

Health Highlights



Community Newsletter
Fall 2024



Venissa Irwin, Supervisor CalAIM Enhanced Care Manager, Laura Lophthien, Enhanced Care Manager, Joanna Garneau, Program Manager and Director of CalAIM, and Virginia Valjalo, CalAIM Coordinator

EPHC AWARDED \$1.74 MILLION FOR CALAIM ECM PROGRAM

Eastern Plumas Health Care's CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal) ECM (Enhanced Care Management) program continues to grow thanks to a third round of funding through the Department of Health Care Services. This funding, \$1,743,684, will primarily support the renovation of office space, providing five offices, welcome area, break room, bathrooms and conference space, in addition to wages and benefits for a third ECM Case Manager.

"As demand for CalAIM Care Management increases, space to provide services and expand support was quickly becoming a necessity," said Joanna Garneau, Program Manager at Eastern Plumas Health Care. "This award is going to make this expansion possible."

Where will this new office go? In a collaborative effort, talks between Garneau's team and Matt Hamilton, Manager of the Nifty Thrifty, resulted in the decision that the second-floor

space above the thrift store would be the perfect location.

Christmas Boutique supporters don't fear, as this renovation preserves the space dedicated to Nifty Thrifty's Christmas Boutique and improves the shopping experience while providing much-needed office space.

"The space above the Nifty Thrifty is ideal for many reasons, but most importantly, it will provide a centralized location for CalAIM services and resource coordination for Plumas and Sierra Counties," said Garneau.

Aside from the central location, the additional space will provide CalAIM clients with a safe, comfortable meeting space and provide resources like use of fax machines, printers and phones to aid clients with their claims and care plans.

Currently serving 54 community members across Plumas and Sierra Counties, EPHC's CalAIM ECM program helps individuals, covered

by Medi-Cal, lead healthier lives. This is accomplished through goal setting, care coordination, and by providing a champion for the individual's healthcare.

With this third round of funding, EPHC anticipates doubling current membership by the end of 2025. These services directly impact community members who have the highest care needs. Healthier community members contributing to a healthier community are the program's indirect impacts.

While planning for the renovated space has been decided, details have yet to be determined. Like many renovations, the scope of work, including projected timelines, is still in progress.

As developments for the CalAIM program and additional space for its use occur, Garneau will keep the community informed. If you'd like more information about the CalAIM program now, contact EPHC's CalAIM team at 530-832-6622 or Joanna Garneau directly at 530-832-6632.

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT



Catherine Colpitts, DO

Dr. Catherine Colpitts specializes in Family Medicine. She has been practicing for over ten years and is starting her fourth year at EPHC's Graeagle Medical Clinic. Dr. Colpitts has deep local roots, having grown up in Olympic Valley, where she still lives. She loves the outdoors and all it has to offer. Hiking and mountain biking in the summer and downhill skiing in the winter are some of her favorite pastimes.

Dr. Colpitts did her undergraduate studies at Whitman College, a small liberal arts college, in Walla Walla, Washington. From there she went on to medical school at Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences in Yakima, Washington. She also completed a residency at University of Nevada, Reno.

Dr. Colpitts was drawn to the practice of medicine because she excelled at science, especially organic chemistry, anatomy, and physiology, and that dovetailed with her desire to help people. Medicine was also a good fit because she loves learning, and with the variety of Family Medicine, there's something new to learn just about every day. Watching her father help patients in his dental practice in Truckee also inspired her.

Family Medicine encompasses care for people of all ages from newborns to geriatrics and from acute to chronic care with a strong emphasis on preventative medicine. The focus is on the whole person and on developing a relationship with the patient and their family. Dr. Colpitts is a board-certified Family Medicine physician trained as an osteopath, which places additional emphasis on the interrelationship of the body and the mind, and how that affects health, rather than a single disease or system in isolation.

Dr. Colpitts loves working at the Graeagle Clinic and practicing medicine in its small, tight-knit community. She is currently accepting new patients. Call 530-836-1122 to schedule an appointment.

GOOD NUTRITION CAN BE LIFE CHANGING

Jennifer Vimbor is EPHC's Registered Dietician and Nutrition Director. Not only does she work with the hospital's kitchen to plan nutritious meals for hospital patients and residents in EPHC's two skilled nursing facilities, but we are excited to announce that she has also begun offering out-patient nutrition counseling and diabetes management at the Portola Medical Clinic.

Jennifer holds a Master's Degree in Nutrition Education from Columbia University in New York City and is a Certified Diabetes Care & Education Specialist. She has also been a featured nutrition expert in numerous popular magazines and newspapers.

Initially, Jennifer was going to school to become an optometrist, but after taking a nutrition class, she found learning about how food fuels the body fascinating, and discovered her calling. As a marathoner and a mom, Jennifer knows both professionally and personally that "you are what you eat."

Six years ago, EPHC's need for an interim dietician dovetailed with Jennifer's desire for a change. Two weeks later, she accepted a permanent position at EPHC and she and her daughter made the Lost Sierra their home. They fell in love with the community and the natural beauty.

Jennifer wants people to know that good nutrition can be life changing because of the huge role nutrition plays in overall wellness. In out-patient nutrition counselling and diabetes management, Jennifer meets patients where they are to make dietary modifications that further long-term health.



**Jennifer Vimbor, MS, RD, CDCES,
Nutrition Director**

Jennifer loves that her work allows her to make a positive impact with every meal and every patient.

To determine if Jennifer's services are appropriate for your needs, please consult with your healthcare provider or call the Portola Medical Clinic at 530-832-6600.



Nifty Thrifty in Portola

JOIN THE TEAM

If you are interested in joining the fun, friendly Nifty Thrifty volunteer team, please drop by the store to fill out an application. For more information you can also call store manager, **Matt Hamilton**, at 530-258-6200.

PASSING OF THE TORCH

LONGTIME DIRECTOR OF REHABILITATION RETIRES



Jim-Burson PT, MSPT
Former Director of Rehabilitation

Like the metaphoric expression that recalls the Ancient Greek torch race tradition in which a flaming torch is passed from one runner to the next, such is the case when Jim Burson decided to retire from his position as EPHC's Director of Rehabilitation and name Max Barroso as his successor.

Burson was the Director of Rehabilitation, but his title does not tell the whole story about his influence in the community or the lives he improved with physical therapy. For over three decades, he methodically built an impressive Therapy and Wellness Center that expanded therapeutic offerings and gained client referrals both locally and regionally.

Burson compares the accomplishments of making someone's life a little better by providing care and giving them inspiration to push forward when they didn't think they could to being a father to his two daughters and husband to his wife of thirty-one years. "That accomplishment of care is one of the greatest things that can ever happen," he stated.

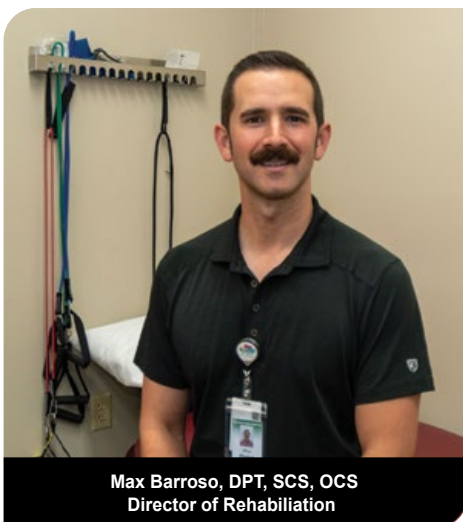
Burson leaves behind an invaluable legacy and Barroso now carries the flame. In addition to the lofty goal of improving the quality of life of each physical therapy patient, Barroso has set his sights on building therapy

disciplines that rival those of big city therapy centers. "The services, professionalism and quality of treatment found at our rural hospital rival those at bigger urban clinics. Our highly trained providers coupled with small town care provide an exceptional patient experience and outcome," said Barroso.

Talented practitioners and comprehensive individualized treatment plans are all part of the success. Along with new services in outpatient pediatric occupational therapy and the launch of cardiac therapy these disciplines join the current services of occupational, physical, speech, and hand therapy.

Barroso said, "Our goal is to build upon our strong foundation and improve patient access while providing high quality care and an excellent patient experience to make Eastern Plumas Health Care the provider of choice for outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation."

Now that the torch has been successfully passed to Barroso, Burson can retire in ease. Everyone at EPHC wishes Jim Burson a happy and well-deserved retirement. For more information about EPHC's Therapy & Wellness Center visit ephc.org or call 530-832-6502.



Max Barroso, DPT, SCS, OCS
Director of Rehabilitation

A CHALLENGING SEASON



After several years of wildfires around our area, this summer saw the most significant risk to our area with the Mill, Smith, and Bear fires. Many of our community members including a large majority of EPHC staff were evacuated from their homes, and we made the decision to evacuate our Portola campus for several days to protect our patients.

This was a frightening situation for everyone in our area with the potential loss of homes, property, and finding places to stay during the evacuations. I was extremely proud of our staff for making the evacuation of the hospital and skilled nursing facility seamless, ensuring the highest level of patient safety, and completing everything in only two hours!

The fire events were also a reminder of the exceptional services provided to our community by our fire districts, law enforcement, and our emergency medical services staff. These brave individuals worked around the clock to save our homes, protect businesses, and keep properties safe all while dealing with their own evacuation challenges.

We are very fortunate to have such dedicated men and women in these vital roles, and many are doing so as volunteers! On behalf of EPHC and the community, we want to thank all of them for their dedication and courage to keep us all safe!

Doug McCoy, CEO
Eastern Plumas Health Care District

Gratitude: Creating a Culture of Giving & Support

The EPHC Foundation is launching new ways to support Eastern Plumas Health Care.

Our ongoing fundraiser “Sip & Sup for EPHC” continues to gain momentum with dining establishments, allowing them to donate part of their proceeds on their designated day of giving to EPHC. Thanks to The Brewing Lair and Headwaters for their generous participation! We'll be announcing additional partners in giving soon.

Keep an eye on your mailbox and inbox for communications designed to inform, inspire, and ignite giving.

Donations help EPHC provide exceptional health care when you need it:

- 9-bed critical access hospital
- 24-hour physician staffed emergency room
- EPHC owned ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) Ambulance Service
- Radiology Services: x-ray, ultrasound, MRI, Dexascan, CT, 3D mammography
- 24/7 lab services
- Two skilled nursing facilities – Portola and Loyalton (66 beds total)
- Three medical clinics – Portola, Graeagle, Loyalton
- Dental Clinic – Portola
- Outpatient Rehabilitation Services

EPHC is forever grateful for the community's support. Your donations have an enormous impact on the quality of health care available in our community. To give today, scan the QR code below, or mail your check to The EPHC Foundation, Attn: Barbara Sokolov, Foundation Manager, 500 First Avenue, Portola, CA 96122. Questions? Email barbara.sokolov@ephc.org or call 530-832-6598.



SCAN TO DONATE