

# BETTER TOGETHER

*Updates from the Northwest Hospital Alliance*

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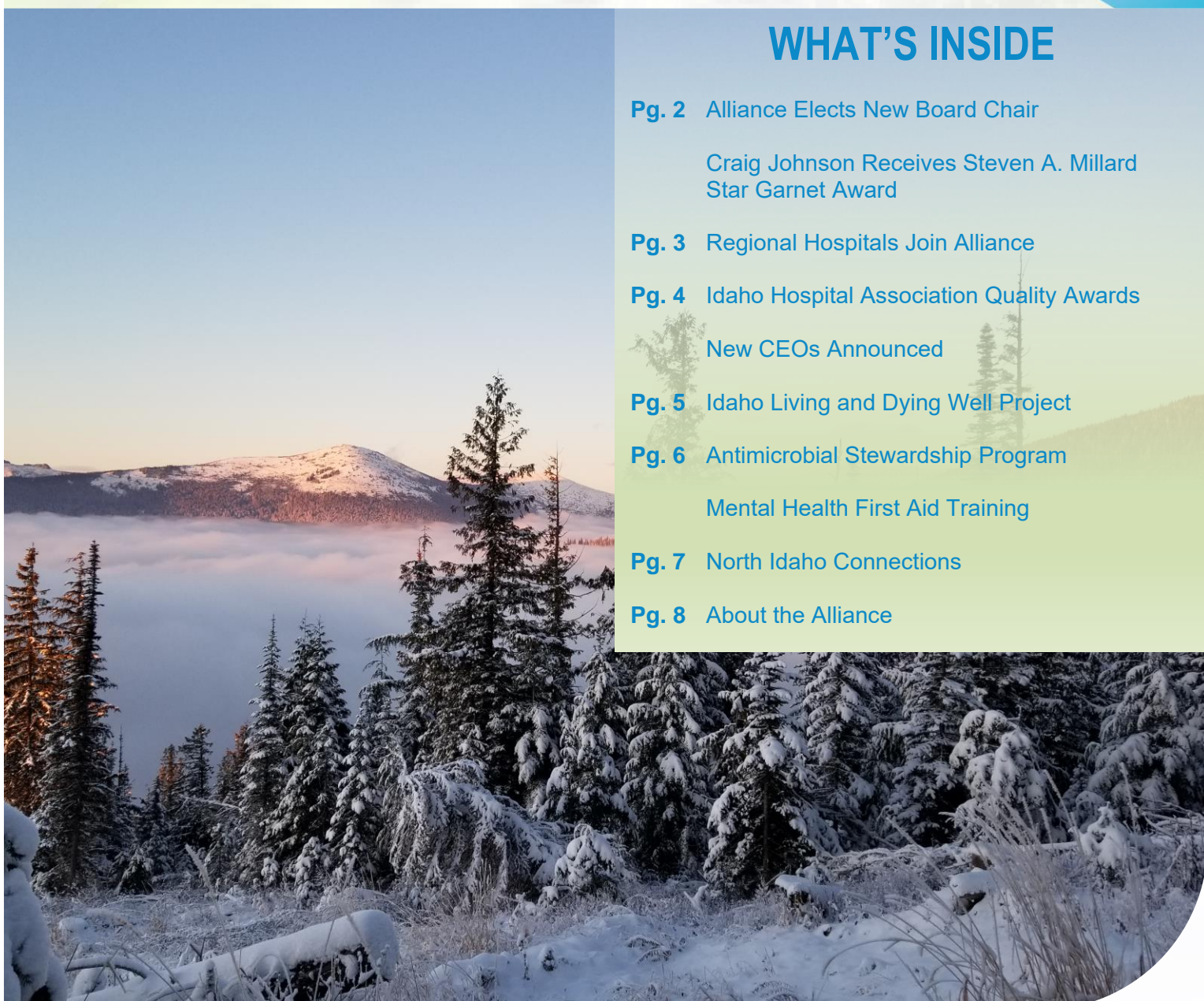
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## NORTHWEST HOSPITAL ALLIANCE ELECTS NEW BOARD CHAIR

Sheryl Rickard was recently elected to the role of board chair for the Northwest Hospital Alliance. Sheryl is the Chief Executive Officer of Bonner General Health in Sandpoint, Idaho where she has worked since 1986. She has been the Chief Executive Officer for 15 years. Sheryl received her bachelor's of science degree in Finance from Montana State University. She is a CPA. She received her master's in Healthcare Administration from Seton Hall University. Sheryl has been a part of the Northwest Hospital Alliance Board since its inception.

## CRAIG JOHNSON RECEIVES STEVEN A. MILLARD STAR GARNET AWARD

Each year, the Idaho Hospital Association honors outstanding contributions and performance in health care through the presentation of several major awards at its annual convention. The Steven A. Millard Star Garnet Award, IHA's most prestigious award, was presented to Craig Johnson at the 2019 convention.

Under Craig's leadership, Boundary Community Hospital maintained the highest standard of care and retained qualified, passionate team members, while being fiscally responsible to the community which supports the facility.

Craig's career in health care spanned nearly five decades in both the hospital and long-term care arenas. Craig served in many leadership roles including Idaho Health Care Association President, which involved extensive legislative interactions, and he served on numerous committees developing rules and regulations for nursing facilities residential care management, and others.

Craig sees beyond his own organization, and consistently shared his message of regional collaboration. As a board member and past chairperson of the Northwest Hospital Alliance, he has been instrumental in building a relationship of trust, collaboration, and commitment to working together to meet the health care needs of the region.

Through his leadership and commitment to the region, the network of hospital peer groups has flourished, providing excellence in delivery of services.

Craig exemplifies quality healthcare. He is a relationship leader, champion of not only patients but employees and all health care providers, building an organization of caring, quality and excellence.



*Craig Johnson receiving Steven A. Millard Star Garnet Award from the IHA President and CEO Brian Whitlock*



**Happy Retirement!**

**We celebrate Craig Johnson for his work with the Hospital Alliance - and offer best wishes to he and Donna, as they enter a new chapter in life.**



# REGIONAL HOSPITALS JOIN NORTHWEST HOSPITAL ALLIANCE

On Friday, September 27, three new hospitals joined the Northwest Hospital Alliance. Syringa Hospital and Clinics in Grangeville, Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics in Orofino, and St. Mary's Hospital and Clinics in Cottonwood, are the newest members of the Alliance.



**Lenne Bonner, CEO of St. Mary's and Clearwater Valley Hospitals and Clinics**

"For the past 28 years we have built relationships and a mutual trust between the five Northern hospitals. We have improved the health in our individual communities by working together," said Sheryl Rickard, CEO of Bonner General Health in Sandpoint. "As the new board chairperson, I am excited to welcome three new hospital members to the Hospital Alliance. We recognize the importance of strong, respectful relationships with the hospitals in our area and expanding that to three additional hospitals is exciting.

All of us recognize the wisdom of partnering with other hospitals to improve quality of care and reduce health care costs in Idaho. We believe that we are stronger together."

The Northwest Hospital Alliance serves as a collaborative network to assist our members in offering high quality, cost effective health care in our communities.

The cornerstone of the network relationship is the preservation of community hospital sustainability and economic strength. Each member hospital maintains its organizational structure and the identity and image that has made it visible in the local community. Each member is represented on the board.

"We like each other, and know how important it is to the people living in our region for us to work together in the delivery of health care," said Jon Ness, CEO of Kootenai Health.

With the additional three members, the Northwest Hospital Alliance now includes eight hospitals, with room to grow in the future.



**Abner King, CEO of Syringa Hospital and Clinics**

Our network of hospitals is devoted to improving the health status of our communities by providing a collaborative approach to regional health care delivery and preserving the economic strength of local providers.

Health care in rural communities is an absolutely essential component of quality of life for rural residents.



*The Northwest Hospital Alliance role is to facilitate and coordinate strategies, synergies, relationships, products and services that will improve delivery, access and quality, while controlling the cost of health care in our member communities.*

## Boundary Community Hospital and Syringa Hospital and Clinics Receive Idaho Hospital Association Awards for Quality

Boundary Community Hospital and Syringa Hospital and Clinics received awards from the Idaho Hospital Association for going above and beyond.

The overall goals in the Hospital Improvement Innovation Network are a 20% reduction in each patient safety measure (except all-cause readmissions= 13%). The award criteria for Boundary's award was the hospital with the lowest harm rates across all patient safety HIIN measures. Syringa was recognized as the hospital who has participated in the most improvement events/projects in our HIIN (18 projects in two years).

As IHA CEO Brian Whitlock stated during their annual convention, “IHA and our member hospitals have long taken pride in our position on patient safety and quality improvement. 27 of our hospitals currently participate in the Idaho HIIN with IHA, CMS, HRET-AHA, and over 1,600 hospitals across the United States. Our HIIN aims to ensure that the quality of care for our patients is exceptional, safe and patient centered. Through extensive performance improvement projects focusing on managing patient safety hazards, our hospitals continue to strive for zero preventable harms. The road to high reliability in patient safety is an ongoing journey. It’s a commitment to patient safety and the way we deliver quality health care. In support of Idaho hospitals who’ve consistently demonstrated their commitment to the HIIN and have outcomes that demonstrate their success along this journey.”



*Tari Yourzek, CNO, Boundary Community Hospital and Lauren Wilson, Director of Quality and Risk Management at Syringa Hospital and Clinics receive IHA Quality Awards*



## Boundary Community Hospital Announces New CEO

The Boundary Community Hospital Board of Trustees are pleased to announce that Preston Becker replaced retiring CEO/Administrator Craig Johnson on October 1, 2019.

Preston is a native of Idaho and attended the University of Idaho in Moscow where he earned a BS degree in Finance followed by an MBA in Health Care from American Intercontinental University. Preston has 17 years of experience working in health care as an executive at various Hospitals including Gritman Medical Center in Moscow, Idaho and Steele Memorial Medical Center in Salmon, Idaho. Most recently, Preston served as President and CEO of Carson Valley Medical Center in Gardnerville, NV and as Chief Operating Officer at Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe, CA.

## Paul Lewis Announced as New CEO for Shoshone Medical Center



Paul started his health care career over twenty-five years ago as a medical technologist in clinical laboratory services.

Prior to his arrival at Shoshone Medical Center, Paul was the care site president at Holy Rosary Healthcare in Miles City, Montana for the past seven years. He earned a BS degree in Medical Technology from Brigham Young University and an MBA from the University of St. Mary. He and his family are excited to be returning to Kellogg and northern Idaho.

# THE IDAHO LIVING AND DYING WELL PROJECT

## SPONSORED BY THE NORTH IDAHO PALLIATIVE CARE COALITION



Palliative Care Physician, Nicole Pelly, in conversation with local resident Mary Frasier while filling out her wishes and advance care documents.

*The North Idaho Palliative Care Coalition (NIPCC) was established in January 2018 to build a standardized approach to palliative care in our region*

*NIPCC is comprised of a diverse group of community partners including a community-owned regional health system, four critical access hospitals, post-acute providers, outpatient/inpatient palliative care and hospice services. The program has also been extended to other community partners.*

Talking about death and dying sometimes seems a little scary, morbid or uncomfortable - but a movement is afloat to normalize the topic in our culture we all face with parents, loved ones and ourselves.

Having conversations with family, sharing your wishes and filing out formal documents called Advance Directives are important for anyone over the age of 18, not just those nearing the end of life.

Advance Directives provide answers to questions your medical providers and loved ones may have such as who you want to make your medical decisions (even temporarily) if you are unable.

A concise Advance Directive form was developed with input from a

group of regional multidisciplinary physicians and patient representatives.

A goal of the NIPCC is to introduce the new Advance Directives form, and to ensure patient preferences for end of life care is honored across the region in a standard way.

To increase awareness of the new Advance Directive form, the coalition created a website where people can download the form and learn more about completing their Advance Directives.

The website includes a calendar of regional events for health professionals and the public as well as contact information for a network of trained facilitators from the

community to conduct advanced care planning conversations with individuals throughout the region.

Work is underway to expand the coalition to the 10 northern counties of Idaho.

**Please visit the North Idaho Palliative Care Coalition's website [www.idaholivinganddyingwell.org](http://www.idaholivinganddyingwell.org).**

**NATIONAL HEALTHCARE  
DECISION DAY IS  
APRIL 16, 2020.**



## Northwest Hospital Alliance Receives Grant for Antimicrobial Stewardship

According to the CDC, it is estimated that up to 50% of all antibiotic use is unnecessary. It is now known that every antibiotic exposure increases a patient's risk for developing an infection due to an antibiotic-resistant organism, which in turn increases the mortality risk associated with that infection.

The Northwest Hospital Alliance Infection Prevention Peer Group recognized the call to action for antibiotic stewardship, applied for and received a \$26,500 grant from the Flex program managed by the Idaho Bureau of Rural Health and Primary Care. The funded project provides opportunity for our critical access hospital members to participate in the University of Washington Tele-Antimicrobial Stewardship Program (UW-TASP).

"UW-TASP has been identified as a best practices and collaborative resource for the cohort members to engage in," said Caryl Johnston, director of the Northwest Hospital Alliance.

The outcomes from this project will be a reduction in antibiotic use and decreased rates of hospital-acquired C.diff infection as a direct result of the continued development of antibiotic stewardship programs and changes in prescribing practices.

Eight critical access hospitals in the 10 northern counties of Idaho are participating in the cohort. Bonner General Health, Boundary Community Hospital, Benewah Community Hospital, Shoshone Medical Center, Syringa Hospital and Clinics, St. Mary's Hospital and Clinics, Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics, and Gritman Medical Center.

The benefits of this project will be sustained by the opportunity of the critical access hospitals to receive toolkits, mentoring and weekly tele-education and case studies.

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

One in five people in the U.S. have a mental health problem. In Idaho, we tend to have a western attitude of stoicism and rugged individualism that can make us reluctant to acknowledge and reach out for help. Idaho is consistently among the states with the highest suicide rates.



"Education about mental health problems helps to decrease the stigma associated with it," said Sue Hill Crowley, MS, RN. "The stigma is a big reason why mental health problems are unacknowledged. Recovery from mental illness can and does occur. When more Idahoans are able to notice the signs of mental health challenges, provide initial first aid and encourage appropriate professional support if needed, our communities will be on the road to decreasing the pain and suffering associated with mental health problems."

Like, CPR, Mental Health First Aid prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis and connects the person with help. First aiders do not diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, the program offers concrete tools and answers key questions, like "What do I do?" and "Where can someone find help?"

"The Northwest Hospital Alliance recognizes the value of Mental Health First Aid trainings to hospital and health care staff," said Caryl Johnston, director of the Hospital Alliance. "We have committed to funding these trainings with each of our hospital members in their communities."



# CONNECTIONS

*Community Resources for Northern Idaho*

***NorthIdahoConnections.org***

## Addressing Social Needs of Patients in Health Care Delivery is Key to Improving Health Outcomes

Knowing whether a patient has a safe place to live or healthy food to eat, transportation to get to appointments, or additional needed resources are important elements to their health. To support case managers, social workers, discharge planners, providers, and other health care professionals the North Idaho Connections website has been developed.

North Idaho Connections is a social services database that provides hospitals and community partners in North Idaho with an efficient, systematic and measurable process to connect community members with social service programs to support them outside the walls of the health care system.

It addresses the critical gap between clinical care and health-related social needs in each of our communities. It provides a systematic approach to

screen, refer and assist patients in navigating community services that will in turn have a positive impact on health care costs and reduced health care utilization.

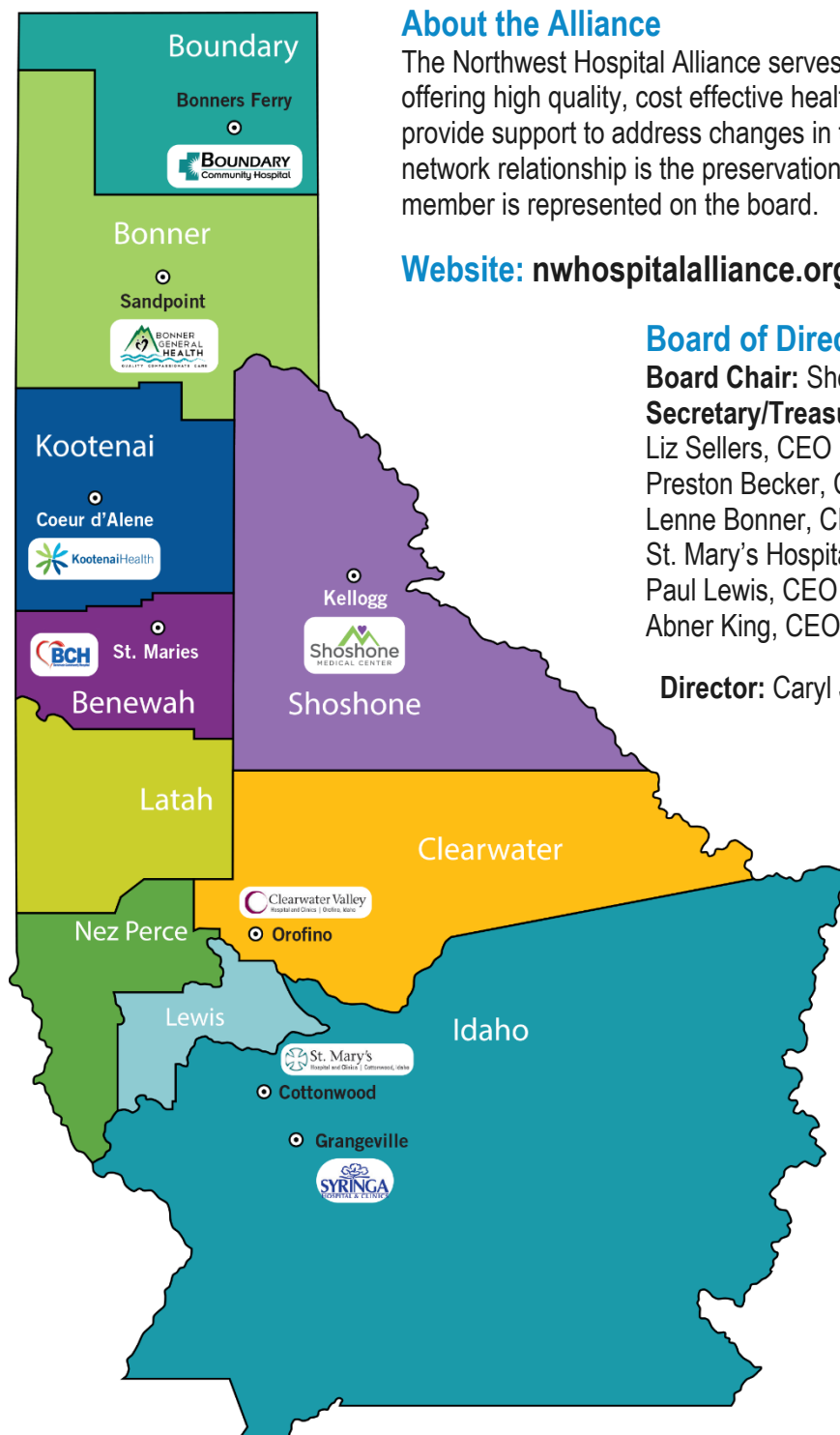
This resource is powered by Kootenai Health and made possible through a grant from PacificSource and support from the Northwest Hospital Alliance.

The online search makes it easy for people facing social needs – and those who help others – to find and make referrals to appropriate programs and services for food, shelter, health care, work, financial assistance and much more.

North Idaho Connections provides a more efficient way to connect patients who are being discharged with the valuable resources they need to help them be successful in their care management and have a healthy life.

### **NorthIdahoConnections.org**

is a free robust online database search and referral platform for health care organizations, social service organizations, community partners, patients and family members to access up-to-date information on community resources in northern Idaho.



## About the Alliance

The Northwest Hospital Alliance serves as a collaborative network to assist our members in offering high quality, cost effective health care in our communities. The Alliance is organized to provide support to address changes in the health care environment. The cornerstone of the network relationship is the preservation of community hospitals and economic strength. Each member is represented on the board.

**Website:** [nwhospitalalliance.org](http://nwhospitalalliance.org)

## Board of Directors:

**Board Chair:** Sheryl Rickard, CEO Bonner General Health

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Jon Ness, CEO Kootenai Health

Liz Sellers, CEO Benewah Community Hospital

Preston Becker, CEO Boundary Community Hospital

Lenne Bonner, CEO Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics and St. Mary's Hospital and Clinics

Paul Lewis, CEO Shoshone Medical Center

Abner King, CEO Syringa Hospital and Clinics

**Director:** Caryl Johnston | [cjohnston@kh.org](mailto:cjohnston@kh.org) | 208-625-4138

## Professional Peer to Peer Networking

The Northwest Hospital Alliance facilitates collaborative peer groups that meet on a regular basis. The groups discuss topical issues, exchange ideas, and implement special projects and initiatives. By developing solutions in unison, the members aim to improve the quality of patient care, improve the health of the rural population, and reduce per capita costs of health care services.

## Projects and Initiatives

- Sharing information, policies and problem solving
- Group contracting and cost
- DNV accreditation
- Shared services
- Care transitions
- North Idaho Connections
- Information systems
- Antimicrobial stewardship
- Education – Providing national level best practice education opportunities locally
- Regional palliative care and advance directives
- Workforce development
- Opioid misuse
- Behavioral health

**MISSION:** The Northwest Hospital Alliance exists to provide a regional cooperative approach to the delivery of rural health care in North Idaho.

**VISION:** Together the Northwest Hospital Alliance members will positively affect health care quality, value, cost, and access to service.

