

# Health Highlights



Community Newsletter  
Fall 2023



Foundation Board Members

## EPHC FOUNDATION REGROUPS WITH DYNAMIC BOARD

After taking a hiatus during the pandemic, the EPHC Foundation has regrouped and appointed nine new members to their Board of Directors who are established leaders across a range of industries, from healthcare and technology to law, media, operations, and education.

The new board members who began their service August 11 are: Patty Clawson, Linda Judge, Pat McCarthy, Paula Johnston, Gail McGrath, Jeanne Tansey, and ex-officio members Doug McCoy, Barbara Sokolov, and Katherine Pairish.

The Foundation Board elected Patty Clawson to serve as Chair. "I'm thrilled to be a part of this board," Chairman Patty Clawson said. "The members are all tremendous leaders with strong connections to our community who will bring fresh perspectives that will help us reach

our goals and provide the needed supplemental financial support to the hospital." Pat McCarthy was elected to serve as Vice Chair.

As members of the EPHC Foundation board, it is their mission to support the Eastern Plumas Health Care District by fostering goodwill in the community and providing additional financial support for the hospital and its services. In pursuit of their mission, the Foundation seeks to create multiple opportunities for charitable giving and public service.

Having recently assembled, the Foundation members continue to outline goals for year-end and future objectives. They accomplished their first success with a \$2,500 donation to EPHC's Angel Tree program to ensure that all skilled nursing residents receive Christmas gifts. In addition, they have set their sights on a larger

goal for a much-needed ambulance remount to get one of EPHC's ambulances back into service.

With upcoming marketing efforts, additional goals will be established and active charitable solicitations to individuals, groups and the public at large will be underway.

The Foundation board members believe perseverance in combination with passion are the essential components for fulfilling their goals. With each donation raised, they aim to improve healthcare for area residents through programs and services at Eastern Plumas Health Care.

To learn more about the EPHC Foundation, or to donate, scan the QR code, or visit [ephc.org/foundation.php](http://ephc.org/foundation.php)



# THE HEART OF THE AMBULANCE TEAM - AMY BURKHART



**AMY BURKHART,  
PARAMEDIC - EMS MANAGER**

When you call 911, your first responders are going to come from Eastern Plumas Health Care Ambulance if you live in its large coverage area that stretches east to west from Scott Road, almost to Hallelujah Junction, all the way to Lee Summit toward Quincy, and North to South almost to the Walker Mine area above Lake Davis, all the way up to the Doyle intersection at Frenchman Lake, and south to little Truckee Summit, halfway to Truckee.

Two EPHC ambulances are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. One ambulance is stationed out of the hospital in Portola and the other is stationed out of the Skilled Nursing Facility in Loyalton; together those two geographical locations make almost a perfect circle around the coverage area. EPHC also has mutual aid agreements with ground ambulance services in Quincy, Susanville, Reno, and Truckee, which means that they will help out EPHC Ambulance if needed and vice versa.

Amy Burkhart manages EPHC's Ambulance team of 28 EMTs and Paramedics. She has twenty-three years of experience providing Emergency Medical Services and has been an Advanced Life Support provider since 2006. She got her start volunteering in fire and then started running medical

calls as a first responder. She is drawn to the work because of the excitement, the ability to help people, the ongoing education and learning, and being such an important and integral part of a health care team.

Amy explained, "Going to somebody's house or being on that accident scene and being the first medical provider that ever touches them and how important that is – if you do your part you will actually save lives. If we are needed, we are needed right then."

Amy has been in Plumas County since 2007. Her hometown is Rudy, Arkansas but her family has roots in the Susanville area that go back to the 1930s and 40s. She earned her AA in Paramedic Technology from Arkansas Tech University out of Ozark Arkansas in 2006.

Amy highly recommends volunteering for those interested pursuing a career in Emergency Medical Services. "If you don't know how to get involved, volunteer with your local fire department," Amy said. "You will run the same calls that we run – we will train you to be an emergency responder – there is always a need."

Our community is very fortunate to have a team of EMTs and Paramedics working out of EPHC with deep roots in the community and many years of experience. The majority make their permanent home in the area and many were raised here. 7 EMTs have over 10 years of experience, and 6 Paramedics have 20 years or more. This level of knowledge of the area and years in the field is impressive and makes EPHC's ambulance team highly skilled in making the kind of judgement calls and assessments the work requires. All decisions are based on what's right and best for the patient, always.

All of EPHC's ambulances are staffed by

EMTs and Paramedics -- the requirement to be an Advanced Ambulance Life Support Service. 2 EMTs and 2 Paramedics are on call every day and typically work 48-hour shifts. EPHC's ambulances are equipped to do everything pre-hospital except for critical care – if a patient needs a higher level of care than what EPHC can provide, that's where Care Flight Air helicopters out of Nervino Airport in Beckwourth come in. It's 25 minutes to Renown in Reno by helicopter, going the way the crow flies cuts the travel time in half.

Because our area is drawing more people to it, EPHC's ambulance department is experiencing a higher volume of calls. This time last year, there were an average of 96 calls per month. This year calls are averaging 110 per month. 2023 will see them taking around 1300 calls.

Increased call volume means more wear and tear on the four ambulances in EPHC's fleet -- going such long distances and covering such a large area – each year more than 50,000 miles are put on EPHC's ambulances, all miles dedicated to the community. Plus, winter weather and rough terrain add wear and tear. And in addition to outgoing calls, EPHC's ambulance team often brings patients back home from stays in higher level facilities in Reno and Truckee.

This is why the EPHC Foundation is making raising funds for an ambulance remount (replacing the chassis while keeping the existing body) for one of their ambulances a top priority. This is a \$228,000 project that directly benefits the health, welfare, and safety of our community. If you would like to make a donation to support the maintenance and expansion of EPHC ambulance services, visit [ephc.org/foundation.php](http://ephc.org/foundation.php), or scan the QR Code.



# WE'VE GOT ONE OF THE FEW CERTIFIED HAND THERAPISTS



**JEANNE M. HARPER, OTR/L, CHT**

In the treatment of hands and upper extremities, one might think that an occupational therapist would be the person helping you with rehabilitation needs. Although that's somewhat true, there's another type of therapist, who through advanced study and experience, is more qualified and specializes in hand therapy.

At EPHC's Therapy & Wellness Center, that's Jeanne Harper, our Certified Hand Therapist and one of only about 6,600 practicing Certified Hand Therapists in the United States. That's a pretty big claim to fame given the strict requirements that limit the number of practicing Certified Hand Therapists (CHT).

For Jeanne, she was interested in hand therapy even before she graduated from college. She had considered getting her master's degree in a combined PT/OT degree but did not have the finances at the time to pursue this avenue.

"My journey into the specialty of hands began during a phase in my career when I had a back injury at work and considered leaving the profession. While taking some post graduate classes, I was invited to attend a regional hand therapy study group that met monthly. I did some

networking, more continuing ed, and after getting the work experience in many hand therapy clinics, and studying with a therapist who had experience in Pediatrics, I sat for the rigorous Hand Therapy Certification Exam, and passed on the first try", said Jeanne Harper.

Jeanne has an impressive resume with a B.S. degree in Occupational Therapy from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Certification in Hand Therapy from the Hand Therapy Certification committee (HTCC). She holds memberships with the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), American Hand Therapy Society (ASHT), and the Hand Therapy Association of California (HTA-CA).

Her areas of expertise are in Physical Dysfunction Rehabilitation, body mechanics, energy conservation, environmental adaptation, adaptive equipment, activity analysis, ergonomics, and hand rehabilitation.

"What makes my job rewarding is the wonderful co-workers I work with, seeing the progress and return to function that my clients experience, and the sense that there is always something more to learn and improve my skills. I like a challenge, especially clients with complicated health conditions. I can't think of any other career that would keep me engaged as much as Occupational Therapy has", said Jeanne.

Hand therapy is only one of the growing therapy services at the Therapy & Wellness Center. For more information about rehabilitation services or hand therapy in particular, contact the Therapy & Wellness Center at 530-832-6502 or visit [ephc.org](http://ephc.org).

## THE STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY

by Doug McCoy, CEO



I feel very fortunate to live in a community where both our EPHC team and our friends and neighbors take up a call to action in an effort to assist others. The last two months have been filled with examples of how our community responds to adversity, helps those in need, and provides support to improve the lives of others. Some of those examples come in the form of fundraising for tragic events. The fire destroying Gumba's and the Village Bakery was felt by the entire community. Matt and Elizabeth have done so much for our area, and it was wonderful to see the financial support to help their staff members through this challenging time. We also had a recent taco fundraiser to support the family of a valued member of our team. Again, the community responded and 1000 tacos were purchased with all the funds going toward assistance with family medical expenses.

Then there are the ways our community helps to improve the lives of others. Through community donations and purchases made to the Nifty Thrifty, the EPHC auxiliary will be purchasing new lab equipment for the hospital that will benefit all of our patients. They also provided 10 scholarships for advanced education for our staff. The recent turnout for the Rotary Fly In breakfast provides funds for high school scholarships and projects to help the community. We also had great support and participation for our health fair in September with several community agencies taking part to share resources and services available to everyone in our district.

These are only a few examples of the positive impact that individuals and organizations can make in their community. On behalf of EPHC, I would like to thank all of you who provide your time, energy, and resources to make our area such a special place to live!

# CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY VISITS EPHC



**Congressman Kevin Kiley at EPHC**

Eastern Plumas Health Care's Administrative Team and Board of Directors are grateful for the time they were able to spend with Congressman Kevin Kiley, our District 3 representative, on his September 5th visit to Plumas and Sierra Counties.

In Loyalton, Congressman Kiley

attended a town hall event focused on the stewardship of the city's water resources, critical to both the community and EPHC's medical facilities there. He also toured EPHC's new, soon-to-be-opened Loyalton Medical Clinic.

In Portola, CEO Doug McCoy led Congressman Kiley on a walking tour of EPHC's Portola Campus that included a stop at the Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse to discuss possible use of that building. The group then met up with Greg Williams and his team from Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship and walked to the nearby trailhead of their new Beckwourth Peak trail that intersects hospital property.

Congressman Kiley presented

EPHC with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition that reads: "In honor of ensuring that all community members have access to compassionate and exemplary health care, California's Third Congressional District recognizes you for providing comprehensive health care and high-quality jobs to Plumas and Sierra Counties."

## **NIFTY THRIFTY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!**

Join Nifty Thrifty's team of fun, friendly volunteers and help raise money for equipment, staff scholarships, and other needed services at EPHC. For more information, pick up an application or contact the store manager, Matt Hamilton, at 530-258-6200.