

# Clinic launches Community Health Worker program

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new Community Health Worker Program is connecting Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic patients in Grant County to an array of resources to provide support and help improve their well-being.

Clinic Director Marci Wasiluk, who is an executive team member for Blue Mountain Hospital District, manages the CHW team of four health care workers.

She said the CHW staff are on “the front lines,” outside the medical providers’ offices, connecting patients — from infants through seniors — with their community partners and providing advocacy, education and support to help them improve their lifestyles.

The help the CHW offers includes home visits and is as wide ranging as the patients that seek assistance.

They may lend a hand to patients applying for health benefits, finding a ride to an out-of-town medical specialist or accessing a walker or wheelchair. They can even help patients find lodging and food.

Other times they’ve discovered patients who have no running water, a baby in need of a crib or a patient in need of a glucometer (to monitor blood sugar levels). They also provide ideas for nutritious recipes to manage patients’ health issues.

“We’re an extension of the providers, looking at the whole person,” Wasiluk said. “The community health workers are helping our community understand the resources we have right here in Grant County.”

The program, which was operating under a grant for the first two years, officially launched last July and is now sustained by the clinic patients. Under the grant, the staff mainly visited with patients over the phone, and since the official launch, home visits are available.

The certified Community Health Workers staff include: Dani Jones, Jenna Hendriksen, Jenny Keith and Gaylene Moyers.

Jones and Hendriksen have both been CHW certified for two years, and Keith and Moyers recently completed their final CHW class and are expected to receive their certification this month.

“The services really exploded with the needs that were in our community,” Jones said. “Every month, we’re seeing the volume



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

**Gathering outside Blue Mountain Hospital, local Community Health Workers include front, from left: Dani Jones and Gaylene Moyers; back, Jenny Keith, Marci Wasiluk (Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic’s director) and Jenna Hendriksen.**

of patients increase.”

They saw 27 patients in October, and in November, they had 32 patient visits.

Hendriksen said she was born and raised in Grant County, but didn’t realize all the local resources that are available.

“We link them together — Families First Parent Resource Center, Heart of Grant County, senior center, DHS (Department of Human Services), health department, food bank, Community Connections, Northeast Oregon housing authority, CCS and churches,” she said.

These workers move into action when the clinic’s primary care providers give a patient a referral.

Sometimes the connection of patient to CHW staff member may happen before the patient leaves the clinic.

“Say a doctor discovers a patient has anxiety, depression and is suicidal, we have the CHW come in — CCS (Community Coun-

### COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

**What is a community health worker?**  
A community health worker serves as a liaison between the community, health care providers, government and social systems. These are the people on the front lines, providing advocacy, education and support to patients in order to help them improve their lifestyle and connect them with health care options or resources. They collect data and discuss health concerns with providers or appropriate agencies. They navigate the landscape the health care, government and social services.

**Job duties of the community health worker**

- Linking patients to needed health care information, resources and services.
- Linking patients to lodging, utilities, food and clothes.
- Linking patients to rides to appointments.
- Discussing health concerns with members of the community.
- Providing informational counseling and social support.
- Helping people understand their health condition.
- Translating or interpreting health information for patients.
- Providing health screening, referrals and educational needs.

- Collecting data and reporting findings to health care providers.
- Helping individuals complete applications to access health benefits.
- Conducting home visits to check on patients.

**Qualities of a community health worker**  
Relationship building: Community health workers often need to be entrenched within the communities they are serving. This is where relationship-building qualities come into play.

Empathy: The most successful professionals in this field are those who have a genuine compassion for the individuals they are serving. For some, this empathy stems from growing up with similar circumstances. Others just have an innate ability to put themselves in the shoes of others.

Trustworthiness: Once a relationship has been established, community health workers are entrusted with sensitive information regarding their clients. Being honest, approachable and offering complete confidentiality is important.

Persistence: A lot of the initiatives community health workers support are things that take time and stamina.

Resourcefulness: There’s not always a clear-cut solution to the issues community health workers help to overcome. Sometimes they have to get crafty to piece together the right resources to help.

seling Solutions) may not be able to come for a couple hours,” Wasiluk said, adding the CHW can visit with the patient while they’re waiting.

When the patient thought their life was hopeless, help came, and they realized resources are available and that things will be OK, Wasiluk said.

Keith said that helping patients get in touch with needed resources can help alleviate stress on family members.

In one instance, she said, “They cried because a burden was lifted.”

“It makes us feel closer to our community,” she said. “We’re really making a difference.”

Hendriksen explained that CHW and home health are two different things.

“Home health is focused on health care needs,” she said. “We’re more focused on community resources.”

Jones said she’s been working in health care for several years, since high school.

“Knowing the other (patient) needs, I felt like there was a gap that was there that I wanted to fill and help people,” she said, describing why she decided to become involved in CHW.

Keith said she’s a “people person” and likes helping others.

“I wished I could do more for someone — now I can,” she said. “It’s nice to be out there and actually helping them and seeing it from the start to the end.”

Moyers said she enjoys talking with parents about their babies’ needs, and helping connect them to Families First for car seats and education. She also enjoys helping people with diabetes learn to cook a healthy meal.

“It’s really fulfilling, knowing that you’ve helped so many people in a day,” Hendriksen said.

Wasiluk said the CWH staff become so close to the patients that “they become part of their story.”

“It’s a lasting relationship,” she said.

**John Day Valley Mennonite Church**  
Meeting every Sunday at Mt. Vernon Grange Hall  
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship...10:50 a.m.  
Pastor Leland Smucker  
Everyone Welcome • 541-932-2861

**Prairie Baptist Church**  
238 N. McHaley St., Prairie City • 541-820-3696  
www.prairie-baptist-church.com  
Pastor David Hoeffner  
Pastor Keith  
Sunday School (all ages).....9:00 a.m.  
Sunday morning worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Awana (Oct.-Apr.).....3:00 p.m.  
Youth Group.....5:30 p.m.

**Historic Remnant Church**  
Preparing for Jesus to come  
Meets Saturday at Mt. Vernon Grange  
Sabbath School.....9:30 am  
Church Services.....11:00 am  
541-620-0340

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**  
Morning Prayer.....10 am  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays)  
Eucharist & Sunday School.....10 am  
(2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays)  
139 S. Washington, Canyon City  
541-620-1436

**VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
KJV Independent  
Fundamental • Premillennial  
Terence K. Crabb, Pastor  
A Bible-believing Church  
“He that hath the Son hath life...” 1 John 5:12  
Sunday School 9:45 am • Sunday Preaching 11:00 am  
Junior Church 11:00 am • Sunday Evenings 3:30 pm  
Wednesday Bible Study & Master Club 7:00 pm  
Saturday Men’s Prayer Meeting 7:00 pm  
108 S. Washington Street, Canyon City  
541-575-2688 or 541-575-0844

**New Life Bible Church**  
2 Corinthians 5:17  
Every Sunday in the L.C. Community Center (Corner of Second & Allen)  
Contact Pastor Ed Studtmann at 541-421-3888 • Begins at 4:00pm

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
Come Worship with us at 627 SE Hillcrest, John Day  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Worship/Communion.....10am  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Worship/Communion/Potluck...4:30pm  
2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Worship .....10 am  
Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....6 pm  
For information: 541-575-2348

**3ABN**  
Three Angels Broadcasting Network  
TV & Radio Networks  
Tune into KSPL 98.1 FM  
Valley View Broadcasting  
PO Box 151, Mt. Vernon, Or 97865  
Antenna: Digital Channel 15  
Blue Mountain Cable Channel 2

**St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church**  
Corner of S Canyon Blvd and SW 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Mon. - Fri. Mass - 12:05 pm  
Saturday Mass - 5:00 pm  
Sunday Mass - 9:00 am  
Holy Days Mass: Noon & 6 pm  
Confession: Saturday 4:00-4:45 pm  
Anytime by appointment  
541-974-8638

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Sunday School..... 10 am  
Church.....11 am  
Afternoon Service..... 2 pm  
No Mid-week Services  
Pastor Jesse Gosnell  
300 W. Main, John Day  
541-575-1355

**CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**  
Sunday School.....9:30 am  
Sunday Worship Service.....10:45 am  
Sunday Evening Service.....6:00 pm  
Children & Teen Activities  
SMALL GROUPS CALL FOR MORE INFO  
Weekdays: Sunshine Christian School  
Pastor Randy Johnson  
521 E. Main • John Day • 541-575-1895  
www.johndaynazarene.com

**JOHN DAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
Sunday Worship • 9AM  
(541) 575-1326  
johndayUMC@gmail.com  
126 NW Canton, John Day  
Food Pantry Friday 3-4p.m.  
Like us on Facebook!

**St. Anne**  
Monument -  
2nd and 4th Sundays at 12:30 pm  
Office Hours  
Monday - Friday 9 am - 12 Noon

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
Sunday School.....9:45 am  
Sunday Worship.....11 am  
Fox Community Church.....3 pm  
Sunday Evening Bible talk.....6 pm  
Saturday Men’s Study.....6 pm  
Full Gospel- Come Grow With Us  
541-575-1202 Church  
311 NE Dayton St, John Day  
Pastor Al Altnow

**Cornerstone Christian Fellowship**  
139 N.E. DAYTON STREET, JOHN DAY  
541-575-2180  
Sunday Worship Service 10 am  
Sunday Youth Group 3 pm  
Thursday Celebrate Recovery 6 pm  
Pastor Levi Manitsas  
cornerstonejohnday@gmail.com  
ccfd.org

**Seventh-Day Adventist Church**  
SATURDAY SERVICES  
JOHN DAY  
110 Valley View Dr.  
541-575-1216  
Head Elder.....541-575-2914  
Bible Classes (all ages).....9:30 am  
Worship.....11 am  
LONG CREEK  
E. Main Street  
541-421-3033  
Head Elder.....421-3468  
Bible Classes (all ages).....2 pm  
Worship.....3 pm

**Living Word Christian Center**  
Hwy 26 Mt. Vernon  
Celebration of Worship  
Sundays 5:30pm  
Youth: 0-6th grade  
Midweek Service  
Thursdays 6:30pm  
Youth: 0-6th grade  
Jr./Sr. High  
Youth Connection  
Contact the office for current schedule  
Overcomer’s Outreach  
Fridays 6:30pm  
House on the Lawn  
A Christ Centered, 12 Step  
Recovery Support Group  
Pastor Sharon Miller  
541-932-4910  
www.livingwordcc.com

**MT. VERNON PRESBYTERIAN Community Church**  
SUNDAY SERVICE.....9 am  
541-932-4800  
EVERYONE WELCOME