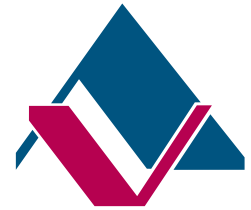


Health Connect



ANTELOPE VALLEY
HOSPITAL

A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

A community newsletter from Antelope Valley Hospital

Winter 2018



Emergency Preparedness Always Ready

**There When
Disaster Strikes**

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in the Rear**

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Chairperson's Message

As we close out the year, I have been reflecting on the progress Antelope Valley Hospital has made in 2018. I am proud of our accomplishments as well as the resilience and dedication of the hospital family.

Our hospital's quality has improved, as indicated by the LeapFrog Hospital Safety Grade scores. While we experienced several cycles of low grades, this year we scored a "C" in both the fall and spring reporting periods, proving that our investments in patient quality were not just a one-time achievement. The score puts AV Hospital on par with the majority of facilities within a 50-mile radius of our location, including major medical centers in Santa Clarita, Mission Hills and Northridge. That said, we are continuing to strive for an "A" grade.

Looking ahead to 2019, we are undertaking additional improvements across patient care areas. The emergency room continues to be a key area of focus as 130,000 patients seek emergency care here every year. Quality patient care is important to all of us, and it begins the minute our patients enter through our doors. To provide a more pleasant experience for our patients and their families, the emergency department leaders are continuing to make changes that utilize more space for the ER. Additionally, you will begin to see some updates inside the hospital thanks to a generous donation from the Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation, which was made at the request of our previous chief financial officer and one of our appointed board members. You will see updated flooring, paint and furniture in many areas.

We are excited about changes in the works and opportunities that await in the coming year, and we are grateful for your continued support of Antelope Valley Hospital.

From the hospital family to *your family*, we wish you a merry holiday season and a happy, healthy new year.

Kristina Hong, RN, NP
Chair, Board of Directors
Antelope Valley Healthcare District

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Cover photo:
Travis Deuson, M.D., emergency room physician and medical care director for the disaster drill, triages "patients."

Doctors Retain Their Seats on the Board

Voters selected **Don Parazo, M.D.**, and **Phil Tusso, M.D.**, to remain on the Antelope Valley Healthcare District Board of Directors. This marks the fifth time Dr. Parazo was elected to the board. Dr. Tusso was appointed to the board earlier this year to fill the seat left vacant when **Mukund Shah, M.D.**, resigned.



Don Parazo, M.D.



Phil Tusso, M.D.

A geriatrician with High Desert Medical Group, Dr. Parazo has lived and practiced medicine in the Antelope Valley for more than 30 years. In 2014 he was named Trustee of the Year by the Association of California Healthcare Districts.

"I am honored to continue serving our community as a member of the Antelope Valley Healthcare District Board of Directors," he said. "Healthcare is a critically important topic in any community, but especially here in the Antelope Valley where the need is great."

Dr. Tusso is a board-certified internist and nephrologist. He is particularly passionate about building lasting relationships with his patients as well as helping uninsured and underinsured local residents.

"Antelope Valley Hospital is an asset to our community that delivers vitally important services not available anywhere else in the area," he said. "As a board member, I want to help ensure Antelope Valley residents and visitors always have access to the highest quality medical care."

The other three publicly elected board members whose terms were not up for re-election this year are **Kristina Hong, NP**; **Mateo Olivarez, RN**; and **Abdallah Farrukh, M.D.** Additionally, the board will continue to work with the three appointed community members—**Kevin Von Tungeln, Regina Rossall** and **Steve Baker**—to govern Antelope Valley Hospital Inc. Baker, Rossall and Von Tungeln were appointed earlier this year as a result of the voter-approved Measure H in November 2017.

Kicking Cancer in the Rear

Early detection has made all the difference in the fight against cancer for two local women. While Margie Shafer and Mary Boy have never met, they have something in common: colon cancer. As daunting as that diagnosis can be, these women share the good fortune of early detection and non-surgical tumor removal.

Both women were referred to gastroenterologist **Jatinder Pruthi, M.D.**, after colonoscopies detected polyps that may be cancerous. Dr. Pruthi confirmed they had cancer, but determined the tumors could be removed without surgery. Instead Dr. Pruthi used endoscopic mucosal resection, which involves inserting a thin, lighted tube-like instrument into the rectum. It allows the physician to observe the inside of a patient's intestinal tract and remove growths without making a single incision.

"The recovery time is such that they can go to work the next day," said Dr. Pruthi, adding that the recovery is similar to a colonoscopy.

While currently cancer-free, both Margie and Mary must have regularly scheduled follow-up visits for two years following the procedure to ensure the cancer does not come back.

"I've got a lot of confidence in Dr. Pruthi, and I think he really has the patient's best interests in mind," Margie said, adding that her most recent check-up in September showed no cancerous polyps.

Margie and Mary both encourage people get a colonoscopy at the proper time.

"In the long run, you should just do it to be on the safe side," Margie said. "It could save your life."



Dr. Pruthi removed Mary Boy's cancer without surgery.



Margie Shafer's cancer was removed thanks to an innovative procedure from Dr. Pruthi.



The American Cancer Society recommends that people at average risk of colorectal cancer start regular screening at age 45. The type and frequency of screening tests depend upon each individual's risk factors, age and results of previous tests. Talk to your doctor about your risk for developing colon cancer.

Prepared for *Any* Emergency

Disasters strike when we least expect them. We recently put our preparedness to the test during a disaster drill. The scenario was a biological weapon attack that sent dozens of victims to Antelope Valley Hospital who had been exposed to hazardous chemicals. Students from Palmdale High School and Desert Christian School posed as patients, complete with stage makeup. Antelope Ambulance, American Medical Response and the Antelope Valley Community Emergency Response Team also participated in the drill.

“Disaster drills give us the opportunity to test our resources, processes and plans,” said **Chris Belanger**, the emergency preparedness coordinator. “We want to make sure we’re ready to handle whatever comes our way when the community needs us most.”



Roger Girion, PhD, executive director of mental health services, consoles “patients” who were participating in the exercise.



Betty Hull, emergency room director, tends to a “patient” during the disaster drill.



First responders wheel a mock patient toward medical care.



Participants are directed to medical personnel after a simulated mass casualty event struck the Antelope Valley.



Several Antelope Valley Hospital employees helped **Ron De Vargas** (second from left) through arranging services and having regular lunches with him. Staff members from left to right: **Susan Johnson, RN**; **Sara Morgan, LCSW**; and **Rachel Barr, LVN**, case manager.

Shocked Into a New Life

Alcohol and drugs nearly claimed the life of **Ron De Vargas** before Antelope Valley Hospital staff intervened.

Ron had been brought to a county health facility in Lancaster in May for what he initially thought was heartburn. That was until he was rushed to the emergency room at Antelope Valley Hospital for what turned out to be acute congestive heart failure due to a history of alcohol and drug abuse.

Two months later Ron was back in the emergency room after more drinking and drugs, but this time he met case manager **Sara Morgan**.

Ron recalled Sara telling him, "We need to get you the help you need."

Following a ten-day hospital stay, Sara got Ron setup with a LifeVest, a personal external defibrillator worn by a patient at risk for sudden cardiac arrest. Preparing to return to the streets where he had been living for three years, Ron filled a backpack with his belongings.

But Sara, Ron and the team faced a small problem: There was no place for Ron to charge his LifeVest. Sara had to get creative.

"I took a stern approach with a lot of engagement from community partners like Grace Resources and Mental Health America to figure out how we were going to get these battery packs charged for him," Sara said.

She convinced him to come to the hospital once a week to download the information from his LifeVest, which provided valuable data about how his heart was doing. Sara treated him to lunch during his weekly visits. This was a turning point in Ron's life.

Ron has now been drug- and alcohol-free for several months and is residing in a sober living facility through a program with Tarzana Treatment Center while continuing to meet with outpatient cardiologist **Shun Sunder, M.D.**, to monitor his heart health. He also landed a job at a Lancaster restaurant. He regularly attends sobriety meetings and has a sponsor.

Pictures of Ron's heart before and after treatment show an amazing difference. Ron said the holes in his heart before he became healthier resembled cigarette burns.

There's another benefit: Ron has also reconnected with his family.

"I've talked to my son, we visit, we hang out," he said. "I'm just gradually getting things back that I'm going to keep this time. I'm on a journey."

Ron thanked the team at Antelope Valley Hospital, including his nurse **Susan Johnson, RN**, for their compassionate work in helping him succeed long after he was a patient here.

"Today, I'm grateful and humble," Ron said. "If it wasn't for God giving me a second chance or this hospital or my children, I wouldn't be here. This hospital saved my life."

The Antelope Valley Hospital case management department helps thousands of people each year.

"You never know when you're going to have these opportunities to make an impact, and when you do, you feel grateful that you helped save someone's life and getting them on the right track," Sara said. "It was a team effort. Everybody wanted him to succeed."



Case Management: Providing Support Even After a Hospital Stay

When patients at Antelope Valley Hospital need additional care, the case management team gets the call. This team of licensed nurses and clinical social workers assess admitted patients' future healthcare needs and facilitates a safe transition from one level of care to the next. Case managers coordinate with patients, their families, and the medical team to ensure patients are discharged at the right time to the right level of care and with the right equipment, resources and information. In creating a discharge plan, case managers can:

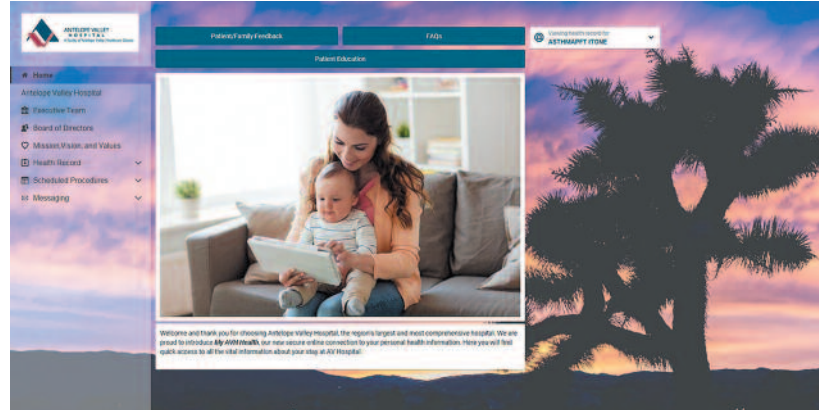
- Schedule follow-up appointments.
- Coordinate post-hospital care and services.
- Arrange for needed medical equipment.
- Set up rehabilitative services or arrange for specialty care.
- Help access other resources that may be needed after discharge, such as homeless support, mental health, drug rehab and shelters.
- Coordinate with county, state and federal agencies when appropriate.

FOR OUR PATIENTS

New Patient Portal Launched

Not only do we have a completely different electronic health records system, we also switched to a new online patient portal: "My AVH Health."

Through "My AVH Health," former patients or their designee can view a private medical record as well as store, update and share personal health information. Each personal health record can include lab results, medical documents, medications, immunizations, imaging results and more.



"My AVH Health" reflects information about care received at Antelope Valley Hospital after Sept. 6, 2018. For medical records prior to that date, please contact our medical records office at 661-949-5011.

After a visit to the hospital, you should receive an invitation via email with portal registration information or sign up on your own at avhospital.iqhealth.com/self-enroll.

A Season of Giving **Winter Blood Drive**

Be a Holiday Hero **Now until January 31**

Give blood this winter season
and receive a free t-shirt.

Call **661-949-5622**

Blood Donor Center
44105 15th Street West
Suite 305, Lancaster



Community Events Promote Health

Now that the weather is cooler, local residents have enjoyed a host of community events designed to encourage healthier living, awareness of various health conditions, prevention, screening and treatment. Here's a look at some of those events.

#TeamAVH Gets Pumped at Heart & Stroke Walk

Nearly 100 Antelope Valley Hospital staff and their friends and families turned out for the American Heart Association's annual Heart and Stroke Walk in November.



Top photo: Interim Security Director Keith Smith (left) and Admitting Representative Donna Oakey were part of the hospital's walk team. Donna spoke to the crowd about her experience surviving a stroke.



Bottom photo: Vijay Shanmugam, M.D., and his wife also joined the walk team. Dr. Shanmugam spoke to the crowd about ways to prevent and treat stroke.

Community Receives Cancer Answers

The hospital joined forces with City of Hope, Kaiser Permanente, Antelope Valley Partners for Health, American Cancer Society and the Antelope Valley Community Clinic for "Get Cancer Answers," a community-focused event aimed at educating attendees about screening, prevention and treatment for skin, breast, lung and colon cancers.

The Lancaster JetHawks mascot, KaBoom, showed his support for cancer awareness during Get Cancer Answers. He is posing behind the Wig Bank booth with (from left) Lizbeth Saenz; Vanessa Labra, RN, cancer patient navigator; and Pat Karnstedt, MSN, Antelope Valley Hospital's cancer program coordinator.

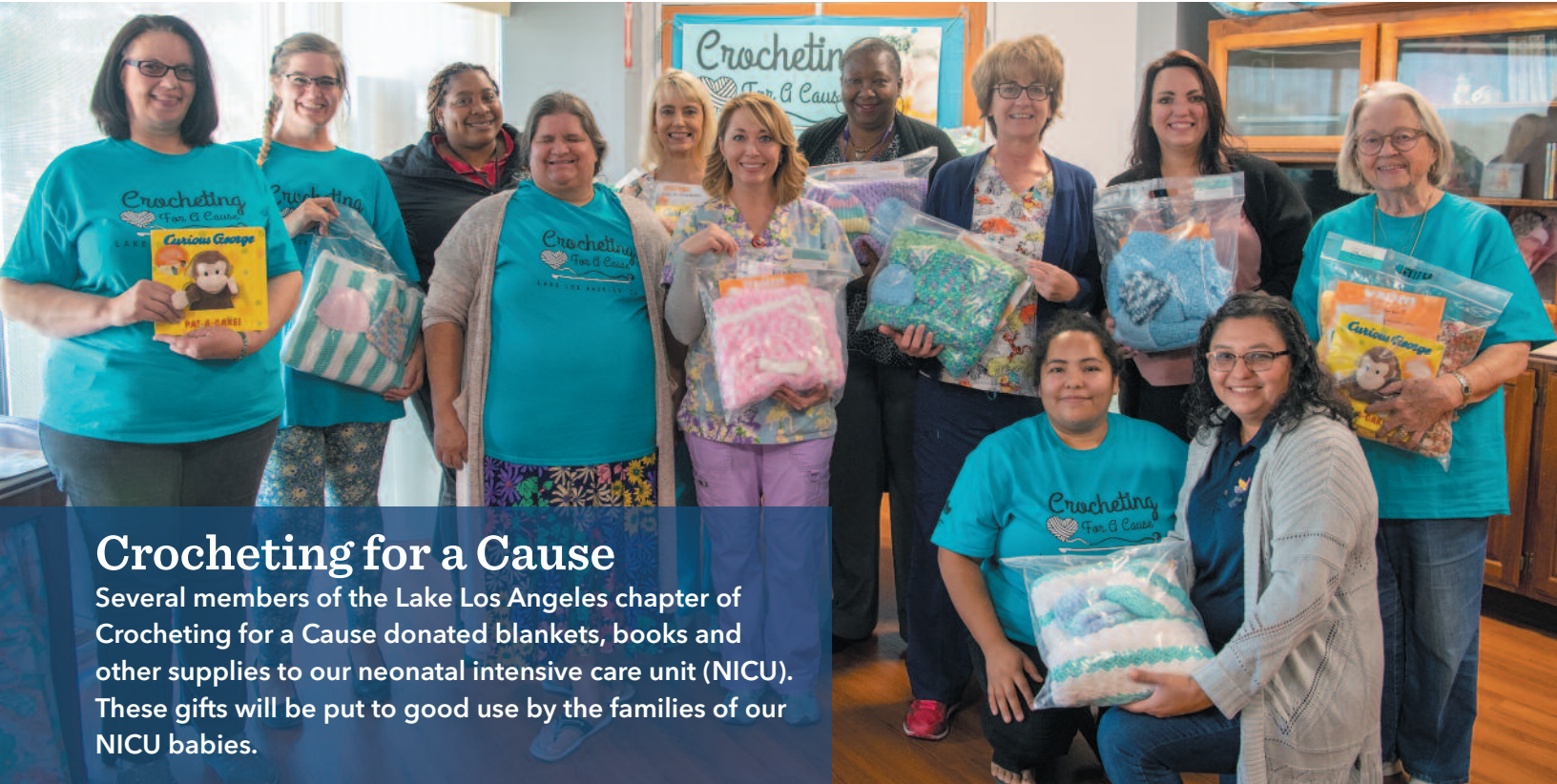


Men Walked a Mile in Her Shoes

Dozens of men, including Palmdale Sheriff Station Captain Dennis Kneer (left) and R. Paul Ferguson of ProCare Hospice, donned bright red heels to bring awareness to domestic violence during the fifth annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event.



HOSPITAL HIGHLIGHTS



Crocheting for a Cause

Several members of the Lake Los Angeles chapter of Crocheting for a Cause donated blankets, books and other supplies to our neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). These gifts will be put to good use by the families of our NICU babies.



Gazebo Dedicated to Former Hospital Employee

Losing a child is difficult for any parent. When Alpha Charter Guild Founding President Marjorie Archer lost her daughter to cancer, she honored the former hospital employee by donating \$50,000 to the Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation to build a memorial. Last fall, hospital staff joined Marjorie to dedicate the Claudia Brower Memorial Garden and Gazebo to all parents who have lost a child.

From left: Claudia's husband, Dean Brower; her sister, Cynthia May; and their mother, Marjorie Archer, stand at the entryway of the gazebo with a portrait of Claudia and Dean.

Medical Records has Moved

The medical records office has relocated to Suite 201 in the Antelope Valley Outpatient Imaging Center building at 44105 15th Street West in Lancaster (on the corner of 15th Street West and Avenue J-5). The office is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays. The phone number is 661-949-5011.

HealthConnect is published by the Antelope Valley Hospital marketing department as a service to the community. For inquiries email marketing@avhospital.org.

Quarter Auction Hits Jackpot

The Antelope Valley Hospital Volunteer Auxiliary held its first-ever Quarter Auction. All proceeds go directly toward hospital services. Below, Nancy McCusker, right, and her daughter-in-law Marydell anxiously await the results of their bidding.



Antelope Valley Hospital Contact Numbers

Main Number
661-949-5000

Blood Donor Center
661-949-5622

Foundation
661-949-5810

OB Clinic
661-726-6180

Volunteers
661-949-5105

Antelope Valley Healthcare District Board of Directors

Kristina Hong, RN, NP, Chair
Mateo Olivarez, RN
Phil Tuso, M.D.
Abdallah S. Farrukh, M.D.
Don Parazo, M.D.

Antelope Valley Hospital, Inc.

Kristina Hong, RN, NP, Chair
Mateo Olivarez, RN
Phil Tuso, M.D.
Abdallah S. Farrukh, M.D.
Don Parazo, M.D.
Steve Baker
Regina Rossall
Kevin Von Tungeln

Information in this publication is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health. Information should not be considered medical advice or treatment nor should it be used as a substitute for a physician consultation.

Monthly Mental Health Lectures

Free hour-long presentations hosted by one of our mental health professionals offer in-depth discussions about topics that are on all of our minds. Presentations begin at 7 p.m. and are held at the Community Resource Center - 44151 15th Street West, Lancaster.



Roger Girion, PhD, hosts the series.

January 15 - Coping with a Devastating Diagnosis - A panel of caregivers will discuss strategies for handling the news of a diagnosis such as cancer, heart disease or other chronic illness.

February 19 - Much Ado About Love - Whether Cupid's arrow hits its mark or just misses, love is a complex emotion that this lecture will help listeners wade through.

March 19 - Facing the Future - Anxiety over the outcome of challenges in life can stir panic in an individual, but this lecture will help listeners confront their fears and deploy strategies for when anxiety arises.





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A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

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Consider Antelope Valley Hospital in Your **Year-End Gift Giving**

For nearly 65 years, Antelope Valley Hospital has served as the center of healthcare in the community. Now, in this season of sharing and caring, is your chance to help assure that we will be here for future generations as well.

Your tax-deductible contribution of any size helps save lives, treat illness, bring newborns into the world, and supports our 2,300 employees who are committed to making the Antelope Valley a great place to live and work.

Please consider Antelope Valley Hospital in your year-end gift giving. It is one of our community's most precious resources and a good investment, now and for the future.

We will be happy to speak with you about various ways to give, including annual or one-time cash donations, real estate, life insurance, stocks, mutual funds, a will or living trust.



**ANTELOPE VALLEY
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION**
A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

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