

# Health Highlights



Community Newsletter  
Spring 2023



LOYALTON CLINIC BEFORE REMODEL



LOYALTON CLINIC AFTER REMODEL

## BUILDING OUR FUTURE: EPHC Successfully Completes Two Hospital Construction Projects

Although this winter has been filled with challenges from so much snow, it hasn't stopped our progress in completing two key projects to improve services for our patients. In 2021 we developed a plan to replace our Loyalton clinic and provide the community with an even better patient experience. The former Pharmacy building on Main Street was a perfect location but would require us to rebuild the interior from the ground up.

We are excited to announce that this month what began as a large empty space is now a beautiful new 2900 square foot clinic complete with 6 new exam rooms. We will be finalizing the licensure process with the State of California followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony for the

community, and then we will begin seeing patients in our new location. EPHC also completed the first phase of our hospital renovation

project with new flooring, wall treatments, and handrails installed throughout the corridors. We are very pleased with the results of this



HOSPITAL BEFORE



HOSPITAL AFTER

# EMERGENCY ROOM PHYSICIANS

Continued From Page 1

project in an effort to improve the environment for our patients and staff members. Our next phase of the project will be a similar renovation of the Loyalton Skilled Nursing facility beginning this spring.

## DARLENE HALL

Wins An Award For  
Top US Tech 2022



**Darlene Hall, Ultrasound Technologist**

Darlene Hall was chosen as the ultrasound technologist of the year for her outstanding performance and dedication by North Star Imaging. She was the best of all the ultrasound technologists in nine different facilities including Susanville and Northern Nevada Medical Center. Darlene has been an ultrasound tech since 2004 and has been with EPHC since August, 2008.



**CNA Class at Loyalton Hospital**

Interested in a career in nursing at EPHC? Our first Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course of 2023 started February 13th. The next course will be in July. If you'd like to learn more about this opportunity contact Deborah Mancebo  
deborah.mancebo@ephc.org

*[This story on Dr. Paul Swanson is the first of a series on EPHC's Emergency Room physicians: the faces you will see there and how you'll know you're in good hands. As Dr. Swanson says, "Everyone goes to the Emergency Room sooner or later!"]*

Since 2011 Dr. Paul Swanson has served as the Medical Director of EPHC's Emergency Department, Hospital, and Long-Term Care Facility, which together comprise the hospital side of EPHC. As Medical Director he is the Director of all the hospital physicians and all the processes – from patient care to hospital administration – that impact them.

Originally from Minnesota, Dr. Swanson attended Harvard University as an undergraduate where he earned a degree in Biochemistry. He then went on to medical school at the University of Minnesota. He did his residency in Emergency Medicine at Bowman Gray Medical Center, part of Wake Forest University, in North Carolina.

Living in the mountains of Plumas County since 2009, Dr. Swanson jokes that he came to California for the warm weather. But, before coming to EPHC in 2002, he'd enjoyed working at Chinese Hospital in San Francisco, another small, nonprofit hospital. Dr. Swanson was initially recruited to EPHC in 2002 and worked one shift per month for several years. Over time, he found himself taking on more shifts and being drawn to our community with its sweet people and personable kind of environment. Dr. Swanson loves nature and the forest, having grown up in a forested area in Minnesota. As an avid hiker, he feels fortunate to live in a place with so many beautiful areas for long hikes and walks.

Dr. Swanson chose Emergency Medicine because he did not want to be hyperspecialized (because you encounter all kinds of medical problems you have to be a very good general physician to be an Emergency



**Paul Swanson, MD**

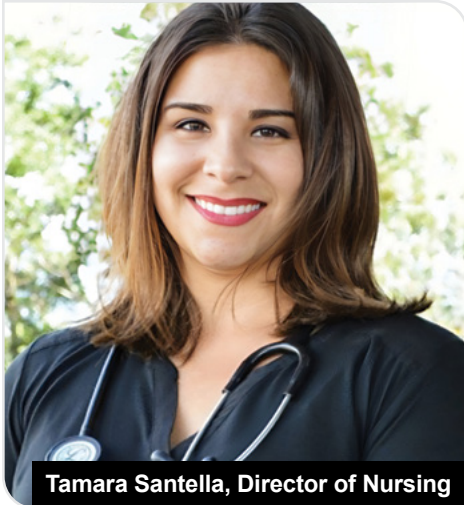
Room doctor), and it suited his personality and character: he liked the excitement and intensity, he performed well under pressure, and he liked the intellectual work of processing information, evaluating and diagnosing problems, and putting together the puzzle pieces to solve his patients' medical conditions. While it is high intensity at EPHC from time to time, the pace is slower and there is more time for patients: to talk, to get more details, and to take care of the whole person.

At EPHC, Emergency Room physicians are also hospitalists. They not only care for patients during an Emergency Room crisis but, if patients are hospitalized, they continue to care for them in the hospital as well. This is considered a best practice in small hospitals like EPHC with its 3-bed Emergency Room and 9-bed Acute Hospital

In addition to being an Emergency Room physician and EPHC's Medical Director, since 2014 Dr. Swanson has also served on EPHC's Board of Directors. His top priorities on the Board, and in all of his roles, are to make sure the hospital is here for the community and that it provides the very best possible patient care.

## TAMARA SANTELLA

New Director of Nursing at Loyalton Skilled Nursing Facility



Tamara Santella, Director of Nursing

As of mid-January, this year, Tamara Santella has joined EPHC staff as Director of Nursing at the Loyalton Skilled Nursing Facility. Tamara will drive the continued success of the skilled nursing department by ensuring exemplary care. She is a Masters-Prepared Nurse with over six years' experience in long-term care and over nine years' experience as a certified nursing assistant.

Tamara has worked directly with patients and residents in a variety of different settings — skilled nursing, hospital, home health, but her heart has always led her back to long-term care.

"I feel an overwhelming responsibility to advocate for the aging population and believe it was my calling and a pleasure to help insure each and every resident receives the most adequate care possible," said Tamara Santella.

With an open-door policy, Santella welcomes praise, concerns, or problems and wants everyone to know that she is only a visit or phone call away.

Since her arrival at the Loyalton Skilled Nursing Facility, residents, staff, and Board members have been welcoming Tamara and wishing her well.

## EPHC AWARDED TWO GRANTS

by Joanna Garneau, Program Manager



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Eastern Plumas Health Care was recently awarded \$456,756. This was through a COVID-19 Test to Treat Equity grant from the California Department of Public Health. Funding will be utilized to prepare for future health emergencies and disaster response. Purchases covered by this funding include an exam room and two larger structures. These climate controlled, portable shelters provide additional expansion support and options for disaster response. Funding will also cover Eastern Plumas Health Care's purchase of a new truck and signage.

Separately, Eastern Plumas Health Care was awarded \$110,000 through a Behavioral Health Integration Incentive grant from the Department of Health Care Services. The Behavioral Health Integration Incentive was a multi-year initiative that ended in December 2022. This incentive was put into place to improve physical and behavioral health outcomes and patient experiences.

Community members are invited to EPHC's Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, April 27. Funding updates will be provided, including information on a \$50,000 USDA Rural Development grant for a new inpatient transportation van. Community members are welcome to provide public comment. Please visit our website at [ephc.org/agenda-and-minutes.php](http://ephc.org/agenda-and-minutes.php) and click on the Zoom meeting link in the agenda for the meeting to join.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CUSTOMER

by Doug McCoy, CEO



Like many of our staff, I have been in health care my entire career. Those of us in the industry often see things through an 'operations' lens, but it is valuable to gain experience from the customer's point of view. Recently my family has experienced firsthand the compassionate care provided by our team at EPHC along with services from larger hospitals in the area. While I am always proud of the commitment that our EPHC team makes to our community, we were so grateful for the care we received during these difficult events.

As a customer, there were several things that were very important to us such as consistent communication with the physician, an understanding of test results and procedures, and compassionate care from the nursing staff. While these areas were unfortunately not met in the larger hospital we utilized, EPHC exceeded our expectations on both occasions.

Seeing care delivered through the eyes of the customer provides us with an opportunity to ensure that we are meeting all our patient's needs and understand how to consistently improve our services. This is the key reason behind our patient experience initiative and our goal to illicit as much feedback from our community as possible. Whether it is through our tablets at registration checkout or surveys you receive in the mail, your experience and feedback are very important to us in order to provide each customer with a 5-star experience!

We are grateful to have the opportunity for our EPHC family to take care of your family!

## NEW PATIENT PORTAL - COMING IN APRIL

EPHC is implementing a new medical records system, Cerner Millennium, in April 2023 that includes a new and improved Patient Portal.

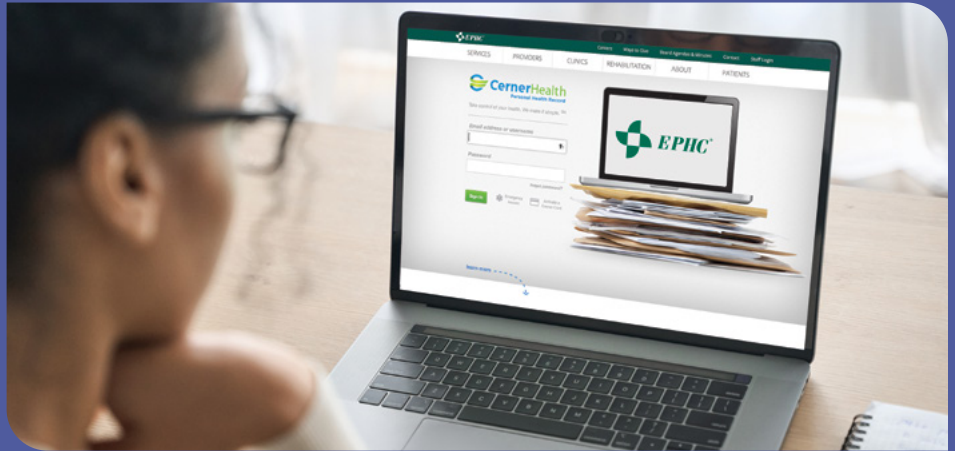
For those familiar with the current Patient Portal, our upgraded version will continue to give you access to your test results and visit information, as well as the link for bill pay.

Plus, EPHC patients will be able to access:

- Your health profile
- Your medication history
- Your medical history
- And the Covid Center – with immunizations and test history

In addition, EPHC patients will have the ability to:

- Communicate securely with your healthcare provider through email/messaging



- Update your health information and history
- Request medication refills
- Request appointments and call backs from our clinic scheduling team

Current and new Patient Portal users will be offered access to the new Patient Portal when they register for

services at the hospital and clinics.

This new Patient Portal is just the beginning as EPHC continues to improve your access to health records and providers!