when small pouches (diverticula) that form in the digestive tract become inflamed or infected. Contrary to popular belief, seeds and nuts don't cause flare-ups. Most cases respond to antibiotics and dietary adjustments, though severe or recurrent episodes may require surgical intervention.

Celiac Disease and Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity: Conditions triggered by consuming gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder causing damage to the small intestine, while non-celiac sensitivity produces similar symptoms without intestinal damage. Both require strict dietary management to prevent symptoms.



Dr. Kovar's training at Stanford included certification in robotic surgical techniques using the da Vinci system. She now offers this leading-edge treatment to GI patients at AVH.

"This advanced technology helps patients recover faster with less pain," she explains. "For our active community, this means getting back to the outdoor activities much sooner that make life here rewarding."

Debunking Gut Health Myths

Despite growing awareness about digestive health, misconceptions still exist. Dr. Kovar regularly addresses several common myths with her patients.

One widespread belief holds that nuts, seeds and popcorn trigger diverticulitis (inflammation of pouches that form in the intestinal wall). "Science has completely disproven this myth," Dr. Kovar states firmly. "These foods are actually good for your digestive health, providing valuable fiber and nutrients."

Similarly, trends like colon cleansing performed outside medical supervision often cause more harm than good. "When done improperly, these treatments pose real risks including dehydration, infection or intestinal damage," Dr. Kovar cautions. "Always talk to a medical professional before trying alternative treatments."

Regarding probiotics—supplements containing beneficial bacteria—Dr. Kovar takes a balanced approach. "Probiotics have shown effectiveness as added therapy for specific conditions like antibiotic-associated diarrhea, C. difficile infection and certain types of irritable bowel syndrome," she explains. "However, they're not cure-alls, and quality varies greatly between products."

She recommends evidence-backed options like Align, Culturelle and Activia when appropriate, while emphasizing that probiotics work best when supported by a fiber-rich diet that naturally nourishes gut bacteria.

Innovations in GI Health

AVH continues investing in cutting-edge technologies that enhance digestive care for our community. Recent additions include advanced endoFLIP technology and high-resolution manometry for detailed esophageal function assessment, complementing our state-of-the-art surgical capabilities.

"We've also added AI technology to our colonoscopies," Dr. Kovar adds enthusiastically. "This helps us find about 10% more polyps than colonoscopies done without this technology—a significant advantage in cancer prevention."

Dr. Kovar envisions AVH becoming a regional center for comprehensive gastrointestinal and metabolic surgery.

"We already provide testing and surgeries that were previously only available in Denver or Grand Junction," she notes. "I want our neighbors to have access to the same level of care without the added stress of travel. We know patients do better when they have support from their community and loved ones."

Your Path to Optimal Gut Health

For residents of the Roaring Fork Valley seeking to enhance digestive wellness, Dr. Kovar offers five tips:

- Eat fiber-rich foods
- Stay hydrated
- Manage stress through regular exercise or mindfulness practices
- Limit processed and high-sugar foods
- Get recommended preventive screenings

"Every healthy choice you make for your gut," Dr. Kovar emphasizes, "is a healthy choice for your life. At AVH, we're committed to supporting your journey to wellness every step of the way."

[1] P. Shkoporov et al., "Gut microbiota composition can predict physical performance," *Nature*, 2024, https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-07336-w

[2] American Gastroenterological Association, "2024 American Gastroenterological Association Guidelines," 2024, https://gastro.org/clinical-guidance/diet-and-nutritional-therapies-in-patients-with-ibd/

[3] B.S. Allen et al., "Exercise training increases microbiome diversity associated with improved metabolic health," *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 2024, https://journals.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/ajpendo.00537.2015

[4] American Cancer Society, "American Cancer Society Guideline for Colorectal Cancer Screening," 2024, https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/acs-recommendations.html

[5] J.K. Smith et al., "Validation of an epigenetic prognostic assay to predict risk of Barrett's esophagus progression in patients receiving endoscopic treatment," *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, 2024, https://journals.lww.com/ajg/fulltext/9900/validation_of_an_epigenetic_prognostic_assay_to.1289.aspx

Quick Tips for Everyday Gut Health

Fiber-Forward Eating

Aim for 25 to 30 grams of fiber daily from diverse sources:

- Add berries to your morning routine
- Include a handful of nuts or seeds as a snack
- Choose whole grains over refined options
- Make vegetables the star of your plate, not just a side dish
- Gradually increase fiber intake to avoid digestive discomfort

Hydration Habits

- Drink at least 64 ounces of water daily—more when exercising or at altitude
- Start each morning with a glass of water
- Carry a reusable water bottle during activities
- Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can be dehydrating and irritate the digestive tract
- Monitor urine color: pale yellow indicates good hydration

Mindful Meals

- Take 20 to 30 minutes for meals, instead of eating on the go
- Put down utensils between bites
- Chew each mouthful 20 to 30 times
- Avoid eating within three hours of bedtime
- Create a pleasant, stress-free environment for meals

Stress Management

- Practice daily stress reduction through outdoor activities, meditation or deep breathing
- Consider yoga, which combines movement with breathing techniques beneficial for digestion
- Prioritize adequate sleep (7 to 9 hours) to support gut health
- Connect with community—social interaction benefits both mental and gut health

Medication Awareness

- Use antibiotics only when necessary—they kill beneficial gut bacteria along with harmful ones
- Minimize use of NSAIDs (ibuprofen, naproxen) when possible, as they can irritate the digestive tract
- If taking medications regularly, ask your doctor about potential gut health impacts
- Consider probiotics during and after antibiotic treatment (consult your healthcare provider first)

Preventive Screening

- Schedule your first colonoscopy at age 45 (earlier with family history)
- Don't ignore persistent digestive symptoms—early intervention typically means simpler treatment
- Discuss digestive health at your annual physical
- Remember that many effective gut-protective behaviors (fiber, hydration, exercise) also support cardiovascular health and longevity



Savor Healthy Eats, *Season After Season*

Thrive Year-Round with Nutritious Recipes for Any Occasion



BY TEDDY THOMAS, MFN, RDN
NUTRITION SERVICES AT ASPEN VALLEY HEALTH

Pair our extraordinary mountain views with vibrant fare for your table. From fall harvests and hearty holiday meals to lighter spring bites, explore these recipes for eating well.

Blistered Shishito Peppers

Add a spicy sidekick to any meal with these thin Asian peppers, roasted or grilled for maximum flavor. Skip the salt and add red chili flakes to boost heat.

Servings: 8 to 10

INGREDIENTS

12-ounce package of Shishito peppers (about 15)

½ cup oil of choice

Salt (optional) and pepper to taste

Red chili flakes (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 425° F, or preheat your outdoor barbeque grill.
- Wash and pat the peppers dry, and then coat them with oil, salt and pepper. Instead of salt, add chili flakes for extra spice.
- Place the peppers on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 5 to 7 minutes. If you are using a barbeque grill, place peppers in a cast iron skillet and cook them over the grill flame for 5 to 7 minutes.
- Use tongs to turn the peppers. For oven roasting, switch to broil and roast for 2 to 3 minutes until the peppers are blackened and blistered. On the barbeque, finish roasting until the peppers are blackened and blistered.
- Remove from heat and toss in a bowl. Serve with a dressing or your favorite dipping sauce.





Summer Salad

This fresh summer-inspired salad is delicious year-round. Roast nuts and grill meats over the campfire or at home on the barbeque. Low sugar and high protein make this salad a healthy crowd-pleaser.

Servings: 6 to 8

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked quinoa

1 bunch spinach, washed

2 cups fresh strawberries or cherries, pitted and sliced

½ cup roasted walnuts (or nut of choice), chopped

½ cup feta cheese

1 red onion, diced

About 2 tablespoons vinaigrette dressing, to taste

Lemon wedge

3 ounces grilled chicken, salmon, steak or your favorite animal protein

INSTRUCTIONS

- Wash spinach in a colander and set aside to dry.
- Wash and slice strawberries. If using cherries, remove pits and slice in half.
- In a large salad bowl, combine cooked quinoa, spinach, strawberries or cherries, toasted walnuts, feta cheese, onion and dressing.
- Toss until spinach leaves are coated. Zest the lemon and add a squeeze of juice to taste. Top with your choice of grilled protein.



Gut-Healthy Garlic-Cabbage Soup

Rich in antioxidants and fiber, this soup is comfort food that's also nourishing. Enjoy a bowl on a cold evening or serve it at a gathering as a side dish. Store in the fridge for up to four days.

Servings: 4 bowls

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 small yellow onion, chopped

5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

4 cups chopped green cabbage

1 teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon ground pepper, plus more for garnish

4 cups low sodium vegetable broth or no-chicken broth

1 (15-ounce) can no-salt added cannellini beans, rinsed

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 large egg

2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus more for garnish

¼ teaspoon salt (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add chopped onion and sliced garlic; cook, until softened, about 4 minutes.
- Add 4 cups cabbage, oregano and pepper; cook until the cabbage starts to soften, about 3 minutes.
- Add broth and rinsed beans. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to medium, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is tender, about 8 minutes.
- In a heatproof bowl, whisk grated Parmesan, egg and lemon juice. While whisking, drizzle about ½ cup of the hot soup broth into the egg mixture until completely incorporated. Repeat once more.
- Remove the soup from the heat. Whisk in the tempered egg mixture. Stir in 2 tablespoons dill and salt to taste.

Source: Julia Levy, EatingWell (eatingwell.com/garlicky-cabbage-soup-8763856)

Healthy Green Bean Casserole with Almonds

Enjoy this lower-calorie twist on the classic green bean casserole, with almonds added for a satisfying crunch. It's an ideal weeknight or special-occasion side dish, with less sodium to boot.

Servings: 8 to 10

INGREDIENTS

1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

½ cup low-fat milk (dairy or non-dairy)

1 teaspoon dried thyme

Salt and pepper to taste

¼ cup sliced almonds

1 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 375° F. In a large skillet, sauté green beans, onion and garlic in olive oil until tender.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together chicken broth, milk and thyme.
- Pour the wet ingredients over the green bean mixture; season with salt and pepper.
- Transfer to a baking dish and top with sliced almonds and whole wheat breadcrumbs.
- Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown.

Source: Nummy Recipes (nummyrecipes.com/healthy-green-bean-recipes)





Pumpkin Spice Energy Balls

These pumpkin pie spice energy balls combine classic pumpkin spice flavor with a chewy texture and bits of crunch. Try cashew or almond butter for a more neutral flavor that lets the spices and pumpkin shine.

Servings: 8

INGREDIENTS

½ cup smooth nut butter (cashew or almond butter)

⅓ cup canned pumpkin

1 teaspoon natural vanilla

1 cup pitted dried dates

¼ cup pecan halves

1 ¼ cup old-fashioned rolled oats

3 tablespoons toasted unsalted pepitas

2 tablespoons chia seeds

2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

½ teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- Stir together nut butter, pumpkin and vanilla in a small bowl.
- Process dates and pecans in a food processor until finely chopped, about 1 minute. Add oats, pepitas, chia seeds, pumpkin pie spice and salt. Process until fully combined.
- Add the pumpkin mixture. Process until fully incorporated.
- Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a 1-tablespoon cookie scoop or measuring spoon, scoop 24 portions of the dough onto the baking sheet.
- Using clean hands, roll each portion into a ball. Serve immediately or refrigerate, covered, for up to 5 days.

Source: Carolyn Malcoun, EatingWell (eatingwell.com/recipe/8075432/pumpkin-spice-energy-balls)

Electrolyte Replacement Smoothie

Drink this smoothie post hike or workout. Squeeze lemon and lime on top for added hydration and immune support. Add a handful of almonds for extra electrolytes.

INGREDIENTS

12 ounces coconut water

1 cup seedless watermelon (without rind)

1 orange, pealed

Handful of spinach

1 small avocado

1 banana

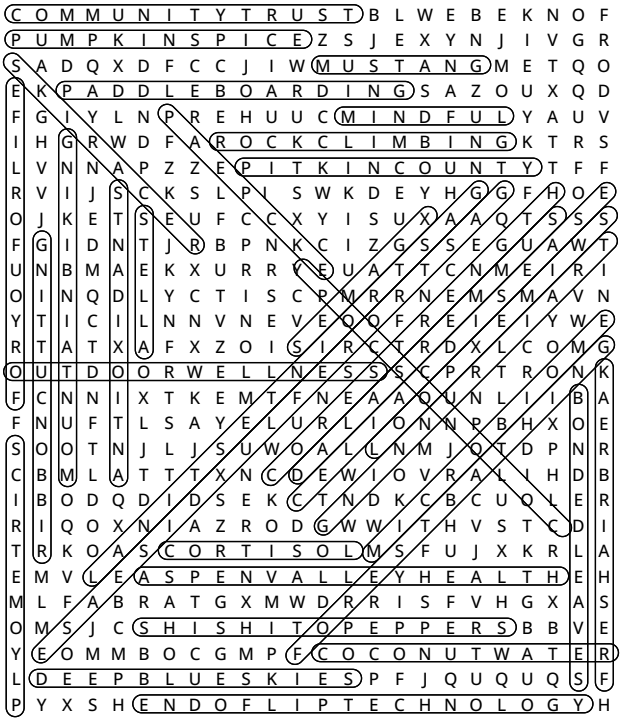
1 cup Greek yogurt

INSTRUCTIONS

Add coconut water, chunks of seedless watermelon, orange, spinach, avocado, banana and Greek yogurt to a blender. Blend to the consistency of your liking. Enjoy!



Word Find answers (from page 23)



Calendar



Monthly Events

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS
Second Monday of the month, at 5:30 pm.

Meetings are open to the public. You can access our monthly meeting information at aspenvalleyhealth.org/events.

BLOOD DRIVES
In affiliation with Vitalant

Blood drives take place at AVH from 10:30 am-3:00 pm. Registration is required ahead of time at aspenvalleyhealth.org/events. There are no walk-in appointments available.

2026

- Friday, February 20
- Friday, April 17
- Friday, June 19
- Friday, August 21
- Friday, October 16
- Friday, December 18

HEALTH FAIR
Deeply discounted lab tests are offered to our community so you can take charge of your health. Appointments are required for blood draws, no walk-ins.

Save the Dates in 2026:

Aspen

Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6
Aspen Valley Health Medical Center, Hosted at Aspen Ambulance

El Jebel

Sunday, June 7
Eagle County Community Center

For the latest updates, including test descriptions, frequently asked questions and information on how to book an appointment, visit aspenvalleyhealth.org/health-fair.

Ongoing

BIRTH CENTER CLASSES
Aspen Valley Health's Birth Center offers the Childbirth Preparation Series, a one-day, two-week or three-week series of classes covering labor, delivery, relaxation, anesthesia, C-section, postpartum, breastfeeding and newborn care. This class is complimentary and offered multiple times throughout the year. Online registration and more details are available at aspenvalleyhealth.org/events.

BOSOM BUDDIES AND BABY CAFÉ
This free support group is led by our lactation experts and provides professional and peer counseling for breastfeeding mothers. Baby Café is now available in the midvalley with a Spanish translator available at the Eagle County Community Center in El Jebel. Call the AVH Birth Center at 970.544.1130 to get more information and reserve your spot.

CARDIAC AND PULMONARY EXERCISE
Surviving a heart attack or any other cardiovascular or pulmonary event does not end with a trip home from the hospital. Our programs, focusing on exercise and education, are certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation and help you reclaim the richness of an active life. For more information, call 970.544.1383.

DIABETES EDUCATION
Our diabetes education program in Aspen and the Midvalley offer insightful information for anyone managing Type 1 or Type 2, gestational or pre-diabetes conditions. For more information, call 970.544.7394.

ONCOLOGY REHABILITATION
Did you know regular exercise can improve or even alleviate some of the troublesome symptoms of cancer treatment? Oncology rehabilitation holistically addresses cancer-related symptoms during and after cancer treatment through cardiovascular exercise, resistance, balance and neuromuscular training in a supportive group environment. For class schedule information and to set up your preliminary interview, please contact Jeanne Stough at 970.544.1566 or jstough@aspenvalleyhealth.org.

ONCOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP
Coping with a cancer diagnosis can feel overwhelming but you don't have to face it alone. Our monthly Cancer Support Group offers a safe, welcoming space to connect with others, navigating similar journeys. Led by Nicole Carroll, RN, and Lexi Bradfield, MS, the group meets on the second Wednesday of each month in the Cardiac/Oncology Rehab gym. Each session begins with a brief educational topic followed by an open discussion, offering participants a chance to share experiences, emotions and practical strategies for coping. For more information, contact Nicole Carroll at 970.544.1507 or Lexi Bradfield at 970.544.1566.

SUPPORT FOR MEMORY LOSS CAREGIVERS
Caring for someone with dementia or Alzheimer's can be challenging. Join our monthly caregiver support group at Aspen Valley Health. Facilitated by Alzheimer's Association-trained professionals and led by Whitcomb Terrace Director Maggie Gerardi, this group offers a safe, confidential space to share experiences, gain strategies for better communication and find emotional support. Whether you're a spouse, child or friend of someone with memory loss, we are here to support you. For more information, contact Maggie at 970.544.1531.



Directory of Services

Want to schedule an appointment? Wish to check on a patient? Have a billing question? For all of your questions and requests, here is a list of Aspen Valley Health phone numbers to call.

Clinics and Departments

General Information	970.925.1120
Administration	970.544.1261
Admissions	970.544.7350
After-Hours Medical Care, Basalt	970.544.1250
Aspen Ambulance District	970.544.1583
Aspen Valley Health Foundation	970.544.1302
Billing Help Line	970.544.7694
Birth Center	970.544.1130
Breast Center	970.544.1420
Business Office/Billing	970.544.7377
	800.262.3067
Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation	970.544.1383
Cardiopulmonary Diagnostics	970.544.1264
Community Relations	970.544.1296
Diabetes Education	970.544.7394
Diagnostic Imaging	970.544.1192
Diagnostic Scheduling	970.544.1392
Emergency Care	970.544.1228
Sally's Gift Shop	970.544.1304
Human Resources	970.544.1367
Laboratory	970.544.1570
Medical Records	970.544.1290
Midvalley Imaging Center	970.544.1260
Nuclear Medicine	970.544.1127
Nutrition Services	970.544.1145
Oncology and Infusion	970.544.1507
Outpatient Scheduling	970.544.1392
Pain Management	970.544.1146
Patient Care Unit	970.544.1135
Pharmacy	970.544.1778
Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine	970.544.1177
Same Day Surgery/Outpatient	970.544.1327
Snowmass Clinic	970.544.1518
Spanish Resources	970.544.1543
Surgery Scheduling	970.544.7391
Whitcomb Terrace Assisted Living	970.544.1530

Medical Practices

Primary Care	970.279.4111
Surgical Specialists	970.544.1200
Cardiology	970.544.7388
Ophthalmology	970.544.1560
Ear, Nose and Throat	970.544.1460
Endocrinology	970.544.1395
Gastroenterology	970.384.7510
Orthopaedics/The Steadman Clinic	970.476.1100
Pulmonology	970.298.5864
Urology	970.928.0808



Aspen Valley Health Continuously Delivers Extraordinary Healthcare

"Since moving to Aspen in 1973, Aspen Valley Health has been an integral part of my life. We are an extremely fortunate community to have such a state-of-the-art level III trauma center in our small community. Over the last several years, I have had many injuries and surgeries that have required extended stays in the hospital. The doctors, the staff and the hospital have always exceeded my expectations.

In 2017, my husband, Gene Law, passed away in the hospital after a month-long stay. We could not have asked for a more peaceful passing surrounded by such a caring staff and excellent care.

Over the years, the addition of The Steadman Clinic doctors, Aspen Valley Health's Primary Care doctors and all the specialty physicians that have joined the Aspen Valley Health family has added enormous value to the community."

LUKY SEYMOUR

Aspen Valley Health is a not-for-profit community health system and Network of Care offering award-winning, patient-centered care throughout the Roaring Fork Valley. To make a gift, please contact Diana Bulman, president of the Aspen Valley Health Foundation, at 970.544.1301 or email dbulman@aspenvalleyhealth.org.
aspenvalleyhealth.org

Aspen Valley Health