

# Kootenai Health

ISSUE 1 | 2015

## Finding her rhythm

Elle Susnis gets back on track after ventricular fibrillation.



Kootenai Health



## The heart of an Ironman. Repaired.

Joe Quercio is a mountain climber and a triathlete. In 2013, he also became a heart attack survivor. Together, Kootenai Health and Heart Clinics Northwest brought the expertise and technology to save Joe's life. Heart Clinics Northwest has board-certified cardiologists and committed staff serving patients in 17 locations across the Inland Northwest. And while we brought the expertise to help Joe get back in the race, Joe brought something just as important: the heart of an Ironman.

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**14**  
A Season  
to Celebrate

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## KOOTENAI HEALTH

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Andrea Nagel

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# Opening Thoughts



Jon Ness, CEO

## THE STRENGTH OF TEAMWORK

It is playoff season again, the 2015 Super Bowl is on the books, and NCAA March Madness is just around the corner. Watching elite athletes' individual performances during these games is a pleasure, but the final score always proves that it is teams, not individuals, that win games.

Here at Kootenai Health we have been working to develop a team that is focused on cooperation,

not competition. Northern Idaho is fortunate to have many excellent physicians who individually contribute to the health of our community. Our vision is to build an environment that makes it easier for each of them to work together as a team. By creating the infrastructure to securely share information electronically, developing alliances with other organizations and bringing more new talent to our community, we are creating our own health care dream team. Best of all the real winner in all this is you!

In this issue of *Kootenai Health* you'll see how our new expansion is beginning to take shape. You can read stories about the outstanding cancer care, cardiology and obstetrics available right here in our community. You'll also see how our first few months as a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network is benefiting patients by providing our local physicians access to one of the most robust physician networks in the world.

Whether you follow sports or find your entertainment in other ways, rest assured that our health care community has the expertise to provide the care you need when the time comes. That's the strength of teamwork.

Wishing you good health,  
Jon Ness, CEO

# Taking Shape



## KOOTENAI HEALTH'S EXPANSION IS MOVING SKYWARD

By Andrea Nagel

**Things are** really starting to take shape on Kootenai Health's expansion. Behind the plastic lining the sides of the structure, steel beams and concrete floors—the bones of the new structure—are coming together.

"The expansion will remain tented through the winter," said Derek Miller, construction manager. "This will protect the structure from the elements and allow us to start putting together the exterior and roof."

Once the exterior is complete, the plastic covering will be

removed and the interior work will begin. This includes everything from lighting and flooring to paint and furnishings.

"We should start work on the finishings in April," Derek said. "Work on the main entrance and lobby area won't begin until midsummer."

Along with the new birthing center and neonatal unit, the expansion will house Kootenai's orthopedic and neurology unit, which currently occupies the south end of the third floor in the hospital. This unit will have 32 patient rooms, a small rehabilitation gym for orthopedic patients and space

for the total joint replacement program.

Ultimately, moving these units will free up space in the main hospital for a second phase of remodels.

"Plans are already underway to expand the operating rooms in the main hospital," Derek said. "Moving these departments was needed in order to start working on the main building."



### WATCH US GROW!

You can view weekly updates and photos of the expansion, along with everything you want to know about the new building, at [KH.org/expansion](https://www.kh.org/expansion).

# Finding Her Rhythm

ELLE IS GETTING BACK ON TRACK AFTER  
SUFFERING FROM VENTRICULAR FIBRILLATION



Photos by Andrea Nagel

By Andrea Nagel

**On July 31**, after a long day of work, Elle Susnis went to dinner following a late meeting. Everything seemed normal. She met up with friends at a favorite Sandpoint pub and was enjoying their time together.

While at the restaurant, Elle said she went blue in the face and had to lie down on the floor. A friend instructed the staff to call 911.

Elle was resuscitated at Bonner General Hospital and was then flown to Kootenai Health on Life Flight. She was admitted to critical care and placed in a hypothermic coma to help preserve her brain function while our providers worked to stabilize her heart. Therapeutic hypothermia helps preserve brain cells by reducing the need for oxygen and blood flow to the brain. Another benefit of reducing blood flow to the brain is the prevention of harmful enzymes created during cardiac arrest that could cause damage.

### TRACKING THE BRAIN

Kootenai Health is the only hospital in the area that is able to continually track brain activity in hypothermia patients in real time (the next closest is in Salt Lake City).

Kootenai's neurodiagnostics team is notified within 10 seconds if a hypothermia patient's brain is going into crisis.

"Unfortunately, even in this day and age, most patients do not survive ventricular fibrillation when it occurs outside the hospital," said Eteri Byazrova,

M.D., cardiologist with Kootenai's Heart Clinics Northwest. "Immediate treatment is to apply electrical shock to the patient's chest called defibrillation. The sooner it is done, the better chances of survival are. After arrival at the hospital, external cooling (called hypothermia) may be used to reduce the amount of damage to the brain caused by cardiac arrest."

### CHAOTIC CONTRACTIONS

Once she awoke, Elle had to relearn basic tasks such as eating, drinking and walking. After working with therapists and nurses in critical care, Elle's heart condition could be more fully diagnosed and treated.

Ventricular fibrillation is a life-threatening condition where the cells of the lower chambers of the heart contract chaotically, at rates over 300 beats per minute.

"Normally heart muscle contracts and relaxes at rates between 40 and 180 beats per minute," Dr. Byazrova said. "Very rapid rates do not allow heart muscle to relax so the heart essentially stops. This arrhythmia usually occurs as a complication of acute or remote heart attack. Less commonly they result from prior viral infection of the heart or one of several inheritable conditions. Very rarely, as in Elle's case, it can occur without any of these. We call it idiopathic ventricular fibrillation."

To treat this condition, Dr. Byazrova inserted a defibrillator under the skin in Elle's chest. It can determine within 15 to 18 seconds if Elle has any abnormal heart rhythm activity and provide an electric shock that helps the heart return to a normal rhythm.

Elle said she is thankful for the



Elle Susnis is a graphic designer and lives in Sandpoint, Idaho, with her son. She currently serves as a member of the Sandpoint Arts Commission and has a passion for community art.

care she received and is happy that after just six weeks she was able to return to work and get back to her normal life with her 10-year-old son.

"Everyone was remarkable," Elle said. "I received good care every step of the way. Every part made it possible for me to get back to my son and back to our life."



### PUT YOUR HEART IN GOOD HANDS.

For more information about Kootenai's Heart Clinics Northwest or to schedule an appointment, call the main Spokane office at **(509) 838-7711** or the Coeur d'Alene office at **(208) 625-5250**.



## ERICA AND BRETT LUCAS'S EARLY LABOR ENDS IN A HAPPY BIRTH DAY

By Andrea Nagel

**Traveling often carries** challenges—especially when you're 33 weeks pregnant. But Erica Lucas and her husband, Brett, had made the journey from their home in West Richland, Washington, to his family's vacation home on Hayden Lake, Idaho, many times with no complications. Last Labor Day was an exception.

The weekend started like any other. Erica and her family enjoyed time together and got some much-needed relaxation before the baby was expected to arrive mid-October. On Labor Day, Erica felt fatigued and a little nauseated, which seemed like normal third-

trimester symptoms.

"I was taking a shower and started to feel really light-headed, and I thought drinking some water and lying down on the couch would help me feel better," she said. "But the feeling didn't go away, and I was feeling really nauseated—after a failed attempt to throw up, I felt a gush of blood and knew something was really wrong."

### A SWIFT RESPONSE

Erica started to hemorrhage. Luckily, her mother-in-law, Lynn, is a labor and delivery nurse at Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland, and she knew exactly how to handle the situation. Aware

that it would take too long for an ambulance to reach the north end of Hayden Lake, she instructed everyone to get Erica to the car and lay her down with her legs elevated.

"I passed out as soon as they got me in the car, but seconds later my husband got me to regain consciousness by laying me down and elevating my legs," Erica said. "I was able to stay conscious and remain calm while Lynn drove us to the emergency room."

Once they reached the hospital, Erica remembers being wheeled back to the emergency department and seeing OB-GYN Brett Penney, M.D. He and neonatologist Kathleen Webb, M.D., happened to be at the hospital when Erica arrived,



## Expecting? Kootenai Health's Birthing Center offers the highest standards of care. For more information, call (208) 625-4276.

despite the holiday. After a swift evaluation, it was determined Erica would need an emergency C-section.

Before being able to undergo surgery, Erica needed a blood transfusion to replace some of the blood she had lost. The team was able to get an IV started for the transfusion, but by the time Erica reached the operating room for the procedure, the anesthesiologist had to start a new IV—her vein was no good. After several attempts to get an IV started, Dr. Penney was forced to start the C-section.

"Erica was given local anesthesia," Dr. Webb said. "There just wasn't a way to give her a regional or a general anesthetic when the case was started. We did get her off to sleep a few seconds later."

What struck Dr. Webb most was Dr. Penney's compassion and Erica's bravery. "He told her it was going to hurt, and she told him to go ahead," she said. "I also remember Cassy Oddy, the charge nurse, saying, 'You just hold my hand and squeeze as hard as you like,' and that's what Erica did. Cassy never left her."

The C-section was a success, and at just 33 weeks and 3 days; 4 pounds, 15 ounces and 18 inches, Elena Brynn was welcomed into the world.

"When Dr. Penney put the baby

in my arms, she began to cry, and I knew she was going to be okay," Dr. Webb said. "I have never felt more proud of our team than I did in that moment."

The next thing Erica remembers is waking up in the recovery room and seeing her husband's face.

"He was trying to tell me something," she recalled. She said it took several minutes before she could comprehend what Brett was saying, but eventually "We have a baby girl" resonated.

### HEALTHY AND THRIVING

Elena and Erica were transferred back to Kadlec after spending a few days at Kootenai Health. To ensure mom and baby could go home together, Kootenai helped by paying for half of the neonatal transfer costs.

Elena is a happy, healthy baby girl today. She was released from Kadlec's neonatal intensive care unit after 24 days. Since being born, Elena has nearly doubled her weight and continues to thrive under the care of her parents.

"It's amazing how everything fell into place on Labor Day," Erica said. "If it hadn't been for Lynn, Dr. Penney, Dr. Webb, the emergency response team and all the nursing staff at Kootenai, Elena and I wouldn't be here today. We are very blessed that things went as well as they did."



## MAYO CLINIC CARE NETWORK STATISTICS

Numbers as of December 2014

**8** Total hours of consultation for the development of Kootenai's new NICU

**24** Total number of physician eConsults since July 2014

- ▶ The largest number for one specialty is six for otorhinolaryngology (ENT), followed by cancer services (five), and cardiology (four)
- ▶ The two physicians with the most eConsults are Kevin Kavanaugh, M.D., with Heart Clinics Northwest, and Kevin Mulvey, M.D., with cancer services—three each
- ▶ Seventeen physicians have used eConsults

**4,000** Number of hits, by Kootenai Health staff, on AskMayoExpert (AME)

- ▶ The most popular topic is hyperlipidemia—meaning too many lipids (fat cells) in the blood—with 99 hits.
- ▶ Second place, with 55 hits, was abdominal aortic aneurysm.

**169** The number of local physicians that have Mayo Clinic eConsult privileges



# By the Numbers

## JUST MONTHS AFTER JOINING THE MAYO CLINIC CARE NETWORK, KOOTENAI MARKS OVER 4,000 HITS ON ELECTRONIC TOOLS

By Andrea Nagel

**As part** of the Mayo Clinic Care Network, Kootenai Health physicians have access to Mayo Clinic knowledge and expertise so that more patients can avoid unnecessary travel for answers to complex medical questions. Members of the network have a close working relationship with Mayo Clinic and access to tools and services that promote collaboration and serve to complement provider expertise, including:

- ▶ **eConsults** allow network physicians to connect electronically with Mayo Clinic specialists when they want additional input regarding a patient's care.
- ▶ **AskMayoExpert** provides point-of-care information compiled by Mayo physicians on disease management, care guidelines, treatment recommendations and reference materials for a wide variety of medical conditions.
- ▶ **eTumor Board Conferences** allow physicians to present and discuss management of complex cancer cases with a Mayo Clinic multidisciplinary panel and other members of the network.

"Having direct access to the leading experts at Mayo Clinic is a great benefit to our physicians," said Casey Meza, executive director

of Affiliated Health Services at Kootenai Health. "Our physicians are taking advantage of the eConsults, and we've already had thousands of hits on AskMayoExpert."

Along with these online resources, Kootenai physicians and leaders can consult with their counterparts at Mayo Clinic on everything from policies and best care practices to growing an entire program.

"Dr. Kathleen Webb and her neonatology team have been working very closely with Mayo Clinic to develop the scope of practice for neonatal services and the new NICU," Casey said. "But our consultations range from something as large as that to staff attending an Ebola webinar."

Soon, staff will also have access to Mayo-developed patient education materials. These materials will include over 2,500 pieces of written patient education content, available in printable PDFs in English and Spanish.

While being part of the Mayo Clinic Care Network is a great advantage for Kootenai's staff and physicians, it is an even greater advantage for patients. It gives Kootenai providers tools and resources in specialty areas where Mayo Clinic's knowledge and expertise may be helpful, so patients are assured of the finest care while staying close to home.

# Quality Cancer Care, Close to Home

KOOTENAI CLINIC CANCER SERVICES RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

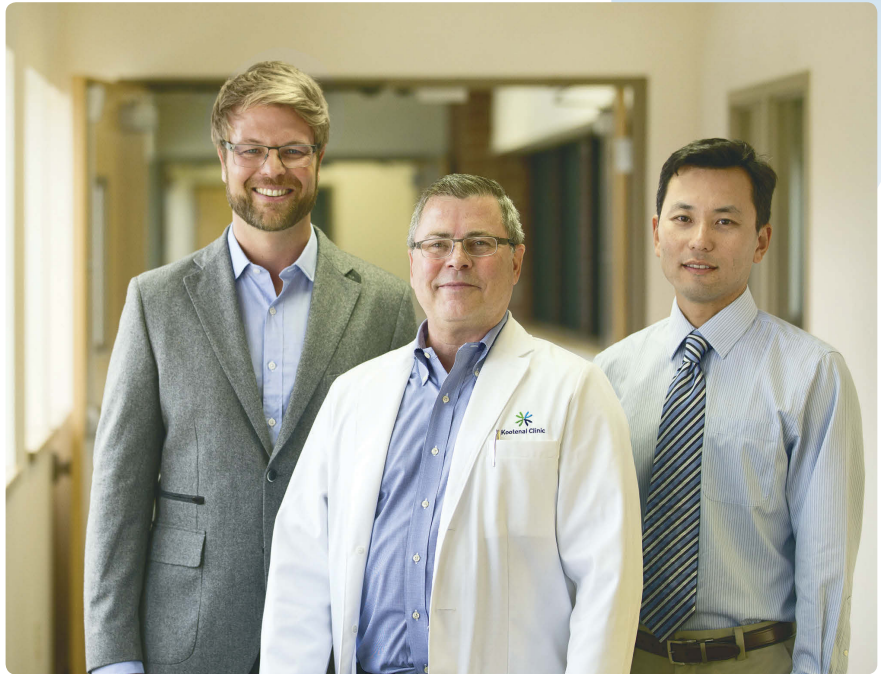
**Kootenai Clinic** Cancer Services has a history of providing comprehensive cancer care to the patients of northern Idaho, eastern Washington and western Montana. Kootenai's commitment was recently recognized with Commendation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. This accreditation places Kootenai in the top rankings of Community Hospital Comprehensive Cancer Programs.

## COMMITTED TO QUALITY CARE

Accreditation by the Commission on Cancer is awarded to cancer programs that have voluntarily committed to providing the highest level of care and undergo a rigorous evaluation and review of their performance. After an on-site survey, Cancer Services received acknowledgement for its commitment to high-quality cancer care through efforts in clinical services, research, community outreach, quality improvement, cancer committee leadership and cancer data management.

Cancer Services opened in 1987 and has been continuously accredited by the Commission on Cancer since 1990. The center offers patients the best in cancer care with medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and advance practice professionals.

"We are able to achieve high standards because of our staff and



Medical oncologists (from left) David Bartels, D.O., Kevin Mulvey, M.D., and Kevin Kim, M.D.

physicians," Jeanne Atha, Kootenai Clinic executive director, said. "It takes everyone working together, making our patients and our cancer program a priority."

Commission on Cancer Accreditation ensures that patients receive:

- ▶ Comprehensive care, including a complete range of state-of-the-art services and equipment
- ▶ A team approach to coordinate the best available treatment options
- ▶ Information about ongoing cancer clinical trials and new treatment options
- ▶ Access to prevention and early detection programs, cancer education, and support services
- ▶ A cancer registry that offers lifelong patient follow-up
- ▶ Ongoing monitoring and improvements in cancer care

The Commission on Cancer is a nationally recognized consortium of professional organizations that sets the standards for quality, multidisciplinary cancer care. The data collected by the Commission on Cancer is used to help improve care outcomes at the local, state and national level.

# Heart to Heart Screenings

## HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

By Stacie Jones

As the leading cause of death for both men and women, heart disease claims more than 600,000 lives every year in the U.S. However, a simple screening could help you avoid becoming part of this alarming statistic.

To help people learn their risk for heart disease, Kootenai Health is offering Heart to Heart™ screenings in February. Through the annual screening program, community members can get an overview of their heart health and potential risk factors for heart disease, for a minimal charge.

“It’s important for people to have a baseline of their numbers and to understand how those numbers affect their health,” said Joyce Kratz Klatt, supervisor of Kootenai Health’s cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation program. “By offering screenings at a discounted rate, people can get the information they need to



John Edgar is one of the leaders of Kootenai Health’s Mended Hearts cardiac support group and has participated in Kootenai’s Heart to Heart screenings since 2003.



make the right choices to improve their health and reduce their chances of a cardiovascular event.”

The screening involves a short lifestyle questionnaire and a finger stick to draw a small amount of blood for testing. In just 15 minutes, screening participants get a full lipid profile, including measurements of total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol, and triglyceride and glucose levels. The test also includes evaluation of blood pressure and body mass index (BMI).

Kootenai dietitians and registered nurses are on hand during the screenings to review results with participants, evaluate risk factors and recommend next steps, which could range from better nutrition to a follow-up visit with a physician. In extreme cases, Joyce recalls, participants whose screenings revealed dangerously high

blood pressure were immediately escorted to the emergency room.

“A lot of times, people who come in for screenings don’t have a regular physician,” she said. “They consider themselves healthy, but at least 20 percent of the people we see are surprised by their numbers and directed to get follow-up care with a physician.”

Coeur d’Alene resident John Edgar said he has participated in the Heart to Heart™ screening program several times since his heart attack in 2003. For John, the screenings are an important part of his effort to maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent a second cardiac event.

“The screening is a good indicator of where you are, versus where you should be, and it gives you the information you need to stay within normal parameters,” said John, who also helps lead Kootenai’s Mended Hearts cardiac support group. “It’s a very worthwhile and affordable program.”

Since its inception in 2003, the Heart to Heart™ risk-screening program has screened more than 10,000 people in the community. As part of the program, businesses can also partner with Kootenai to offer screenings to their employees within their workplace.

The Heart to Heart™ community screenings are offered in February on Tuesdays and Fridays, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., in Kootenai’s Heart Center classroom.

Source: [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm)



### TAKE THE TEST

For more information and to register for a screening, call **(208) 625-6800**.

## KOOTENAI HEALTH HEART SERVICES

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

#### Heart to Heart™ Risk Screenings Tuesdays and Fridays (February) Registration required.

Learn how your heart health measures up. Call **(208) 625-6800**.

#### Cardiac Rehab Education Classes Thursdays, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Learn about nutrition and cardiac health. Open to patients, family members and caregivers. Call **(208) 625-4690**.

#### Fitness Programs Activity for Life (AFL)

Open gym time for those looking to stay active in a safe setting.

#### Balance and Fit

Mondays, 1 p.m.  
Get fit and stay active in a safe environment. Call **(208) 625-4690**.

#### Mended Hearts Meeting times vary.

Former cardiac patient support group. Call **(208) 625-4690**.

For more information about cardiac or pulmonary classes, call **(208) 625-4690**.



Jane Bosko (left) and Karie Anderson participate in Kootenai Health’s cardiac fitness class.

2014 FESTIVAL OF TREES

# 26 Years of Phil

**You are amazing!** Through the Festival of Trees events you helped raise over \$402,000 in 2014 and a cumulative \$5.5 million to directly impact patient care at Kootenai Health. Simply remarkable! We are grateful for every decorator, volunteer, sponsor, donor and friend. On behalf of the Kootenai Health Foundation Board of Directors and staff, thank you for generously sharing your time, talent and treasure. We look forward to partnering with you again in 2015.

*Photography by Sheena Dunn/Spectacular Images*



# anthropy

- 1 Derek Dahl, Dave Smith Motors
- 2 Steve Griffiths, Kootenai Health Foundation board
- 3 University of Idaho decorating crew: Heidi Rogers, Peggy Stein, Cindy Haagenson, Shelly Robson, Konni Leichner, Carol Wilson and Bobby Myers
- 4 Ian, Gus and Max Taylor
- 5 Richard Shutts, Crown Media & Printing
- 6 Judy and Jack Gustavel with Jill Hathaway, Jeff Larson, M.D., Lynn Taylor and Sean Adams
- 7 Gerry Brown and Christa Deadmarsh, Gala Chair

- 8 Back row (from left): Lara Kalbfleisch, Roberta Lamarr, Dawn McIntire, Theresa Muller and Lisa Scoffield. Front row (from left): Joanne McIntire, Nancy Clarke and Pam Meier
- 9 Back row (from left): Philana McInnis, Kristi Sims, Jen Cowper. Front row (from left): April Fortier, Ann Thomas, Paula Smyly, Kelly Sisson and Gail Batchelder
- 10 (From left): Teri Farr, Sue Berg, Jan Farr, Anne Baker, Suzy Jolley
- 11 Bob Yuditsky, Shelly and Jim Robson
- 12 Dan and Linda Green, Connie and John Young



# Personalized Care for Health and Well-Being

Q&A WITH NEW INTERNIST  
CATHERINE CHESTER, M.D.



**Catherine Chester, M.D.**, is joining Kootenai Clinic from Portland, Oregon. She is board-certified in internal medicine and has been in practice since 1997. She graduated from the Medical College of Wisconsin and completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

**Q Tell us a bit about your family.**

I am married, and we have five children ranging in age from 4 to 18—four girls and one boy.

**Q Why did you pick your specialty?**

I have always been interested in internal medicine because I enjoy taking care of people with chronic health issues and helping them to achieve the best level of health and well-being that they can. I enjoy seeing families and have enjoyed seeing couples and their elder parents for care.

**Q What can patients expect when they show up for their first appointment with you?**

Patients can expect a physician who will want to get to know them as people, in addition to their health needs. I know that seeing a new physician can cause some anxiety, and I hope to put my patients at ease. I believe that the patient-physician relationship is founded on making decisions together.

**Q What are some of your hobbies?**

I have a lot of interests—I enjoy cycling; swimming, backpacking and hiking; skiing that is not scary; crafts; and, of course, enjoying time with my family and our children's sports and activities.

**Q What drew you to Kootenai Health?**

The people! I was impressed by the kindness and friendliness of this community and the Kootenai Health staff when I came to interview. We were attracted to northern Idaho, as our family enjoys the outdoors, and we love the Northwest.



# A Westerner Follows His Heart

Q&A WITH NEW CARDIOLOGIST  
RUSSELL BLAKELEY, M.D.



**Russell Blakeley, M.D.,** cardiology, is joining Kootenai Clinic from Knoxville, Tennessee. He graduated from medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio and completed his internal medicine residency, a general cardiology fellowship and an interventional cardiology fellowship at Emory University in Atlanta.

**Q Tell us a bit about your family.**

My wife, Julie, was a critical care nurse who graduated from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. After raising our daughters, she has spent her time involved with church and commu-

nity work, particularly Court Appointed Special Advocates, which assists children in difficult family situations. We have two grown daughters and a granddaughter. Our oldest daughter and her husband and daughter live in Dallas, where she works in education policy with The New Teacher Project. Our youngest is a National Park Service backcountry ranger in Alaska.

**Q Why did you pick your specialty?**

My undergraduate work was in electrical engineering, and the mechanical and electrical activity of the heart always fascinated me. I chose to practice medicine rather than engineering, because I enjoyed helping people much more than fixing circuit boards.

**Q What can patients expect when they show up for their first appointment with you?**

They can expect me to work hard getting to know as much as I can about them. We will establish their medical history, and then work on understanding the problem that brings them in. This will mean answering lots of questions.

**Q What are some of your hobbies?**

My wife and I enjoy the outdoors, particularly skiing, kayaking, hiking and biking. I volunteered as a ski patroller in the mountains of western North Carolina for a number of years before coming to Idaho. Photography is another personal interest.

**Q What drew you to Kootenai Health?**

Julie and I are moving here from Knoxville, where I practiced medicine for many years after completing my postdoctoral training at Emory. Although we lived in the East, our upbringing in Texas marked us as Westerners at heart, and we dreamed of returning to the West someday. In Knoxville, where I practiced medicine for many years, I worked with a large group of great cardiologists, but our hospital system began to struggle financially, and recently it came under the ownership of a for-profit corporation. I could find no peace with that business model and began to look for another opportunity. Heart Clinics Northwest here at Kootenai Health has two Emory-trained cardiologists. Our paths crossed at a cardiology meeting, and here I am. These are challenging days in health care across the country, and it is exciting to see a growing, innovative health care system that is healthy itself.



## CHILLY TEMPS CAN BE HARD ON YOUR HEART

Winter weather can put a real strain on your ticker.

Your body has to work extra hard to stay warm. If those cold temperatures rob the body of heat, hypothermia can set in. And when body temperature drops too low, a person may die—usually from heart failure.

Winter conditions often require

physical exertion, such as shoveling snow or wading through wet, heavy drifts. That level of activity can be risky if you're not in good physical shape.

If you have heart disease, it pays to be extra careful when venturing out in frigid weather. Get your doctor's advice about what kinds of

# 4 for Your Heart

## THESE SAFEGUARDS MAY SURPRISE AND DELIGHT YOU

**Protecting your heart** is serious business. But keeping it healthy can be easier—and a lot more fun—than you may think possible. Here are four relatively simple steps to help you take care of your ticker:

**1 Keep your chin up.** A positive attitude may help boost cardiovascular health, according to research published by the American Heart Association (AHA). You can focus on the good things happening in your life by keeping a gratitude journal—write down anything, large or small, that makes you smile. And when things don't go your way, make a conscious effort to look for the silver lining.

**2 If you have chocolate, go dark.** Studies have shown that chocolate—the darker the better—may help lower blood pressure. But if you eat it, do so in moderation. It's a high-calorie food, and being overweight is hard on your heart.

**3 Have a good, long laugh.** Funnily enough, laughter really is good medicine. According to the AHA, it gets more oxygen into your blood, activates your muscles, quickens

your pulse, stimulates your circulation and helps you relax.

So spend time with a friend or loved one who knows how to crack you up. Or find books or movies—or even crazy cat videos on the Internet—that tickle your funny bone.

**4 Get your ZZZs.** Poor-quality sleep may raise your blood pressure and increase your risk for heart disease.

To sleep better:

- ▶ Set a bedtime and stick to it. Do your best to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning—even on the weekends.
- ▶ Try to get 30 minutes of natural sunlight a day, especially in the morning.
- ▶ Make your bedroom comfortable—remove distractions like the TV, computer or cellphone. And keep the temperature cool.
- ▶ Have a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading or taking a warm bath.

Additional sources: Mental Health America; National Institutes of Health

activities you can do out in the cold. And keep these tips in mind:

- ▶ Wear layers of clothing, including a hat or scarf and warm gloves and footwear.
- ▶ Don't drink alcohol before heading outside—it causes you to lose body heat more quickly.

- ▶ Work slowly and avoid sudden exertion.
- ▶ Watch out for symptoms of hypothermia, such as confusion, slowed reaction time, loss of coordination, sleepiness and shivering.

Sources: American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



NEW APPOINTMENT CENTER

# Kootenai Makes Seeing the Doctor Easy

By Andrea Nagel

**Finding the right** primary care physician can be challenging. Calling office to office to find an opening and filling out paperwork is time-consuming. Kootenai Clinic is hoping to remedy that with its new appointment center.

“We’re here to do all the legwork,” appointment center manager Linda Maxwell said. “We call and schedule the initial appointment, gather all of the patient’s information, and mail out packets with paperwork and information about the clinic they’ll be going to.”

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Patients looking for a primary care physician can visit [kh.org/appointmentcenter](http://kh.org/appointmentcenter) to start the process, or call **(208) 625-6767**. Kootenai Clinic representatives will be able to help patients:

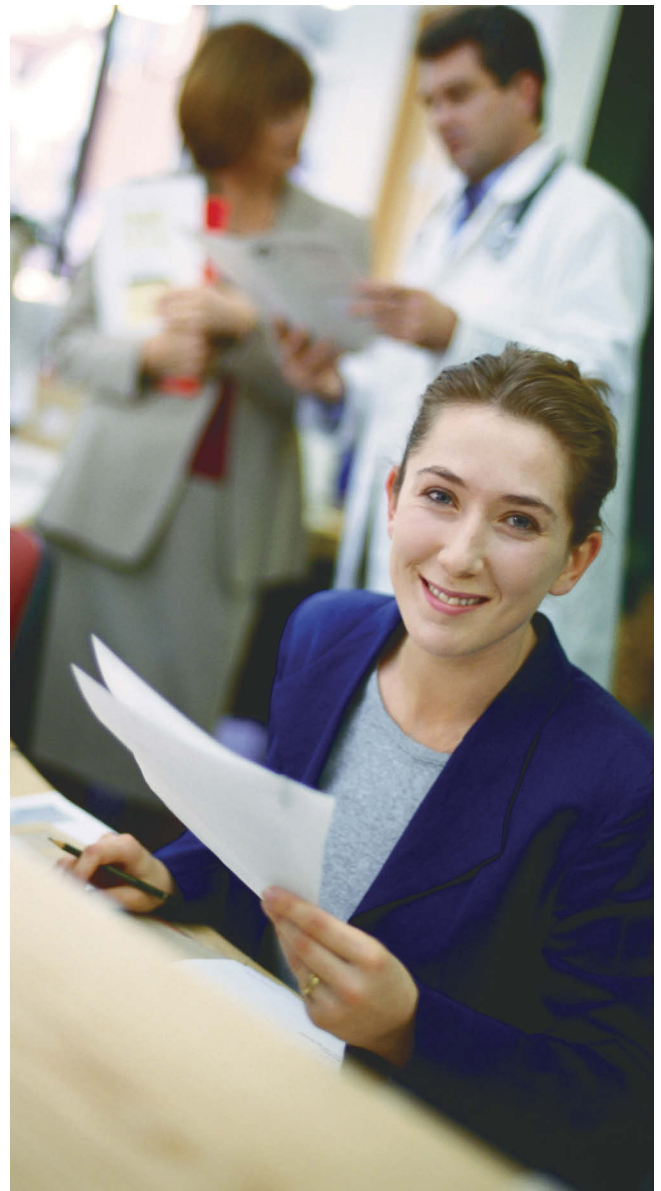
- ▶ Determine the type of physician they need
- ▶ Find an appointment that fits in their schedule
- ▶ Know what to expect at the appointment


“This will allow new patients one point of contact and eliminate a lot of confusion,” Linda said. “After their initial appointment we’ll follow up with them and see how the process was received and how we can make it even better.”

The packets mailed to new patients include:

- ▶ A Kootenai Clinic folder to keep health-related documents in one spot
- ▶ Paperwork to be filled out and brought to the appointment
- ▶ A brochure about the clinic and a map to its location
- ▶ Any relevant policies

“We won’t turn calls away,” Linda said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s your first appointment or your 20th appointment, we’ll be there to help and answer questions.”



 **LOOKING FOR A** primary care physician? Call the appointment center at **(208) 625-6767** or visit [kh.org/appointmentcenter](http://kh.org/appointmentcenter) to get started.

# Inside Kootenai

## WHAT DO YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY?



**IVANKA KURAN, P.T., D.P.T., O.C.S.,  
C.O.M.T., A.T.C., PHYSICAL THERAPY**

“I do my best to eat a well-balanced diet that’s high in protein to help increase my metabolism and keep my weight in check. I also use my Garmin Vivofit to log 12,000 steps each day as well as exercise at least six hours each week in my target threshold zone. I enjoy doing triathlons, so keeping my heart healthy is part of the reward of an active lifestyle.”

**DEANNA BRUNK, M.S.W.,  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

“I incorporate something that I try to share with all the patients that I work with—that is the importance of having balance in life. I think that heart health comes from a variety of positive things we can do in our lives. This includes eating well, exercising regularly, taking time to be with family and friends, creating a positive work environment, and taking time for self-care. A combination of all these things keeps my heart healthy and happy.”



**PAUL HILL, R.N.,  
CARDIAC REHABILITATION**

“I try to watch calories, eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, and exercise at the gym after work. I also try to just keep moving throughout the day, because it helps burn calories and keeps muscles activated.”

**NATALIE COLLA, R.D.,  
NUTRITION SERVICES**

“To keep my heart healthy, I try to focus on eating healthful, unprocessed fats by eating fresh fish as often as possible, adding ground flaxseeds and chia seeds to my oatmeal or smoothies, or snacking on a handful of walnuts or sliced avocados. Also, fruits and veggies are a mainstay in my diet, and their rich potassium levels keep my heart beating regularly and strong.”





TED KOUTLAS, M.D.,  
CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

# Diagnosing a Heart Murmur

**Q I have been told I have a heart murmur. What does that mean, and what do I do about it?**

Heart murmurs occur when turbulent blood flow is heard through a stethoscope. Turbulent blood flow may result from pathologic states such as leaky or obstructive (stenotic) heart valves or congenital heart defects such as holes in the heart (atrial or ventricular septal defects), or it may be a normal occurrence (physiologic flow murmurs). While not all heart murmurs represent a significant heart problem that needs an intervention, the finding of a heart murmur on physical exam needs to be investigated.

The first part of any workup for a heart murmur is a thorough history and physical examination by a health care professional. Important symptoms to look for when seeing a patient for a heart murmur are fatigue, shortness of breath and chest pain. Other symptoms include difficulty sleeping flat, waking up at night short of breath, leg or ankle swelling, and fainting or near-fainting spells. During a physical exam, your doctor will look for evidence of fluid in your lungs; leg swelling; and the loudness, character and location of your heart murmur. Once your history and physical is performed, you should be referred for an echocardiogram.

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of the heart and is completely noninvasive. It uses sound waves from a probe placed on the chest wall to generate pictures of the heart. These pictures show the technician and cardiologist reading the study the function and competency of the heart valves (there are four of them), as well as the size and function of the heart chambers (also four of them). Using a technique called color-flow Doppler, the echocardiographer can examine blood flow throughout the heart and across the heart valves, looking for abnormalities.

Not all heart murmurs require an intervention and commonly represent an early finding of an abnormal heart valve. Patients typically may have a leaky or narrowed heart valve for years without ever needing surgery. The decision to recommend heart surgery for an abnormal heart valve involves combining the severity of the findings on the echocardiogram with the nature of the patient's symptoms and is usually made in consultation with a cardiologist and a cardiothoracic surgeon.



## WORRIED ABOUT A HEART MURMUR?

Dr. Koutlas practices at Northwest Heart and Lung Associates in Coeur d'Alene. For questions or to schedule an appointment, call (208) 666-2552.



# Events & Classes

## PRENATAL CLASSES

Classes meet in Kootenai's Health Resource Center unless otherwise noted. Space is limited. Visit the Online Course Calendar at [KH.org](http://KH.org) to register, or for more information, call (208) 625-6050.

### Prepared Childbirth Classes | \$60

**Tuesdays**, March 3 to 24,  
6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Thursdays**, March 5 to 26,  
6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Tuesdays**, April 7 to 28,  
6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Thursdays**, April 9 to 30,  
6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Tuesdays**, May 5 to 26,  
6 to 8:30 p.m.

### Bringing Baby Home | \$15

**Saturday**, March 7, 9 a.m. to noon

**Monday**, April 6, 6 to 9 p.m.

**Saturday**, May 2, 9 a.m. to noon

### Breastfeeding Basics | \$15

**Wednesday**, March 4, 6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Wednesday**, May 13, 6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Wednesday**, June 3, 6 to 8:30 p.m.

### Safe Kids Car Seat Inspections | Free

**Thursdays**, 1 to 4 p.m.

Kootenai Health Emergency  
Entrance

Call (208) 625-5722

for an appointment.

## FITNESS AND WELLNESS

### Aquatics Classes | Varies

#### Weekdays

McGrane Center pool  
Formats, times and prices vary.  
Call (208) 625-5311, or go to  
[KH.org/rehab](http://KH.org/rehab).

### Community Cardiac Education | Free

**Thursdays**, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Heart Center Classroom

#### Weekly Topics:

**First Thursday**, Stress Reduction

**Second Thursday**, Nutrition

**Third Thursday**, Medication

**Fourth Thursday**, Nutrition

(208) 625-4690

### Fit and Fall Proof | Free

**Mondays**, 1 to 2 p.m.

Heart Center Classroom

This is a free exercise program for adults who want to improve their strength, balance, flexibility and mobility while decreasing their risk of falling. Contact Donna Kalanick at (208) 625-5722 for more information.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups meet at Kootenai Health unless otherwise noted.

### Women's Cancer Wellness Support

**Mondays**, noon to 1 p.m.

Kootenai Clinic's Cancer Services  
Post Falls, 1440 E. Mullan Ave.  
Call (208) 619-4138.

## Cancer Support

**Wednesdays**, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

For those whose lives have been affected by cancer.

Call (208) 625-4711.

### American Cancer Society Man-to-Man Prostate Support Group

**First Thursday of each month**,  
7 to 9 p.m.

This group is for patients diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Call (208) 625-4711.

### American Cancer Society Look Good...Feel Better

**Second Monday of the month**

This free program helps women facing cancer with the appearance-related side effects of their cancer treatment. A cosmetologist will teach beauty techniques and help with head coverings. Call (509) 723-8258.

### Mended Hearts

**Third Thursday of the month**,  
3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Former cardiac patients help support others with cardiac or pulmonary diseases. Call (208) 625-4690.

### Pulmonary Support Group

**Second Tuesday of each month**,  
noon to 1:30 p.m.

Education and support to help improve your quality of life. Call (208) 625-4690.

## Follow Us



## DISCOVER MORE

Visit the events calendar at [KH.org](http://KH.org) for a complete listing of classes and events.





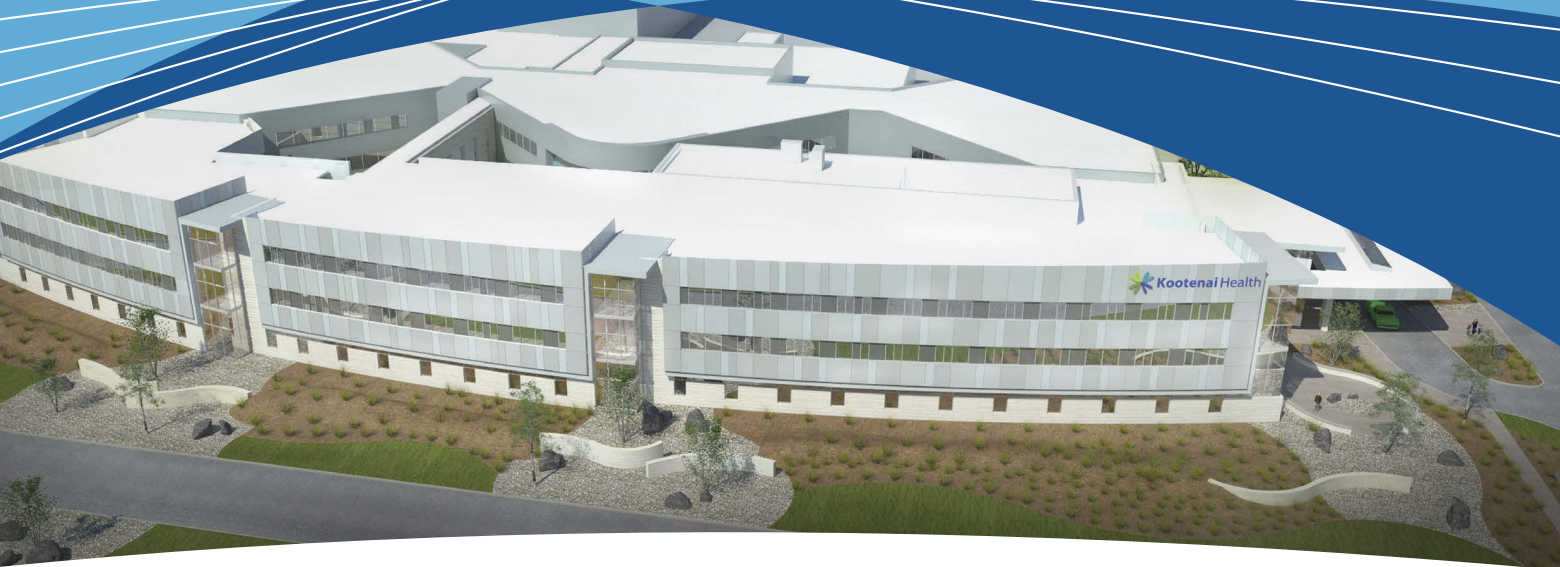
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*The Green Machine*  
Andrea Nagel,  
Communications and Marketing

# Come Grow With Us!



We've been about community, since the beginning. Over the past three decades, the Kootenai Health Foundation has been hard at work partnering with generous donors and showing you where your philanthropy will have the most impact. Together we have helped Kootenai Health improve patient care facilities, add cutting-edge equipment and technologies and bring higher levels of care to our community.

Today, Kootenai Health is embarking on a new era of growth and the Foundation is ready to help with the next major project: a 100,000 square-foot hospital expansion. This expansion will provide the space needed to care for more patients, add new services and meet the ever increasing health care needs of our community. At Kootenai Health it is our mission and our privilege to provide the best care possible for every patient, one day at a time. As we look toward the future, your support will help ensure quality health care for your family, friends and neighbors right here in Idaho. Please join us on this exciting journey; Come Grow With Us!



**KootenaiHealth**  
Foundation, Inc.

To learn more about how you can be a part of providing excellent patient care close to home, contact the Foundation at 208.625.4438 or [foundation@kh.org](mailto:foundation@kh.org).