

# Health Connect



ANTELOPE VALLEY  
HOSPITAL  
A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

A community newsletter from Antelope Valley Hospital

May/June 2017

## Labor and Delivery

*Women & Infants Pavilion  
Welcomes Babies in a Caring,  
Supportive Environment*

## Know When Antibiotics Work

## Cardiac Catheterization Labs

*Excellence in the Diagnosis and  
Treatment of Heart Conditions*



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# Happy National Hospital Week to Our Community

This month hospitals around the country will be celebrating National Hospital Week – an annual observance that honors the millions of women and men who are the backbones of healthcare in cities and towns all across America. Here at Antelope Valley Hospital it is our chance to salute our more than 2,500 employees who through their action, dedication and compassion are devoted to improving the health of our community 365 days a year.

While we say thank you to our employees, we give thanks to our community as well for the confidence and trust that you have placed in us for more than 60 years. That makes National Hospital Week a celebration not just of us but of YOU.

In the truest sense, healthcare is a partnership. It takes you, your doctor and your hospital all working together – from screenings, education and healthy lifestyle habits that keep you well to providing the care, technology and extra compassion you need when sickness or injury strikes. This issue of *HealthConnect* is dedicated to the role we jointly play in the health and well-being of the Antelope Valley.

On the following pages we've highlighted various programs, including driving-safety events and an educational seminar on child abuse, that are designed to make the AV a better place to live. The feature on our renowned Women & Infants Pavilion describes the role we play each year in welcoming more than 5,200 babies into the world and the joy we share in seeing these new families embrace. And the items about our volunteer and foundation events remind all of us that none of this is possible without our community's ongoing encouragement and support.

Just as you have stood steadfastly by us through rough waters and smooth sailing, we will stick by you in both good and challenging times. And that's a commitment we make not just during National Hospital Week but the other 51 weeks of the year as well.

**Michael L. Wall**  
*Chief Executive Officer*







# Outpatient Surgery Center to Reopen Through New Joint Venture

**A**ntelope Valley Hospital's Outpatient Surgery Center, closed since late last year, is scheduled to reopen this summer through a joint partnership between the hospital and a private, local surgery center. The reopening will not only be a great benefit to the local healthcare landscape but, according to hospital CEO Mike Wall, may very well usher in a new era of healthcare cooperation in the Antelope Valley.

"Healthcare is changing; and thanks to technological advances and consumer demand, more and more activities will take place outside of the traditional acute care hospital," said Mike. "So it's more important than ever to look for new opportunities to partner with physicians and others on programs that make sense for the community while providing new revenue streams for the hospital."

The reopening of the 13,500-square-foot outpatient surgery center is just such an opportunity. Through a unanimous approval of the Antelope Valley Healthcare District board of directors in March, the hospital will purchase a 49 percent stake in a private, local surgery center whose managing partner is Pavel Petrik, M.D., the hospital's trauma medical director and chairman of

the department of surgery. That center, currently operating out of the Lancaster Marketplace shopping center, will move into the vacant building on the AVH campus at Avenue J and 17th Street West.

"This joint venture says to the medical community that there is a new philosophy that recognizes the power of relationships where everyone benefits," says Mike. "If there are opportunities for us to joint venture with others who share our mission and who are equally dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of the community, then let's be open to that and do what is best for everyone."



At the outpatient surgery center, physicians will perform those procedures that do not necessarily require lengthy surgery times or overnight hospital stays. In addition, Mike points out that while the closed outpatient surgery center is presently "sitting idle, doing good for no one, and generating no income," the hospital

anticipates earning more than \$300,000 in rent under the new agreement. "Those are dollars that we can reinvest back into healthcare in the community through new programs, new equipment and educational outreach activities where everyone benefits."



# Get Smart About Antibiotics

## Arm Yourself With Knowledge About Antibiotic Resistance

**A**ntibiotics are powerful, often lifesaving medicines that can kill bacteria. They are also, however, one of the single greatest threats to global health due to their misuse and overuse, which can result in “antibiotic resistance” within an individual. And the sad truth is that up to one-half of all antibiotic use in humans today is either unnecessary or inappropriate.

Antibiotic resistance puts the achievements of modern medicine at risk. Chemotherapy, organ transplants and surgeries such as cesarean sections become much more dangerous without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections. And when infections can no longer be treated by first-line antibiotics, more expensive medicines must be used; and a longer duration of illness and treatment (often in a hospital) is often the case, as is increased mortality.

“Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in a way that reduces the effectiveness of antibiotics; and as a result, a growing number of infections are becoming harder to treat,” said Jill Bennett, Pharm.D., BCPS, clinical coordinator, department of pharmacy at Antelope Valley Hospital. “The best way to combat antibiotic resistance and avoid adverse drug reactions is to use antibiotics appropriately.”

Each year in the United States, 47 million unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions are written in doctors’ offices, emergency rooms, and hospital-based clinics, which makes improving antibiotic prescribing and use a national priority.

“Antibiotics are critical adjuncts to modern medicine and make it possible to perform surgery and provide medical treatment for a variety of serious illnesses,” said

Dr. Lauri Hicks, director for CDC’s Office of Antibiotic Stewardship. It is crucial that antibiotics are used only when absolutely necessary; and when they are needed, the correct antibiotic must be prescribed in a timely manner at the right dose and duration.”

### Know When Antibiotics Work

While the healthcare industry is putting increased focus on this issue, individuals can do their part by becoming more aware, changing their behaviors and taking antibiotics only when absolutely necessary.

ILLNESS	USUAL CAUSE	ANTIBIOTIC NEEDED?
Cold/Runny Nose	Virus	No
Whooping Cough	Bacteria	Yes
Influenza (Flu*)	Virus	No
Strep Throat	Bacteria	Yes
Sore Throat (except strep)	Virus	No
Fluid in the Middle Ear	Virus	No
Urinary Tract Infection**	Bacteria	Yes

\* Antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu, may be prescribed for influenza.

\*\*Use antibiotics only if symptomatic or pregnant.



# Cardiac Catheterization Labs

## Excellence in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Heart Conditions

The Institute for Heart & Vascular Care (IHVC) at Antelope Valley Hospital features two cardiac catheterization labs with the most advanced technology in the Antelope Valley.

Cardiac catheterization is a big name for a procedure that involves inserting a tiny tube (called a catheter) into an artery or vein that leads to your heart. The catheter, which is about as thick as a toothpick, is inserted near your groin, neck or arm and guided through the blood vessel to the heart with the help of X-ray images.

With the catheter in place, physicians can examine how well your heart is working and diagnose any problems that may exist. Cardiac catheterization is a highly effective way for physicians to:

- **Detect blockages in the heart and coronary arteries.**
- **Determine if the valves between the heart's chambers are working properly.**
- **Evaluate the heart's muscle strength and pumping action.**

Some heart treatments, such as coronary angioplasty, are also done using cardiac catheterization. Angioplasty, for example, involves inserting and expanding a tiny balloon at the site of a blockage to help widen a narrowed artery.

The cath labs at AVH are staffed by a highly skilled, hands-on team of cardiologists, cardiac surgeons and nurses who perform hundreds of catheterization procedures each year. Available 24 hours a day, the cath labs are used for both scheduled as well as emergency procedures, including the rapid diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening conditions such as a heart attack.

Antelope Valley Hospital has demonstrated that it can rapidly treat a heart attack in progress and has earned designation as a Los Angeles County heart attack (STEMI) receiving center. Recent studies have confirmed that

outcomes for patients suffering from heart attacks are best in STEMI receiving centers like AVH, which offer emergency cardiac catheterization, angioplasty and stent placement.

*"We are proud of our unique and extensive expertise in caring for heart attacks and related conditions," said Sameh Gadallah, M.D., a cardiologist and medical director of the IHVC. "Antelope Valley Hospital is committed to providing the most advanced treatment and care to patients experiencing heart and vascular conditions."*

For local residents the high-tech cath labs at the IHVC mean first-rate, lifesaving heart care is available right here in the Antelope Valley.







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## *Labor and Delivery*

# Women & Infants Pavilion Welcomes Babies in a Caring, Supportive Environment

Having a baby is one of the most important moments of your life. At the Women & Infants Pavilion at Antelope Valley Hospital, we're honored to share it with you. Our highly trained staff is dedicated to making the entire birth experience as smooth and comfortable as possible.

“Every year more than 5,200 babies are born at AVH, which means our maternity staff has a lot of experience helping moms and families welcome new babies into the world,” said Andrea Randenberg, RN, executive director of Women & Infants Pavilion services. “We have an exceptional team of doctors and nurses who provide a warm, supportive environment for our patients before, during and after delivery. While no two deliveries are the same, each one is special to us.”

### **Family-centered maternity care**

Featuring an ideal blend of comfort and technology, the Women & Infants Pavilion is a spacious and modern facility that allows families to experience birth in an inviting, home-like environment. The pavilion includes 39 private rooms and couplet care, which means families can stay together.

Unlike the traditional approach in which new babies are cared for in a separate nursery by the nursery staff, couplet care places healthy newborns in the same room with their mothers until both go home. The rooms also include extra sleeping accommodations allowing the new mother's partner to remain with the mother and baby during their entire hospital stay. This family-centered maternity care has the added advantage of giving new parents many opportunities to learn how to care for their baby.

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# Labor and Delivery continued

In couplet care a single nurse attends to the needs of both mom and baby. These maternity nurses receive special training to give moms and babies the best care possible. If new moms have any problems or feel they are not getting enough rest, their nurse is nearby and happy to help. Certified lactation specialists are also available to assist with breastfeeding.

## The only neonatal intensive care unit in the AV

Newborn babies who need intensive medical attention are often admitted into a special area of the Women & Infants Pavilion called the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). As the Antelope Valley's only NICU, we combine advanced technology and specially trained healthcare professionals to provide the highest level of care for the tiniest, most vulnerable patients.

"We have experts available around the clock to provide care to babies who are born premature or with medical problems," says NICU Medical Director Murugesu Thangavel, M.D., a neonatologist who has been caring for the Antelope Valley's tiniest patients since the NICU first opened more than 30 years ago. "Our physicians and nurses have created thousands of positive outcomes for babies who required immediate care after birth."

The NICU is covered by UCLA board-certified neonatologists who provide expert in-house medical care 24 hours a day 7 days a week so that babies who are born or diagnosed with a very serious condition can receive the complex level of care they need right here in our community.

## Quality, compassionate care is our number one priority

In 2015 AVH was designated a Baby-Friendly Hospital, which means the hospital has met the gold standard in maternity care operations, including support for breastfeeding and mother-baby bonding. And every year since 2010, AVH has been acknowledged for its outstanding maternity services by receiving the Healthgrades® 5-Star Maternity Care Excellence Award. This award recognizes hospitals that provide consistent high-quality care for women and their babies during pregnancy, delivery and the first few days after delivery.



"Whether this is your first baby or your fourth, our staff is dedicated to ensuring that moms and their families receive all the support they need during this special time in their lives," said Andrea.



## AVH OB Clinics

We have two convenient locations that provide routine gynecological exams, pregnancy and prenatal care, and breast and cervical cancer screenings.

### Lancaster

661-726-6180  
44105 15th Street West  
Suite 301

### Palmdale

661-726-6325  
38350 40th Street East  
Suite 200

## Expecting?

Schedule your  
childbirth education  
class today!

**661-726-6210**







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## Amazing Person

# A Lifetime of Service Leads Volunteer Chaplain to AVH

A soft-spoken and unassuming gentleman, volunteer chaplain Sherman Blakeslee's life stories could fill volumes.

**A** spry nonagenarian – a fancy word for a person in his nineties – Sherman can be described as a man driven by his faith, a man who has a deep love for others, and a man who is a true survivor. These qualities form the basis for his success as a volunteer chaplain. While he has been comforting AVH patients and their families for just three years, his service to others began decades earlier.

Five days after graduating from Burbank High School in 1943, Sherman enlisted in the U.S. Navy, right in the midst of World War II. After receiving training in Pearl Harbor, he became a radar operator in the combat information center aboard the USS Coral Sea, which was later renamed the USS Anzio and was stationed in the Pacific. “We were the eyes of the ship,” he recalled.

Throughout the war his unit engaged in ten battles, including the one on which the book and movie *Hacksaw Ridge* is based. He witnessed their sister ship sink in just 23 minutes after being torpedoed. Seven hundred men on board were lost. Another very personal loss Sherman suffered during the war was that of his older brother, who served as a paratrooper. Once the war ended, Sherman returned to California via a five-day train trip from Panama to Long Beach.

Back home he relied on an almost chameleon-like ability to learn trades and adapt to diverse work environments to provide for his new bride and growing family. “There’s nothing I couldn’t do,” he said, which over the years included working as a banker, inventory control at a lumber mill, welder for the gas company, arc welder for a construction company, truck driver, and salesman, just to name a few.

Married for nearly 50 years before his first wife passed away, he has been remarried for 18 years to a woman he met at church. “I knew from the moment I met her that she would become my wife,” he reflected. In addition to his four children, Sherman has 18 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Having been retired for many years, Sherman felt compelled to use his gifts in a meaningful way. Drawing from his deep convictions, serving as a chaplain seemed a natural fit, which led him to AVH. “Praying for and comforting people when they are hurting, scared, unsure or simply need encouragement is a tremendous honor,” he said. “I have always *liked* people. Now I *love* people. I feel so blessed.”

At Antelope Valley Hospital the real blessing is having Sherman providing much-needed support to patients and their families.



# HOSPITAL HIGHLIGHTS



## Annual Golf Tournament is Always a Good Time (and for a Good Cause)

Over the past 14 years, the Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation's annual golf tournament has raised more than \$1.1 million to help support better health in the Antelope Valley. We are grateful to everyone who sponsored, participated in and contributed to this year's tournament, which was held April 24 at the beautiful Robinson Ranch Golf Club in Santa Clarita. The winning foursome included (from left) Munif Rahal, M.D.; Prithviraj Dharmaraja, M.D.; John Pryor; and Jim Erdman.

## Raising Community Awareness on Child Abuse-Related Issues

More than 250 professionals and community members packed the AVH Community Resource Center auditorium for a special all-day conference on issues related to child abuse investigations. The April event was sponsored by Assistance League of the Antelope Valley in collaboration with AVH. "Child abuse is one of the adverse childhood experiences that contributes negatively to the mental and physical health of our community, and it is important that we educate ourselves in order to increase awareness to address this issue," said Mary Reina, MSN, RN, director, forensic services unit at AVH.



## Local High School Students Learn Dangers of Drinking and/or Texting While Driving

Motor vehicle accidents are the second-leading cause of premature death in the Antelope Valley. In an effort to reduce these tragedies, students at local high schools have been participating in interactive programs that highlight the potentially tragic consequences of drinking alcohol or texting while driving. Through these programs students experience the devastating effect a fatal car accident would have on their families, friends and community. The "victims" of these accidents are transported by ambulance to Antelope Valley Hospital where a trauma team attempts to "save" their lives.



*HealthConnect* is published by the Antelope Valley Hospital marketing department as a service to the community. For inquiries email [marketing@avhospital.org](mailto:marketing@avhospital.org).

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Admitting | Registration  
661-949-5411

Emergency Department  
661-949-5115

Outpatient Surgery  
661-952-1100

Blood Donor Center  
661-949-5622

Mental Health Services  
661-949-5250

OB Clinics  
Lancaster  
661-726-6180  
Palmdale  
661-726-6325

*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.*



## Celebrating Our Volunteers

At a special volunteer appreciation banquet, AVH recognized its 500 volunteers who collectively contributed nearly 55,000 hours of service to the hospital in 2016. The celebration, held at the Hellenic Center in Lancaster, included special recognition for milestone years of volunteer service, including Shirley Beasely, 45 years, and Joe Silva, 40 years. Recognition was also given to the volunteers who have contributed the most hours during their tenure, including Betty Morgan, 18,000 hours; Shirley Beasely, 15,000 hours; Bobbie Patton, 14,000 hours; Judy Ibbotson, 13,000 hours; and Lou Arnold, 12,000 hours.



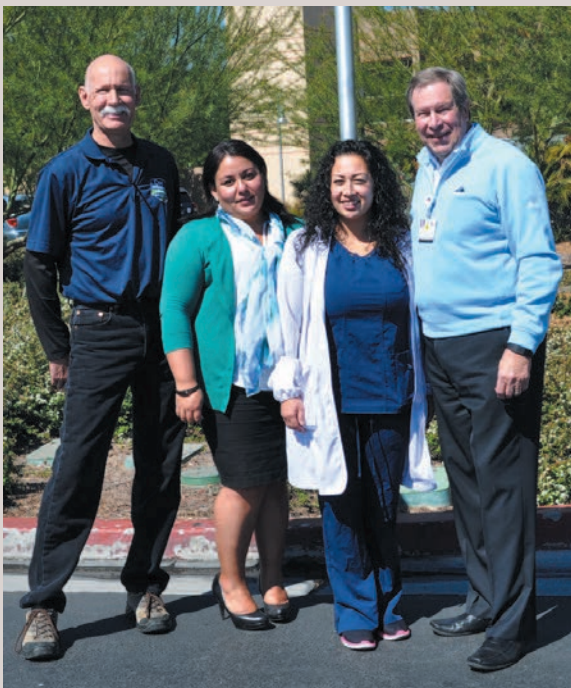
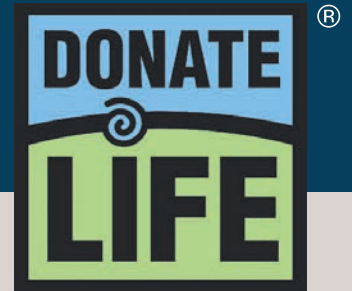


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## AVH Honors Organ Donors During Donate Life Month



Antelope Valley Hospital joined thousands of hospitals across the nation in recognizing National Donate Life Month with its annual flag-raising ceremony. Donate Life Month is designed to encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors and to honor those who have saved lives through the gift of donation. In addition to the flag-raising ceremony, AVH also had a walk team that participated in the annual Donate Life Run/Walk in Fullerton on April 29.

In California alone nearly 22,000 people are waiting to receive a lifesaving transplant. A single organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people and improve the lives of as many as 75 more by donating their corneas and tissue. To become a donor, register at your local DMV or online at [donatelifecalifornia.org](http://donatelifecalifornia.org).

(Left to right) Organ recipient Brian Hinsley, a retired Los Angeles County firefighter and OneLegacy ambassador; Angela Bolaris, OneLegacy donation development coordinator; Kristina Hong, RN, Antelope Valley Healthcare District board member; and hospital CEO Mike Wall attend the Donate Life flag-raising ceremony.