Community Report 2013
Walter Knox Memorial Hospital
Our Message

The year 2013 was a landmark year for Walter Knox Memorial Hospital, which celebrated 50 years of caring for our community.

It carried with it many challenges, mostly related to regulatory, reimbursement and funding changes related to the Affordable Care Act. This resulted in seeking new opportunities for partnerships and services.

With the advancement of outpatient care and services, we are striving to meet the needs of our community so they have the care they need close to home, with care givers they can count on. Changes provide improvements in access, patient care, and health status.

The hospital's mission, vision, and values are the cornerstone to our total care delivery. To achieve our vision and mission, it is imperative that WKMH continue to change in many ways. We are continuing to transform how we deliver health care for the benefit or our neighbors and community residents.
**Community Outreach**

In 2013, Gem County health rankings greatly improved overall by twelve points. This is in part due to the work of the Gem County Community Health Connection. The “Health Connection”, is committed to the improve the overall health. The committee includes members that are passionate about our community, and are working to improve conditions that will offer residents places to move, walk, and play. As physical fitness is a key component to improving health, many projects of the group is focused on walking and pathways.

Most recently, the Health Connection was one of twelve nationally to be awarded a coaching opportunity from the national County Health Rankings coaches, sponsored by the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin.

The Community Relations Department at Walter Knox is active working with the Health Connection and local economic development groups supporting business, jobs, and healthy community growth in the future.

*Figure 1* Walgreens provided t-shirts for walkers in the mayor’s 100 mile walk
Activities

The hospital celebrated another great health and safety fair, and applauded the Gem County Recreation Center for hands-on demonstrations about healthy living. Residents received free preventative health screens, and education from many local organizations and businesses. Over thirty groups supported the fair with demonstrations and activities. People of all ages have grown to love the free activities the fair brings. The health fair offers a chance for reduced lab testing, games and safety awareness, food, and fun for all. It is a great benefit to those with limited or no health coverage. We were one of two sites statewide to offer a national screening for oral head and neck cancer.

The SWAT team (Students Working Against Tobacco) was developed at Emmett High School by Gayle Woodworth. Members received a grant for TATU training from the Idaho Lung Association. The SWAT team plans to demonstrate the effects of smoking throughout the year to youth groups and peers.

Adult Tobacco Cessation classes are available free of charge throughout the year and are taught by a tobacco specialist and a partnership with South West District Health Department. We are assisting residents to take control over tobacco and create a healthy alternative.

Presentations on sun safety, first aid, health care careers, accountable care, and others were all part of our community outreach. Walter Knox also offers prenatal/delivery classes to new mothers at no charge. Breastfeeding education and services are now available to all new mothers taught by a lactation consultant and staff nurses.

Our employee Jeans for a Cause program raised funds this year for several local non-profits. One project funded a park bench at the city park for walkers to have a place to rest.

We also assisted with the collection of pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, coats and warm clothing drive, diaper drive, a jean drive, and collected box tops for our local schools.
Community Involvement

We take action through memberships in local clubs such as Gem Lions club, Emmett Kiwanis, and Rotary club of Emmett. Hospital staff volunteer for events in the community, such as Cherry Festival, Youth Appreciation Day, The River Through Time, the Idaho Renaissance Faire, and others. Our staff is active in leadership roles throughout the community, and support local boards.

Walter Knox Hospital staff collaborates with the local Emergency Medical Services, City and County Fire Departments, Gem County Health Department, and the Emmett Police Department for disaster preparedness, education, and community safety.

A [www.wkmh.org](http://www.wkmh.org) website update project is currently underway to provide more useful content and information on medications, health conditions and resources.

Figure 2 (left) Governor Otter praises Gem County’s efforts towards a healthier community. (right) Sue Vahlberg, Community Relations manager, and chairman for the Gem County Community Health Connection discusses health concerns and social impacts for Gem County with governor Otter and his staff at Capital for a Day in Emmett in 2013.
Helping those in Need

To place our commitment to community health and well-being of high importance, there’s no question that Walter Knox itself must be a responsible member of the community. One way we are proud to care for our community is our charity care program. The program aligns with the hospital’s commitment to improving the health of our community by ensuring everyone has access to quality medical care. This program is available to assist with the financial needs of eligible individuals who have limited resources. In 2013, we spent $149,966 for charity care.

We also encourage patients to establish with a primary care physician. Doing so shortens wait times and allow appropriate usage of the Emergency Room. There are three private family medical clinics in Emmett with eight practicing physicians and support staff who practice at Walter Knox.
Improving and Additional Services

Specialists bring a variety of services to WKMH through the Specialty clinics at the hospital. This year we added Dr. Nirmal Charan, MD providing pulmonology and sleep disorders clinics, Dr. Dennis Carter, MD for Gynecology services, and Dr. Forrest Fredline and Dr. Barry Smith for general surgery. Dr. Zachary Bastian will be joining our Surgical Specialties group in the near future.

Our Sleep Disorders clinic was founded by Dr. Nirmal Chiran and offers patients a way to pinpoint sources of sleep disorders and tailors a treatment plan. Dr. Chiran’s extensive success with sleep disorders has been recognized nationwide. This was a busy year for the Sleep Lab.

This year we extended the hours of the Urgent Care services. In addition to the weekday evening hours, we added weekend coverage to meet community requests. Expanding the hours also alleviates the Emergency Room flow. Many changes in the Emergency Room is allowing for better patient flow, lower wait times and higher patient satisfaction. Circe Munson was recently hired as manager of Emergency Room and Urgent Care.

Figure 3  Emergency and Urgent Care Manager Circe Munson

Our revised Swing Bed program can assist patients when recovering from an accident, illness or surgery in a close-to-home facility. It is designed for patients who need skilled services and time to heal following a hospitalization, before they can safely return home. Our emphasis is on recovery to return home.

Quality and Patient Satisfaction

Quality improvement was a driving force to implement smart delivery systems for medications and intravenous infusions. We also implemented a policy management system and upgraded computer and electronic medical record systems.

The Quality Department experienced a number of new processes through the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP). Performance is measured by reporting key quality measurements and patient satisfaction surveys. On the initial results, the hospital received perfect scores on several of these metrics.

Figure 4  Karen Leach, Director of Quality
To align with the standard practice of regional care and improve the quality of care, this year Licensed Practical Nurses, LPN’s were given the opportunity through a Tuition Reimbursement program to continue their education and advance to a Registered Nurse.

Other improvements this year included completion of new flooring, computer servers and storage systems, a policy management system, a remodel of the Surgical Specialties clinic, and LEAN projects to improve patient satisfaction. Walter Knox is also a member in good standing with the Idaho Better Business Bureau.

**Volunteers Make a Difference.**

Volunteering is one of the most rewarding things that we do. Volunteers across Gem County assist us at events, such as the health and safety fair and Youth Appreciation Day activities.

Our WKMH Auxiliary is an active group that provides funds for hospital equipment through fundraisers and a gift shop which is located inside the hospital lobby. This year, the Auxiliary raised funds through a luncheon, tea and fashion show, a yard sale, and their annual holiday festival. We deeply appreciate their efforts and the community’s participation at these events.

Walter Knox Memorial Hospital is governed by the Board of Directors of Walter Knox Memorial Hospital, which consists of nine members appointed by the Board of Gem County Commissioners.

Members of the Hospital Board must be residents of the County and are selected from various localities of the County.

The Board of Directors is a voluntary group that spends countless hours on management and operations of the hospital.
Wish Lists

From advancing medicine, equipment, and improving services, 2013 budgets left little for physical improvements, so this year, we reached out to the community to help us redecorate our newborn baby rooms. We held a fundraiser and silent auction, and received the funds we needed for the rooms. A committee will be unveiling the newly renovation as soon as they are completed. We thank the service clubs, groups, and individuals who contributed to make a more comfortable environment for mother, baby and families.

![Image](image.jpg)

*Figure 5 Emmett Kiwanis Club donated rocking chairs for the Newborn Baby Rooms fundraiser during the 50 year anniversary celebration.*

Changing Times

As we celebrated our 50th anniversary, we created a time capsule of days gone by. Some of the items that were added to the time capsule were a Polaroid camera, calendar, and memorabilia.

An anniversary celebration was held to honor all of many people who have supported WKMH serving and caring for our patients, friends and neighbors for the past 50 years.

Looking Forward

Our leadership will lead us successfully into the era of the Affordable Care Act and the changes it brings in 2014. We will continue to work through partnerships and collaborate to bring quality services and excellent health care.

We will continue to support our valued mission in providing quality health care and improving the health of those we serve.