

Culbertson CONNECTION

Your Health. Your Hospital.



CATCH

CULBERTSON AS THE CHOICE HOSPITAL

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Update from the Executive Director

In previous newsletters, you've read about the plans taking shape for the new Therapy Building, patient room updates, and overall hospital renovations. I'm pleased to tell you those plans are now turning into action.

The first building activity that will be visible to the community is the new Culbertson Therapy Services Building. We are happy to report the bid accepted by the Culbertson Memorial Hospital Foundation will provide work and building materials to be sourced almost entirely by local businesses. The Foundation anticipates construction to begin by the end of April.

While the Foundation heads the therapy renovations, the Culbertson Memorial Hospital Board of Directors has been focused on patient room renovations and approved a bid for the work at the January board meeting. Architectural, engineering, and phasing work has taken place since then. Around the same time you're receiving this newsletter, the Illinois Department of Public Health should be receiving our patient room renovation plans for approval. Once approved, we are targeting a July start for construction.

In addition to our physical plant work, we're working hard to continue building our team. A large portion of our efforts is focused on "Growing Our Own" local students into the future of Culbertson. There are numerous clinical and non-clinical careers that all collaborate to make this hospital work. Be it nursing, radiology, laboratory, therapy, IT, or business services, we're working to provide scholarships and support that will allow young residents to become the future of this hospital.

Every day, we work to ensure Culbertson Memorial Hospital will remain the hospital of choice for this area long into the future.

Yours in good health,

Gregg Snyder ♡

**Executive Director,
Culbertson
Memorial Hospital**



Gregg Snyder
Executive Director



Elevating Patient Care

Culbertson Partners with Concord Medical Group

Culbertson Memorial Hospital has announced two new partnerships aimed at bolstering patient care and efficiency. Concord Medical Group will provide Emergency Department and telehospitalist care to ensure 24-hour coverage for patients of Rushville and surrounding communities.

“Concord has always strived to provide the highest quality of care possible to the communities we serve,” said Kyle Sheets, MD, founder and owner of Concord Medical Group. “The commitment of Sarah D. Culbertson Memorial Hospital to increasing and maintaining patient satisfaction aligns perfectly with our mission and vision for the community in and around Rushville.”

Additionally, to provide 24-hour hospitalist services to our patients, Concord will also provide telehospitalist services at Culbertson. This service allows licensed providers to directly evaluate patients through telemedicine visits, enables oversight of patient conditions, ensures quality of care, and allows the nursing staff to communicate directly with the provider when there are changes in a patients’ condition. Culbertson hospitalist services are currently provided by Betsy Birdsley, APRN – BC four days a week.

The telehospitalist partnership also allows physicians and nurses to collaborate directly with the patient, who can see firsthand the integration of their care team. Thanks to HIPAA-compliant technology using HD cameras and microphones, nurses may assist with examination maneuvers, address concerns and complaints, and discuss care plans with the provider present onscreen instead of relaying the information later. Physicians may also use a digital stethoscope to examine cardiopulmonary functions without being present in the room. Providers are able to follow up overnight on any treatment plans and testing ordered during the day, allowing quicker changes should new issues arise. This in turn leads to shorter stays and improves patient satisfaction.

About Concord Medical Group

Founded in 2001, Concord Medical Group is a physician-owned and operated organization originally designed to serve rural emergency departments in West Texas. Today, the group provides staffing and practice management services for more than 75 programs across nine states. For more information, visit concordmedicalgroup.com.



A Heart for Medicine

Cardiologist Erbert Caceres, MD Joins Culbertson Memorial Hospital

For Erbert Caceres, MD, the field of cardiology — and more specifically, interventional cardiology — offers an opportunity to impact lives in a unique way. It's that passion gained from more than 20 years of experience that Dr. Caceres brings to the Culbertson Specialty Clinics, providing specialized cardiovascular care to patients in Rushville and surrounding communities.

"Interventional cardiology is one of the few specialties in medicine in which you can change the way a patient feels in a matter of minutes with almost complete restoration of functional/physical abilities," Dr. Caceres said. "This is something rarely seen in all other specialties of medicine."

Beginning his medical career as an internist, Dr. Caceres said his background affords him the ability to view a patient's condition holistically. Rather than focus on a specific set of symptoms stemming from a cardiac condition, Dr. Caceres analyzes how those symptoms are affecting other parts of the body and whether they're indicative of other underlying problems.

"Before I became a cardiologist, and later an interventional cardiologist, I considered myself a well-rounded internist. So, when I approach my patients, I do not only see them through the lens of a cardiologist as they may have other health issues that could prevent a more complete and faster recovery," Dr. Caceres explained.

After performing more patient outreach in the Springfield area, Dr. Caceres noticed a lack of adequate cardiac care — particularly in rural areas, where he identified patient access, lack of understanding, and lack of insurance as the most pertinent challenges. Now bringing specialized cardiac care to Rushville and surrounding communities, Dr. Caceres emphasizes clear communication with patients to help them realize the importance of heart health, in addition to treating each person on a case-by-case basis.

"I like to talk to patients and explain to them in simple words their medical problems and plan of care," Dr. Caceres said, emphasizing using plain language and helping patients find affordable, effective medical solutions. "I like it simple and do not practice what I call 'cookie cutter medicine.'"

Dr. Caceres sees patients on the first, second, third, and fourth Monday of each month at the Culbertson Specialty Clinics. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (217) 322-5271.

About Dr. Caceres

Education: MD, Universidad Nacional Mayor De San Marcos (Lima, Peru)

Residency: Englewood Hospital and Medical Center (Englewood, NJ)

Fellowships: Cardiovascular Diseases and Interventional Cardiology, Baystate Medical Center (Springfield, MA)



A Menu for Wellness

Dietary Services & Consultations at Culbertson



Everyone knows eating a healthy diet is a key aspect of maintaining their physical well-being. But when patients are ordered to follow a strict diet because of some underlying health problems, knowing what's OK to eat can be challenging. With proper guidance and counseling, preparing delicious and nutritious meals that fit within certain dietary restrictions can be a much less daunting task — and can even open the door to some fantastic new flavors.

Katie Horstmeyer, RD, LDN, a registered dietitian at Culbertson Memorial Hospital and owner of Chatham-based Advanced Nutrition Care, LLC, provides outpatient dietary counseling and medical nutrition therapy for patients required to follow a specific diet because of a medical condition. Horstmeyer said she treats patients dealing with a variety of conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, and obesity. By consulting with a dietitian, she said, patients are empowered to make healthier choices and improve their well-being.

“As a dietitian, I provide personalized guidance to help patients make informed food choices, manage chronic disease, and improve quality of life,” Horstmeyer said.

“A referral from your doctor is the fastest way to get the ball rolling. Once a referral is received, I will call patients and schedule a time to meet with them face to face.”

In addition to helping you navigate complicated dietary instructions, consulting a registered dietitian can yield other benefits, including:

- Individualized nutritional advice based on current diet, lab work, and health goals
- Evidence-based advice and assistance to help meet personal health goals and priorities
- Guidance on how to avoid misinformation
- Counseling on making more informed decisions while shopping, modifying existing recipes, and how to make smarter choices when dining out
- Collaborative support to create a personalized dietary plan

Better health starts with a better diet. Katie Horstmeyer sees patients for consultations every Wednesday. For more information, call (217) 322-4321 ext. 5271 or visit cmhospital.com/services/food-and-nutrition-services/nutrition-consultation.

Meet Our Dietitian!

Katie Horstmeyer, RD, LDN is a consultant, dietitian, and owner of Advanced Nutrition Care, LLC. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Murray State University (Murray, KY), where she also completed her dietetic internship. She has worked in a wide range of areas and continues to diversify by working as a consultant dietitian. Her areas of expertise include outpatient counseling, food service, renal disease, sports nutrition, general surgery, feeding tube placement, and clinical nutrition. Horstmeyer is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is also a certified personal trainer and enjoys working out in her spare time and helping others achieve their health goals.



Katie Horstmeyer

Your Local Surgical Team

Stay Close to Home for Your Next Procedure

Do you have an ongoing medical condition that requires surgery? Scheduling a procedure can understandably come with some anxiety, but staying close to your friends and family can help put your mind at ease. Providing expert, compassionate surgical services in an environment that's familiar and close to your home, the surgeons at Culbertson Memorial Hospital are dedicated to improving your quality of life and helping you reach new levels of physical wellness with the same expert procedures you'd expect at a larger healthcare facility.

Meet the Culbertson surgery team and talk to your provider about keeping your procedure local. For more information, call (217) 322-4321.



Dr. John Bozdech
Gastroenterology



Dr. Mary Doellman, FAOA
Otolaryngology (ENT)



Dr. Eric High
General Surgery



Dr. Matthew Knudson
Urology



Dr. Adam Niemann
Gastroenterology



Dr. Todd Petty, FACS
General Surgery



Dr. Stephen Ryan
Vascular Surgery



Dr. Drake White
Orthopedics

Keep Your Surgery Local

The providers at Culbertson Memorial Hospital can perform a variety of procedures in an environment close to home, meaning your family and friends are nearby and you won't have nearly as long of a trip home upon discharge. Surgical procedures available at Culbertson include the following:

- Adenoidectomy
- Breast biopsy
 - Fine needle aspiration
 - Core needle biopsy
 - Surgical or open biopsy
 - Lymph node biopsy
- Bunionectomy
- Carpal tunnel surgery
- Circumcision
- Colonoscopy
- Cubital tunnel surgery
- Cystoscopy
- EGD (upper endoscopy)
- Endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR)
- Esophageal dilation
- Excision of breast lesions
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Foreign body removal
- Ganglion cyst removal
- Hammer toe surgery
- Hydrocelectomy
- Laparoscopic cholecystectomy (LC)
- Laparoscopic epigastric hernia repair
- Laparoscopic and open inguinal hernia
- Laparoscopic and open umbilical hernia repair
- Myringotomy (ear tubes)
- Port insertion and removal
- Prostate biopsy with ultrasound
- Tonsillectomy
- Trigger finger surgery
- Vascular surgery
- Vasectomy

Dedicated to Saving Lives

Dr. James W. Thiele to Perform Colonoscopies in Rushville

For James W. Thiele, MD, FACS, FASCRS, providing high-quality screening services for colorectal cancers began with a personal encounter with the disease early in his career. As a 26-year-old second-year resident, Dr. Thiele met a young patient — who at the time was also 26 — who had just given birth to her first child when she was admitted for abdominal pain.

“When I examined her, colon cancer wasn’t even on my radar because she was so young. She had been seen a week earlier at an outlying hospital and another surgeon removed her appendix thinking that might have been the culprit,” Dr. Thiele explained. “After an extensive work up, we ultimately found a near-obstructing cancer in her transverse colon.”

Staging showed the cancer had not spread and the patient was treated with a colon resection, to which she responded positively. Over time, Dr. Thiele became close with the patient and her husband, sharing interests and hobbies with one another and staying in touch. Three years later, however, the patient experienced a tugging sensation in her abdomen during a fitness competition. Imaging revealed carcinomatosis, or widespread metastasis of cancer throughout the abdomen. During her final days, Dr. Thiele spent time with his old friends, talking with the patient about life and expressing sadness that it was soon ending.

“The last time I spoke with her, I asked as I left her hospice room for the last time, ‘Is there anything I can do for you?’ thinking she might need some pain medication or a drink of water,” Dr. Thiele said. “Her reply changed my life: ‘Yeah, you can try to prevent this from happening to anybody else.’”

From this immense tragedy, Dr. Thiele was inspired to dedicate his life to the prevention of colorectal cancers. Providing colonoscopies at the Culbertson Surgical Department beginning June 10, Dr. Thiele said his top priority is to treat each patient with dignity and

compassion — both of which can have a profound impact on patients experiencing great hardship.

“I have treated tens of thousands of patients over the past 30 years, and I often meet them for the first time at a very low point in their lives,” he said. “While much of what I do has become routine for me, I always remember that none of what the patient is going through is routine for them.”

Drawing inspiration from his father-in-law — who also practiced surgery — Dr. Thiele said he’s proud to provide expert, specialized screenings to rural areas that otherwise would not have access to this service. “While we often do not have the same degree of lack of services in this country, patients being able to access specialized services close to home can often be the deciding factor in seeking out treatment and screening for some of the more common health problems seen here in Central Illinois.”

Dr. Thiele will perform colonoscopies on the second Tuesday each month starting June 10 in the Surgical Department. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 217-322-5293.

About Dr. Thiele

Education: MD, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine (Springfield, IL)

Residency: General Surgery, SIU School of Medicine (Springfield, IL)

Fellowships: Colon and Rectal Surgery, Washington University School of Medicine (St. Louis, MO)



Dr. Thiele

Convenient Care for Mom & Baby

Dr. Aguirre Offering Comprehensive Prenatal Care

Pregnancy varies from one family's experience to the next. However, in all instances, keeping Mom happy and healthy directly correlates to the well-being of the baby. So, seeking compassionate, local treatment is a crucial step of ensuring health and wellness for both mother and child during their pregnancy journey.

Dr. Deseray Aguirre, DO at the Elmer Hugh Taylor Clinic in Beardstown specializes in providing compassionate, comprehensive prenatal care tailored to each patient's unique pregnancy journey. Taking a holistic, individualized approach, Dr. Aguirre sees mothers, newborns, and other members of the family, offering continuity of care from conception to postpartum and beyond (if desired) in a warm, welcoming environment.

Prenatal services provided by Dr. Aguirre include:

- Personalized prenatal visits
- Nutritional and lifestyle counseling
- Routine screenings and schedule ultrasounds at the SIU Center for Family Medicine in Jacksonville
- Management of common pregnancy-related conditions
- Coordination of care with the SIU Center for Family Medicine for delivery

Schedule your first prenatal appointment today with a provider who truly cares. Call the Taylor Clinic at (217) 323-2245 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Aguirre and learn more about prenatal services.



No Appointment? No Problem!

Walk-in Clinic Opens in Beardstown

Have you ever experienced an acute injury or illness that couldn't wait for an appointment, but didn't quite rise to the level of an Emergency Department visit? For those instances when you just can't wait to see your primary care provider, a brand-new service from Culbertson Memorial Hospital provides accessible medical care without the need to call ahead.

The new Walk-in Clinic at the Elmer Hugh Taylor Clinic in Beardstown provides convenient treatment for acute, minor, non-emergency illnesses and injuries for patients of all ages. Designed to provide quick access to care without the need for an appointment, the Walk-in Clinic welcomes patients to — as the name implies — walk in at any time to receive care.

Conditions and illnesses treated at the Walk-in Clinic include:

- Aches and pains
- Allergies and allergic reactions (non-emergency)
- Cold sores
- Earaches and ear infections
- Fevers
- Insect and tick bites
- Laryngitis
- Minor burns and rashes
- Minor headaches
- Minor injuries
- Minor cuts, scrapes, and wounds
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Pink eye and eye infections
- Poison ivy
- Respiratory symptoms (coughs, colds, and flu)
- Sinus congestion and infection
- Sore throats
- Urinary infection symptoms

The Walk-in Clinic does not provide medication management or treatment for chronic issues, nor does it provide routine childhood vaccinations — all of which are more appropriate for a primary care provider. Patients are not required to be established with a Culbertson Memorial Hospital provider, and most private medical insurance plans are accepted. Visits are billed the same as a clinic visit; costs are determined by the level of care.

Upon arrival, patients will be asked to present a photo ID, insurance card, and co-pay at the registration desk. Patients should also bring an updated list of medications and may be asked to provide their primary care provider's information so a visit summary can be provided. Walk-in Clinic providers may suggest follow-up recommendations at the conclusion of each visit. The Walk-in Clinic may also refer patients to the Culbertson Specialty Clinics for further treatment.

Culbertson Walk-in Clinic

Elmer Hugh Taylor Clinic
100 W. 15th St.
Beardstown
(217) 323-2245

Open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday – Wednesday



Your Partner in Health

Improve Your Quality of Life with Chronic Care Management

For patients dealing with chronic health conditions, something as simple as seeking healthcare can be a challenge. Many take for granted the simple act of driving themselves to an appointment, but for others, their chronic health conditions can have detrimental effects on their quality of life.

Chronic care management is a Medicare-covered service that provides ongoing, coordinated care for patients dealing with multiple chronic conditions. The program at Culbertson Memorial Hospital creates more streamlined access to care for patients by creating partnerships between them and their providers, establishing comprehensive health plans and helping them improve their overall well-being. Services include scheduled check-ins with a nurse, medication management, assistance with community resources, and after-hour access to on-call healthcare providers.

“Chronic care management improves health outcomes and reduces healthcare costs for patients with chronic conditions, providing personalized care and support to help patients manage their conditions and prevent complications,” said Chronic Care Manager Geri Cambridge, RN, CCM. “Scheduling routine check-ins establishes an ongoing relationship with a designated healthcare professional who is familiar with you, ensuring continuity throughout your care.”

In the chronic care management program, patients are assigned their own care coordinator — i.e., healthcare professionals who will work with patients and families to help

manage health conditions by providing personalized care and support. Care coordinators work with patients — as well as family members and caregivers — to develop a care plan tailored to the patient's specific conditions and symptoms.

Ultimately, the plan aims to assist patients in numerous capacities, including:

- Understanding and managing health conditions
- Improving communication with the patient's primary care provider
- Arranging transportation to and from appointments
- Accessing free or low-cost medications and medical aids
- Attending visits if needed
- Regularly reviewing care plans

“
The nurse helped me out of a bad living situation then assisted in getting me back on my feet. I feel the happiest I have felt in years!
”

Patients may access chronic care management if they have two or more qualifying health conditions, a referral from their primary care provider, and coverage through traditional Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan. Primary care providers may refer patients to chronic care management, but patients' consent is required before enrollment. Patients may also be referred to the care coordinator by the hospital, community health services, healthcare professionals, or by self-referral.

Learn more about how chronic care management can impact your everyday life. Contact your primary care provider to learn more or find out if you qualify for chronic care management from Culbertson Memorial Hospital.

Memorials & Contributions

2024-2025 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

ABC Fire Extinguisher Sales

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Adams

Mrs. Merc Allen

Mr. and Mrs. Myrel Allen

in memory of Marvin and Maxine Clayton

Mrs. Judith Anderson

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Ashcraft

in memory of Brixty Cox

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Baker

Mrs. Marsha Bartlett

in memory of Ron Bartlett

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Bartlett

Mrs. Jean Barron

in memory of Richard Barron

Beardstown Savings

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Benninghoff

Better Banks

Mr. Albert Bietsch

Mr. and Mrs. James Blackburn

in memory of Steve and Mark Blackburn

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Boehm

in memory of Elizabeth Boehm

Dr. John Bozdech

Rebecca S. Brickner Fund

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Briney

in memory of Jack and Phyllis Peak

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Burke

Mr. and Mrs. Scott Butler

Cass Communication

Charles Burton Attorney at Law

Community Foundation – Thankful Heart Fund

Country Gardens

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Cox

in memory of Homer Cox

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Crum

Mr. Charles Dace

in memory of Gloria Dace

Mrs. Patricia Day

Mrs. Tricia Dean

in memory of Blake E. Devitt

Mrs. Jan Devitt

in memory of Blake E. Devitt

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Devitt

in memory of Blake E. Devitt and Douglas Dunbar

Mr. Mark Dohner

Mr. and Mrs. Chad Downs

Mr. and Mrs. Butch Edlin

in memory of loved ones

Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Ervin

in memory of Charles Berry

Mr. and Mrs. Don Fagan

First Bankers Trust

Mrs. Kay Fitzjarrald

in memory of LeRoy Fitzjarrald and Jeffery Fitzjarrald

Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Flynn

Mr. and Mrs. Terry Frye

in memory of Mary and Larry Finch

Dr. Eli Goodman

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Hardy

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hardy

in memory of Tommie and Twila Orr

Mrs. Helene Hendricker

Mrs. Sherry Henninger

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Herr

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kerr

in memory of Charles & Irene Kerr

Kerr Homecenter

Mr. and Mrs. Phil Koch

in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Koch

Mrs. Cynthia Korsmeyer

Mrs. Shirley Kost

in memory of David and Rose Dean

Mrs. Nancy Lashbrook

in memory of Larry Lashbrook

Mrs. Cathy Leahy

The Local Brew Coffee Shop Rushville &

Beardstown

in memory of Gene Wise

McDaniels Marketing

Medical Outsourcing Solutions, Inc

Ms. Kay Miller

Moreland and Devitt Pharmacy

Mr. Michael B. Myers

O'Hara Auto Glass, Inc

in memory of Rick Taylor

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Orr

Ms. Lori Orr

in memory of Twila Orr

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Peters

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Pleviak

Mr. Rodney Potter

Precise Specialties Corporation

Mrs. Judy Quillen

Quincy Medical Group

Mr. Merle Ralston

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Read

Guy B. Reno Family Foundation

Mr. Eric Reynolds

in memory of Rosalie Reynolds

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Roberts

Rushville Moose Lodge

Rushville Rotary Club

Rushville State Bank

Rushville State Bank Trust & Investment Center

Ms. Donna Sargent

Mrs. Nancy Schisler

Mr. and Mrs. Barry Settles

Mrs. Mary Shenaut

in memory of Ernest and Bess Daly

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Smith

Mrs. Norma Smith

in memory of Harold Smith and Robert and

Peggy Young

Mrs. Dianne Snyder

in memory of Helen Diseron

Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Stambaugh

in memory of Murray Reynolds

Mrs. Nancy Stauffer

Mr. and Mrs. Eric Streeter

in memory of Franklin & Rosalee Kotter,

Robert Stauffer, Jane Emerick and in honor of

Nancy Stauffer

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Strode

Mrs. LaVern Talbert

in memory of Robert Talbert and Kevin Tucker

Mrs. Pam Tavernier

Mr. and Mrs. Bide Thomas

Ms. Nancy Toland

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Trone

Mr. Bryce Volk

in memory of Rozella Volk

Mrs. Janis Wade

in memory of Don Wade

Mr. Daniel Wagner

Mr. Ken Walters

Ms. Mariolyn Wheeler

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Wise

in memory of Gene Wise

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Worthington

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Worthington

Yingling and Nuessen

in memory of Arthur Yingling

IN MEMORY OF LOUISE

SWANGER BARRETT

Class of 1958

IN MEMORY OF NINA FORSYTHE FILER

Class of 1960

IN MEMORY OF TOM SCHNEIDER

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Geisler

Mr. and Mrs. William Million

Mrs. Jane Morris

Mr. and Mrs. David Slocum

Ms. Tammy Behymer

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blackwell

Mr. and Mrs. James Henry

Ms. Julie Knapp

Mr. and Mrs. Tom McKee

Mr. Jim Ray

Mrs. Sharon Teefey

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Wilson

IN MEMORY OF TUFFY DANNER

Mr. and Mrs. DeWayne Bond

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Briney

Mr. and Mrs. Chad Downs

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Grate

Ms. Cynthia Greer

Mr. Randy Greer

Mrs. Norma Herbster

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pierson

Mr. Kenny Walters

Stay on Top of Your Well-Being

Schedule Your Medicare Wellness Visit

Your health is wholly unique to you. A preventive care plan that works for one person may not be the best course of action for you. For Medicare recipients, a convenient, local service can help you create a plan based on your specific needs and your health history — and it's already paid for.

Like the Welcome to Medicare Preventative Visit — a one-time appointment scheduled within 12 months of enrollment in Medicare part B— an annual Medicare Wellness Visit focuses on evaluating your health status and risks. During the visit, your provider will update vitals and changes to medical history, ensure you've received appropriate preventive services and screenings or are scheduled to receive those services, perform a cognitive assessment, and discuss advanced care planning.

"During a Medicare Wellness Visit, patients are asked a series of questions to update their medical history, current medications, current specialty providers, and current ancillary services received," said Kimberli Ramirez, RN, Rural Health Clinic Director at Culbertson Memorial Hospital. "A health risk assessment is then completed, which allows the provider to develop a personalized prevention plan."

Available to all Medicare beneficiaries, a Medicare Wellness Visit differs from a routine checkup in the fact that it's not a physical examination. Rather, Medicare Wellness Visits are assessments to help you and your provider understand your current health and create a plan to help manage future issues. So, while you may have already had a physical exam this calendar year, a Medicare Wellness Visit may provide even greater insight and understanding into your health. Medicare Part B covers one Medicare Wellness Visit per year; patients typically are not billed for services. Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage) also covers these visits at little or no cost.

If you're a Medicare recipient who wishes to schedule a Medicare Wellness Visit, contact your primary care provider today. For more information, call (217) 322-4321.

