

We can keep health care – and its dollars – local

By Julie Taylor

WEST VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER

It's getting easier to protect your health. In an age dominated by instant everything, this move toward expanded access is great news for people and businesses alike.

On the Canyon County health care landscape, collaborations among various Treasure Valley groups are driving programs and projects that are great not only for patients, but for the economic stability of the community.

But most important, by far, is the overarching health and wellness benefit

to local residents.

West Valley Medical Center recently broadened its relationships with other health care organizations. For example, our clinical alliances with Boise-based facilities to ensure continuity of care through state-of-the-art services include:

Neurology and oncology – Saint Alphonsus

The new Stroke Network unites Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center (Boise, Idaho's only Certified Stroke Center), West Valley Medical



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We also have a partnership with Saint Alphonsus' Cancer Care Center in Caldwell, where patients receive the full scope of cancer treatment services, with a radiation oncology and medical

Center, and Canyon County EMS in efforts to more aggressively treat stroke. Through incident response training, EMS and ER staff will be better prepared to improve patient outcomes.

oncology physician on-site.

Cardiovascular – St. Luke's Health System

St. Luke's Health System and West Valley Medical Center have a new Collaborative Cardiovascular Care partnership. This agreement bolsters support for quality and continuity of care for patients with heart conditions in our service area. Plans within this program include future development of

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Health care in Treasure Valley a collaborative effort, and everyone benefits

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a certified Chest Pain Center located in our ER that will ensure early detection and treatment for patients with cardiac symptoms. Further, the partnership enables peripheral vascular diagnostic and interventional procedures here in Caldwell.

Well-planned teamwork between groups enhances your care by capitalizing on each organization's strengths. Consider it the best of everything – as close to home as possible. The synergy of services in Canyon County – enabling as little duplication as possible – is emblematic of an increasingly complementary health care industry around the U.S. The reason for these changes? It improves and sometimes even saves the lives of our

patients and their families.

When people face critical health emergencies, every moment is precious. We truly care about your life, which is why we don't want you driving to a hospital 45 minutes during your time of peril. The quicker a trained expert can begin your treatment, the greater the likelihood you'll survive a life-threatening situation.

That's the best reason we can think of to reach across county lines. But there are additional community benefits beyond health and well-being. Economic vitality is a timely example. We can support businesses in nearby communities by providing high-quality, trustworthy services close to home. Keeping a Caldwell resident in town for his surgery, emergency care and the like also helps keep his dol-

lars in Canyon County.

Filling up the tank. Shopping for Christmas gifts. Eating at a local restaurant after a late-afternoon appointment. These and more are economic opportunities missed when patients leave the community for their health care. Continuity of care also is a major boon for employers. It makes good economic sense to invest in the health and well-being of your staff. Proactive businesses can use the improved wellness of their workers to strike lower insurance premiums.

Convincing individuals to seek the preventative care they need is easier said than done. But as we expand access, remove barriers and speed up processes, we will see an influx of personal health responsibility. In fact, we're already seeing it. Recently West Valley Medical

Center began a series of free health screening events for staff at local businesses and organizations. The first few dates, in September, were for Vallivue School District. Regence BlueShield of Idaho invested in the health of these insured district employees by covering the cost of Personal Health Assessments and other tests.

Now companies are coming to us, asking if they can partner with us for screening events. Working together, we can make community care as close to instant as possible, improving emergency care and removing the excuses for personal health neglect.

Julie Taylor, the CEO at West Valley Medical Center, has 30 years experience in the health care industry, both as a nurse and an administrator.