



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

How has St. Vincent Hospital improved patient care and financial sustainability?

The mission of St. Vincent Hospital is to deliver excellent healthcare to our community with dedication, honesty, and compassion. St. Vincent Hospital administration has focused on service excellence for our community and patients by increasing providers and ambulance staff, re-opening eight inpatient beds, and bringing the billing office and patient financial services in house. Both our medical clinic and physical therapy department have added expanded hours to better serve residents who work out of town.

New Providers:

St. Vincent Hospital's Physical Therapy Department added two full time providers in 2017 (Kelsey Kuehn PT, DPT and Kristina Koenig, PT, DPT). Between the two providers they now offer appointments Monday through Saturday and some week-day evenings. Patient visits for Physical Therapy have grown over 200% since 2017.

Taryn Barrette, MMS, PA-C joined St. Vincent Medical Clinic in the autumn of 2017. She is passionate about community wellness and a welcome addition to the primary care clinic.

Inpatient Care:

St. Vincent Hospital has eight inpatient beds to provide our friends and neighbors with acute care – right here in their hometown. Dr. Lisa Zwerdinger is serving as a hospitalist for the inpatients and round-the-clock care is given by our dedicated team of nurses, paramedics, and certified nursing assistants. Recent patient satisfaction surveys show that over 90% of our responding patients would recommend St. Vincent Hospital to their friends and family.

Increased Ambulance Staffing:

St. Vincent Hospital ambulance service responds to all 911 calls in Lake County. Increased staffing permits us to also provide consistent coverage for ground transfers to a higher level of care when our patients' medical conditions require it. The result is an improved experience and reduced wait-time for our patients, and increased revenue which helps to sustain the ambulance service.

Patient Financial Services: In May of 2018 the hospital is bringing the billing office in house under the direction of Janet Petty, Revenue Cycle Director. The billing of patient accounts will no longer be outsourced. What does this mean to you?

- Your billing questions are answered here in Leadville at the hospital or by phone or email inquiries.
- The look of your statement is changing and to be more understandable.
- New state-of-the-art billing and medical record software from Athena Health, a health information technology innovator.
- Improved access to your patient portal and health information

What new specialty services will the hospital add in the coming years?

It is the hospital's goal to have a positive impact on access to care for Lake County. St. Vincent Hospital currently offers a visiting Cardiologist, Dr. Lemis, of Summit Cardiology two times per month. Hospital administration hopes to add visiting specialists in the areas of gastroenterology, pulmonology, and dermatology in 2018.

We are also working to include podiatry, behavioral health, ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialists and expanded cardiology services in 2019.

Will the hospital district build a new hospital building?

The hospital board of directors is committed to operating in a facility that can serve the community for decades to come. St. Vincent Hospital was built in 1958, over 60 years ago. Currently St. Vincent Hospital administration and board of directors are focusing on creating a strong foundation for the future by improving financial performance, expanding services, and maintaining high-quality care for our community.

The U.S.D.A. loan for the construction of a new hospital is committed until 2021 which enables the hospital administration and board of directors' time to strengthen the hospital's financial position and continue planning for the future. A new hospital building continues to be in consideration and a likely goal in the near future.

What is the state of the current St. Vincent Hospital facility?

St. Vincent Hospital facility is capable of supporting our current delivery of health care and hospital services now and in the future. As we increase service offerings the facility limits our capacity to grow and modernize our practices. There are many procedures that patients travel out of town for, such as eye surgery, scopes, and other simple surgical procedures. Hospital life-safety code for these procedures, and in general, is highly regulated and has changed immensely since our building was constructed. Our ability to bring more services to Leadville is limited by the aging facility and increased regulation.

There are two boilers that support St. Vincent Hospital. Prior contractors and a 2015 facility assessment indicated that the boilers had reached the end of their useful life. New contractors recently provided a different diagnosis on the boilers, indicating that although extensive repairs were needed, the boilers will continue to function now and in the foreseeable future.

Growth in service offerings, the boilers, the building infrastructure and life-safety code will be factors the board considers when determining plans to replace the existing hospital.

How are the tax dollars utilized from the mill levy?

The 2015 ballot issue, as stated in the ballot language below, gave the board of directors' broad authority to use revenues to improve community health care. Among other things, the intent was to support a 24/7 emergency room, laboratory, radiology/imaging and other hospital services at St. Vincent Hospital, which the board has done. It was also the intention of the hospital board to address sustaining hospital services and the need for a new facility to replace the aging hospital building.

The hospital board remains focused on this issue, and is committed to providing a long-term affordable solution that serves the community's needs. A new facility continues to be in consideration as the hospital excels at strengthening its financial position.

The actual ballot language was:

SHALL ST. VINCENT GENERAL HOSPITAL DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED BY \$350,000 IN 2016 AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY SUCH AMOUNT AS MAY BE COLLECTED BY AN ADDITIONAL MILL LEVY OF UP TO 3.625 MILLS, (EXCLUSIVE OF REFUNDS AND ABATEMENTS), TO PAY GENERAL OPERATING AND OTHER PURPOSES; AND SHALL ALL DISTRICT REVENUES BE COLLECTED, RETAINED AND SPENT NOTWITHSTANDING ANY REVENUE LIMITS PROVIDED BY LAW?