

# New family nurse practitioner: 'education empowers'

Mendy Sharpe and family moved from Austin

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

For family nurse practitioner Mendy Sharpe, education is key to unlocking good health.

Sharpe began working at the Grant County Health Department in John Day in December. She and her family moved to Prairie City from Austin, Texas, where she grew up.

Sharpe was a critical care nurse for most of her nursing career, working while finishing studies to become a family nurse practitioner. She spent five years in critical care, working in urgent care and as a home health nurse, but most of her experience was in a hospital setting.

"I've dealt with a lot of younger people, but also older people who had exacerbations from chronic diseases," she said. "My goal is to prevent, as much as possible."

Catching health problems early can help patients have the best outcome possible.

"If they get that education, it empowers them to make better decisions regarding their health," she said.

Sharpe also tries to educate herself, learning new things



Family nurse practitioner Mendy Sharpe checks the ears of a patient at the Grant County Health Department.

The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

and keeping herself up to date in her field, she said.

She enjoys working at the health clinic and said there are good resources available for such a small area.

She noted having the mental health clinic, Community

Counseling Solutions, attached to the health department was rare.

"Here at the health department, we have family planning services with access to contraceptives," she said, as well as resources for those

who are pregnant, such as the WIC program, or those who would like to become pregnant.

She said they now take laboratory work at the health department, and their morning and evening hours are geared



Eagle file photo

The Grant County Health Department at 528 E. Main St., Ste. E, in John Day is open with new hours of 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. On Fridays, the health department is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with no providers available on that day.

more toward urgent care.

When she's not working, Sharpe said she enjoys spending time with her family.

This includes her husband, David, an Army veteran who attends school full-time, working on a bachelor's degree in informational technology. His five-plus years in the military included deployment to Iraq.

She and David have two children, son David, 11, and daughter London, 6. Mendy said they've enjoyed going to the movies out of town and taking vacations to visit other states.

A draw to the area for the Sharpes was having family and friends nearby in Eugene, northern California and

Washington — as well as the weather.

"Now that the weather is starting to warm up, we want to start doing outdoor activities and find places to hike and go camping," she said.

Sharpe said she is enjoying the close-knit community.

"Everybody is really friendly, and you don't always get that in a bigger city," she said.

The health department, located at 528 E. Main St., Ste. E, is open 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. On Fridays, the health department is open 8 to 5 p.m. with no providers available on that day.

For more information, call 541-575-0429.

# 340B program benefits people without prescription drug insurance

Eligible hospital patients can receive card for discounts at Len's Drug

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Blue Mountain Hospital District patients without prescription drug insurance may see significant savings from a new program in John Day.

Through the 340B drug pricing program, patients without prescription coverage who are prescribed medications by doctors at the hospital or its clinic can receive a 340B card from the hospital to use when filling prescriptions at Len's Drug for major discounts.

"This is a government pro-



Eagle photos/Sean Hart

Len's Drug Pharmacy Technician Rori Leighton, left, and Pharmacy Manager Tilli Bjornberg work in the John Day pharmacy Wednesday, April 12. Eligible Blue Mountain Hospital patients without prescription drug coverage can now obtain a 340B card from the hospital to use for significant savings on most prescriptions at Len's Drug.

gram that gets small, rural hospitals and clinics like ours the ability to receive discounts

from the big pharmaceutical companies," hospital CEO Derek Daly said. "Through



Prescription drugs may be much more affordable for people who do not have prescription drug coverage, thanks to the new 340B program.

our partnership with Len's Drug, we are able to get the discounts into the patients' hands."

Daly said patients should ask the receptionist if they are

eligible for the program when they visit the hospital. He said hospital staff will probably ask the patients if they are interested but may not be aware a patient does not have prescription drug coverage.

Although people who already have drug coverage are not eligible, Daly said the program could help 5-10 percent of the population.

"This has an impact to get people pharmaceuticals that otherwise wouldn't be able to," Daly said. "We would print you a card in the clinic that can be utilized similarly to a prescription insurance card you could show up to Len's with."

Len's Drug Pharmacy Manager Tilli Bjornberg said

people have already used the program and it is going well.

"We're excited for the program because it's going to help people without insurance to get medications that are cost prohibitive for most people," she said. "I had one medication that would be \$300 out of pocket, and it was \$75 with this program."

Expensive medications, such as insulin and other diabetic drugs, inhalers and blood thinners, receive the largest discounts in the program, she said, though many medications are included.

Bjornberg said patients simply need to bring the card from the hospital to the pharmacy and present it when filling the prescription.

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