

Health Talk

By Jim D. Le Brun
CEO - Barrett Memorial Hospital

The purpose of this column is to provide local, Montana and national health care information for those who wish to learn more about local health care, Montana health care and President Clinton's health care reform plan. Health Talk will be published every other week. Please mail questions and specific topic requests to Health Talk, Barrett Memorial Hospital, 1260 South Atlantic Street, Dillon, MT 59725.

Our health care delivery system has been and will continue to be front page news. President Clinton promised he would exercise strong leadership in health care reform. His vision of health care reform was made public in his September television address. The American people are asking for comprehensive health care reform. President Clinton has fired the starting gun and a long legislative process has begun. We are at the beginning of a marathon, not a 100 yard sprint.

As legislators, politicians and special interest groups wrestle with the mechanics of health care reform, we need to put patients and communities at the center of the health care system. Hospitals, physicians and health care providers need sound reasons to work together, rather than compete with each other. We need to reduce expensive duplication of service and technology and contain costs.

High quality, affordable and universal access to health care provided close to home will never go out of style. These three issues are the central theme of what the American people are asking the health care industry to address. Community hospitals must continue to:

- Improve quality, both clinically and service-wise.
- Integrate with the medical staff. A cooperative working relationship with physicians is a key to quality improvement and cost-reduction.
- Improve management skills, efficiency and productivity.
- Explore more efficient payment and insurance plans.
- Become more skilled at reporting improved quality to payers, physicians, patients and regional health centers.

National health care reform legislation is inevitable, however the final details will require many more months of give and take and changes in positions. The successful health care providers will keep the health and well-being of the public in mind, focus on improving quality and fiscal responsibilities.

Future Health Talk topics will include Barrett Memorial Hospital's Strategic Plan, Critical Success Factors, Access to local primary care, Quality Assessment/Quality Improvement Plan, Montana Voluntary Rate Review participation, Montana Health Care Authority, Montana Hospital Association, Basic Elements of the Clinton Plan, Brim Healthcare, Inc. and Community requests.



First taste of winter...

There was no doubt that winter came hard and early this year. Several inches of snow covered the ground late Thursday night and it continued to fall into the next morning, covering the ground and doing a considerable amount of damage to wires and trees, because of its high moisture content and weight.

The snow was basically concentrated in the southern part of the county, and a few miles north of Dillon became much lighter.

Over 1.3 inches of moisture content was recorded in the two-day period. The snow, and farther north, icing conditions, especially on bridges, made driving conditions difficult. The snow is gone, now however, just in time for Western Montana College's homecoming activities this weekend.

J.P. Hunt Photo

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DMS names students of the week

The seventh grade teachers are choosing students each week for a "Student of the Week Award." The students are chosen for their positive attitudes, enthusiasm, and overall citizenship. Honored during the month of September were Beau Decker, Connie Eberline, Casey

Haggard, Timothy Cech, James Mingus, Janae Hemsley, Rob Rouse, Lindsey Alberi, Laurel Conover, Suzy Mock, Kevin Monaco, and Lindsey Cottom.

They each received a candy bar and a certificate as a reward. From those students, the

teachers then chose Lindsey Alberi as the "Student of the Month". She received a certi-

cate and two coupons from McDonalds. The school is also maintaining a bulletin board with the pictures of these outstanding students.

Michael Lundin Dillon teacher serves SIMMS

Many high school students will soon find math class even more interesting and they will understand how the mathematics they are learning in school is needed to solve real-world problems.

Michael Lundin, a Dillon teacher, was a participant in the Systemic Initiative for Montana Mathematics and Science (SIMMS) summer program and he has been selected to serve as co-chair of the Professional Development Committee for the project.

Lundin was among more than 80 teachers from Montana and other states who spent July and August at Montana State University and at University of Montana working on the SIMMS Project and developing updated mathematics materials which utilize modern technology to provide students with the skills they will need upon graduation.

This is the second year that Montana high schools have participated in the five year SIMMS Project and participated in developing updated mathematics materials which utilize modern technology to provide students with the skills they will need upon graduation.

The five year SIMMS Project which is sponsored by the Montana Council of Teacher of Mathematics and funded in part by a \$10 million grant from the National Science Foundation. During the 1993-94 school year, over fifty Montana high schools and nearly 2,800 students will be using SIMMS materials.

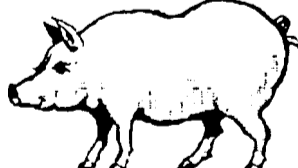
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