



LOGAN
HEALTH
Building healthier lives, communities and futures.

2024 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Contents

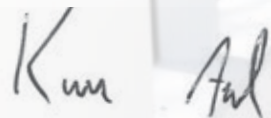
About Logan Health.....	4
Community impact.....	6
Community engagement.....	8, 9
Let's talk about it.....	10-13
Enhancing access to care.....	14
CycleMT.....	16, 17
Traveling specialists deliver care statewide.....	18, 19
Supporting survivors of sexual assault.....	20
Virtual health.....	21, 22
Lung cancer screening	24-27
Statewide trauma services	28
Awards and recognition	31

President's Message

Welcome to the 2024 Report to the Community, showcasing Logan Health's impact in our communities. We take great pride in providing high-quality health care and bringing care close to home. Our commitment, however, goes beyond our hospitals' walls; it comes from a genuine desire to make a difference in every life we touch and every community we serve.

Through our community initiatives, events, activities and programs, our team members work very hard to share health education, serve the underserved, support community building activities and give back to our communities. In the following pages, you will find stories that highlight our efforts to prevent suicide, bring health care to our schools, provide specialty and emergency care to rural areas, offer innovative cancer screening and more.

The impact we make in our communities is palpable and it makes me very proud to serve this organization. We are not just a health care provider; we are a committed partner and advocate for our communities. Together, we can create a healthier future.



Kevin Abel

Co-CEO, Billings Clinic – Logan Health

President, Logan Health Medical Center and

Logan Health – Whitefish



Logan Health by the numbers 2023

448,969
Clinic Visits



10,045
Admissions

1,197
Births



Kalispell
Whitefish
Cut Bank
Conrad
Shelby
Chester

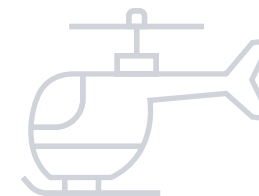


6 HOSPITALS
590 BEDS
68 CLINICS
4,514 EMPLOYEES
537 MEDICAL STAFF



27,052
Surgeries

47,539
ED Visits



548
A.L.E.R.T. Flights

5,484
EMS Transports



On Sept. 1, 2023, Billings Clinic and Logan Health united to create one health care system, serving patients across Montana and Wyoming. Two of Montana's oldest, largest and most comprehensive health care organizations combining is a historic event which brings great opportunities for enhanced health care across our region. With many shared values and a deep commitment to serving all residents of Montana and Wyoming when and where they need us, we look forward to both working together and advancing care throughout the broad geographic area we serve.



Community impact



150+

Number of community events Logan Health supports each year.

**\$2.4
Billion**

Total economic impact of Logan Health hospitals in the communities we serve.

100+

Number of community organizations Logan Health supports each year through donations, sponsorships, gifts-in-kind and volunteers.

**\$2.5
Million**

Total property taxes paid.



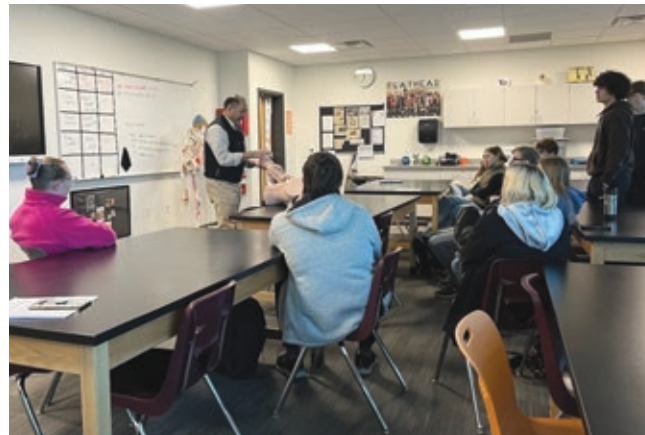
Columbia Falls High School HOSA students had the opportunity to hop into the ambulance, ask questions and explore all the emergency gear of the Logan Health EMS.

Community engagement

Logan Health maintains a rich tradition of giving back to the communities we serve. We are committed to promoting health, well-being and a caring spirit throughout our communities.



Employees at Logan Health – Whitefish adopted three families and delivered Christmas gifts through the Whitefish Rotary Club's "Magic of Christmas" program.



Board-certified OB/GYN, Dr. Thomas deHoop, added real-world insight to Flathead High School's bioscience classrooms.



With help from Gary & Leo's Fresh Foods IGA in Conrad, Montana, Logan Health provided each boys and girls basketball team with healthy snack boxes at the district tournament.



Logan Health's second annual CycleMT event expanded to the Hi-Line with events held in both Shelby and Kalispell, Montana.



Students from area high schools participated in the Hyped on Healthcare event, where they learned about the many different career paths within the health care fields.



As a part of the Kids on the Rise program, Logan Health donated over 1,000 pairs of new shoes to school districts across the state.



Logan Health Clinic – Shelby's team helped shed light on suicide awareness at Shelby High School boys' and girls' basketball games.



Hi-Line Logan Health facilities donate frozen turkeys and non-perishable food items to Great Falls Rescue Mission and local pantries before Thanksgiving.



Logan Health – Whitefish launches Fall Prevention Project. Ice cleats were distributed to high fall risk residents in Columbia Falls, Eureka and Whitefish.



Logan Health Medical Center hosted the inaugural Subzero Summit Emergency Symposium, a full day of educational presentations covering emergency medicine topics.



Logan Health Faith Community Nursing Program hosted the Strong People class, providing evidence-based strength training for midlife and older adults.



Logan Health joined the Whitefish Winter Carnival's Grand Parade.

*It's time to talk
openly and
honestly about
mental health.*



Isaac Fisher
Arlee, Montana

Let's talk about it

In 2023, Logan Health and Billings Clinic combined to form the largest Montana-based health organization. In doing so, they took on a challenge that has plagued Montana for decades. For more than 40 years, Montana has had one of the highest suicide rates in the United States. Thanks to collaborative efforts, the Let's Talk About It campaign, an initiative to dismantle the stigma surrounding mental health by encouraging an open dialogue on the subject, was born. The shared endeavor, symbolically mirroring the consolidation of Logan Health and Billings Clinic, united eastern and western Montana in a common cause against a shared adversary.

Montana's alarmingly high suicide rates are shaped by a variety of factors, some of which are beyond control. From the geographical challenges of altitude and isolation to socioeconomic disparities and cultural complexities, the landscape is daunting. Despite these obstacles, there is an opportunity to change how Montanans view mental health in society and create an environment of empathy and support.

One significant factor contributing to Montana's high suicide rates is the disproportionate presence of at-risk groups within its population. Veterans, middle-aged white men, and Native Americans all bear a heavy burden, experiencing suicide rates surpassing the national average. Geographical isolation and harsh environmental conditions prevalent in many regions heighten the feelings of loneliness and hopelessness, particularly among these vulnerable populations.

Additionally, Montana's youth suicide rate is troubling, as it is more than double the national average. According to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), suicide is the number one cause of preventable death for children aged 10-14. A 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey also indicated that 10.2% of all Montana students in grades 9-12 had made a suicide attempt.

The elderly also have higher suicide rates than average. Stigma has especially affected the Greatest Generation and Baby Boomer generations. These older adults tend to feel shame and embarrassment when talking about their struggles, and they often fear being labeled as mentally ill or unable to care for themselves. This stigma has led to many older adults suffering in silence. According to the Montana DPHHS, in 2021 the suicide rate for seniors (aged 65+) was 17 per 100,000. And it was 22.4 per 100,000 for those over 85.

These numbers indicate how dire the suicide situation has become and why it is necessary to take a stand as a state. These suicides of our friends, family members and neighbors are preventable, and together we can create an environment of empathy and understanding that encourages open conversation and promotes mental wellness. Nobody should have to suffer in silence. Together we can make a positive change in our communities.

In response to this crisis, awareness of available resources has become essential. The implementation of the 988 number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, as well as online resources like logan.org/LetsTalk, represents crucial steps in bridging the gap between individuals in crisis and the support they desperately need.



In February, Logan Health hosted a “Let’s Talk About It” basketball game at Carroll College in Helena to bring awareness to suicide prevention. Players added the names of people they know who have been affected by suicide to their shirts as a way to show why they take the pledge to talk openly and honestly about mental health struggles.





The biggest takeaways from this campaign are the importance of educating people on available resources and informing them on how to become an ally to those in need. There are five recommended steps in helping someone who is suicidal or going through some sort of mental health crisis:

1. TALK ABOUT IT:

Asking someone if they are thinking about killing themselves is not an easy question, but studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.

2. KEEP THEM SAFE:

Reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing or disabling the lethal means can make a difference.

3. BE THERE:

Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may, in fact, reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.

4. HELP THEM CONNECT:

Save the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (call or text 988) and the Crisis Text Line number (741741) in your phone so they are there if you need them. You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.

5. STAY CONNECTED:

Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. Studies have shown the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

Since its inception, the Let's Talk About It campaign has been at the forefront of igniting conversations about mental health across Montana. Through strategic partnerships with organizations like the Montana High School Association and the Frontier Conference, Billings Clinic – Logan Health has orchestrated a series of Let's Talk About It-themed basketball games at high schools and colleges. These events serve not only to raise awareness but also to foster a sense of community and support around the issue of suicide prevention.

Integral to the success of the campaign are the student athletes who have embraced its message wholeheartedly. Figures like Tommy Mellott from Montana State University, Dani Bartsch from the University of Montana, and Arlee Dunk Champion Isaac Fisher have lent their voices and platforms to championing this cause. By leveraging their influence and visibility, they help to amplify the campaign's reach and impact, inspiring others to join the conversation and break the silence surrounding mental health.

Looking ahead, the Let's Talk About It campaign remains committed to its mission of eradicating the stigma surrounding mental health and promoting open dialogue throughout Montana. By continuing to engage communities, empower individuals, and advocate for systemic change, Billings Clinic and Logan Health strive to create a future where conversations about mental health are not only encouraged but embraced openly and without reservation.

In the fight against Montana's suicide crisis, every conversation matters. Let's keep talking about it.

***Our best chance
at stopping
suicide is to
stop the stigma.***



Dani Bartsch
Helena, Montana

Enhancing access to care: Logan Health introduces new school-based mobile unit

Logan Health has taken a significant step towards improving access to health care for students, faculty and staff with the introduction of a new school-based mobile unit. This initiative, made possible by a generous \$500,000 donation from the Broussard Family Trust to the Logan Health Foundation, marks a pivotal moment in enhancing health care accessibility for underserved populations.

School-based health centers have long been recognized as an integral part of comprehensive health care strategies, aiming to address the physical and mental well-being of students and staff, while minimizing disruptions to education caused by health-related issues. These health centers offer a wide range of services, including preventive care, treatment for acute and chronic conditions and mental health support.

“Students succeed when they are at their healthiest, and this mobile unit represents a significant step in delivering quality health care directly within the school environment,” said Brittany Coburn, NP, director of the School-Based Health Center program. “Our mission is to reach communities that may not have a dedicated nurse or a place to provide care. Now, we can bring that care directly to them in their school.”

The new school-based mobile unit also represents an expansion of resources to rural communities where health care access might otherwise be limited. One of the primary beneficiaries of this initiative is the economically disadvantaged student population, many of whom live at or

below the poverty line. For these students, access to health care services can be particularly challenging due to the financial constraints and geographical barriers. By bringing health care directly to school campuses, Logan Health's mobile unit ensures immediate access to care, minimizing the impact of health issues on their well-being. In eliminating the need for extensive travel, the mobile unit also saves time for parents, reducing the likelihood of missed work or school days while ultimately promoting greater community engagement and academic continuity.

In addition, the mobile unit will address the needs of rural families who often face lengthy commutes to access health care services.

Logan Health partnered with NomadGCS, a local manufacturer specializing in mobile medical and health care vehicles, for the construction of the mobile unit. The unit was unveiled in the spring and will begin serving the West Valley, Marion and Kila communities. Outreach to additional communities will be scheduled in the following school year.

As Logan Health continues to prioritize accessibility and innovation in health care delivery, the introduction of the school-based mobile unit exemplifies this commitment to addressing the evolving needs of rural communities. By bringing quality health care directly to where it is needed most, Logan Health is not only transforming the lives of students and families, but also laying the groundwork for healthier, more resilient communities for generations to come.

[Learn more about Logan Health School-Based Health Centers at logan.org/schools.](https://logan.org/schools)



Logan Health's new school-based mobile unit travels to schools around the Flathead Valley to provide health care to students conveniently on their own campuses.

CycleMT: Pedaling towards healthier futures for Montana's children

Childhood should be about possibilities, not challenges. On March 2, 2024, the second annual CycleMT event hosted in Kalispell and Shelby, Montana, ignited a wave of support and solidarity for children battling medical hardships. This stationary bike relay event is more than just a fundraiser – it is a hopeful opportunity for families across Montana, bridging the gap for those facing challenges not covered by traditional means of funding.

With 24 teams comprised of Logan Health employees and community members from across the state, this year's event was a testament to the power of collective action. Pedaling with purpose, participants rode tirelessly to raise funds and awareness for Montana's youth experiencing medical hardships.

Over the past two years, more than \$220,000 in donations were raised through CycleMT to specifically aid families and children in need. Through the peer-to-peer fundraising efforts of the participants and the generous support of community sponsors, such as Town Pump, Glacier Bank, Stockman Bank and Summit Beverage, this event has become a driving force for change.

CycleMT's mission is a heartfelt expression of Logan Health's commitment to address the unmet needs of children and families across the state. Funds raised help families afford vital resources and therapies often overlooked by insurance, serving as a lifeline for children who need more to help them cope, overcome and excel through their medical hardships.

In 2023, Logan Health distributed funds to eight eligible applicants, benefiting their families with various items and resources, including adaptive tricycles to encourage better movement and ease joint pain; a therapy dog for comfort, safety and connection; therapy swings to help the child feel their body in space and understand their own physicality; and a bathroom remodel to allow a wheelchair-bound teen to become more independent.

"As we reflect on the success of this year's CycleMT event, we are overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from our Logan Health family, local sponsors, and the entire community," said Joe McClafferty, president of Logan Health Foundation. "We are immensely grateful to everyone who





participated, donated, and supported this meaningful event. CycleMT is about rallying together as a community to fill the resource gap and embrace those facing a challenging diagnosis. We are not only raising funds, but we are also wrapping our arms around our community, offering support, and demonstrating that no one faces these obstacles alone.”

Through the generosity of donors and the dedication of participants, CycleMT is an inspiring example of Montanans coming together to help their neighbors in need. In the spirit of unity, this event propels us towards a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of the obstacles they face. CycleMT is a reminder that true change begins with a single revolution – a single act of kindness that ripples outward, shaping healthier tomorrows for generations to come.

To learn more about CycleMT or to apply for funding, visit www.logan.org/cyclemt.



Traveling specialists deliver care statewide

The thriving Montana landscape spans more than 145,000 square miles, giving residents an abundance of space to enjoy but often distancing them from specialty providers. Because of this, those with complex health issues can feel isolated, especially if they have a chronic condition that requires regular care. Seeking out this care can come with many stressors, including travel, expense and even the side effects of untreated conditions. It is no wonder that these patients wish care would come to them. So, the Logan Health specialists do.

Logan Health has 15 outreach sites across western Montana, frequented by providers disciplined in nearly 30 specialties. Their expertise comes in all forms – pediatric, adult, maternal and more – and includes specialties of all kinds, from cardiology to orthopedics, to endocrinology. When services like these are absent, an area lacking health care professionals is at risk of turning into a medical desert – a region where a population has inadequate access to care. Logan Health providers are aware of this risk, and have resolved to help fill in those gaps. For them, this means taking time out of their busy schedules to make regular trips to our outreach clinics.

One of the areas where Logan Health outreach providers have been particularly active is the Hi-Line. Being far from major cities, patients in the Hi-Line region often have to travel hours to visit a specialty clinic. In addition, as these towns have a higher average age than most in Montana, older patients may find it difficult or even impossible to coordinate their

Thomas deHoop, MD, travels from Kalispell to Logan Health – Shelby to provide OB/GYN care. Photo from health documentary Siloed by Hazel Cramer.

care across such a distance. Luckily, the Logan Health facilities in Cut Bank, Conrad, Shelby and Chester host visiting specialists often. As a result, they have seen improved outcomes, personalized care and much higher patient satisfaction.

Logan Health – Shelby was the first critical access hospital to bring general surgery and OB/GYN care to the area with Stephen Milheim, MD, and long-time outreach provider Thomas deHoop, MD. They both have committed to providing outreach care in an effort to further serve their patients.

“It has been a joy to bring OB/GYN care to the Hi-Line in Shelby. I have patients call our office in Kalispell for an appointment, and they are so happy to hear that they can see me in Shelby rather than travel,” deHoop said, “They are always so thankful that we are willing to come to them.”

Dr. Milheim is just as enthusiastic, “Providing outpatient general surgical services for the east side critical access hospitals has been a real joy for me for the past two years. Saving patients hours of driving and providing personalized, safe and efficient care gives our surgical team a real sense of satisfaction.” The Hi-Line’s access to care only continues to improve as more specialty providers join the outreach teams for their facilities.

Another key need across the state is access to care from pediatric subspecialty providers. Traveling subspecialists Claire Steinberg, CPNP-PC, BC-ADM, and Katie Flass, PA-C, drive regularly to outreach clinics to see their patients for endocrinology care. Claire drives from the Missoula area to Helena, and Katie travels from Kalispell to Great Falls. Considering local specialists can be hard to find in Montana, pediatric subspecialists like Claire and Katie are even more rare. “Children deserve to have subspecialty care,” Claire said. “They deserve providers that are both trained in pediatrics and trained to help them with their unique health conditions.” For Katie and Claire, being present in the clinic for their patients is priceless, and the best

gift of all is being able to come alongside them on their journey. “Getting to know my patients and their families is really fun,” Katie said. “They’re really personable, sweet families, so it’s a pleasure to take care of them.”

The breadth of this big sky country gives Montanans the responsibility to care for each other and serve the communities across the state. Logan Health’s vision is that every Montanan would receive the care they need, and that goal requires a collective effort. In this way, Logan Health is exceedingly proud of its providers, leaders and staff who are compassionate and committed to this endeavor. As specialty services continue to expand in the state, the outlook is bright that Montanans will have easier access to care to thrive wherever they may be.



General surgeon Stephen Milheim, MD, FACS, with a new laparoscopy machine at Logan Health – Shelby.

Supporting survivors of sexual assault

It takes a unique set of skills to navigate the sensitive process needed to provide support for a person who has been sexually assaulted. Because emergency rooms are typically the first health care facility to encounter survivors of a sexual assault, Logan Health established a SANE – sexual assault nurse examiners – program at Logan Health Medical Center (LHMC) in Kalispell.

Only a handful of hospitals in Montana offer 24-hour service for sexual assault examinations, and rural communities are especially underserved, as the closest location to an examination could be hours away. Logan Health's SANE program serves a vast region, collaborating with health and law enforcement agencies all over northwest Montana.

“We will see cases from as far away as Polson, Libby, Eureka and all along the Hi-Line region and as far as Great Falls,” said Anna Wilson, RN, the SANE program coordinator. “We collaborate with the agencies where the victims are from to ensure that they have the forensic evidence they need.”

The program is made up of seven Logan Health nurses who are specifically trained in providing trauma-informed care and forensic evidence collection. Each nurse takes an on-call shift to ensure that service can be provided 24-hours a day, seven days a week, with a response time within an hour.

These nurses have backgrounds in several specialties from emergency medicine to obstetrics and surgical services. However, when they are on-call, they all have the same role: providing careful and compassionate care to sexual assault patients.

When a victim arrives at LHMC, they are brought to a private room within the emergency department for their examination. Purposefully designed for the SANE program, this room provides the patient with privacy from other emergency patients. Nurses use a CortexFlo, a camera that captures advanced imaging with data analysis, a state-of-the-art tool for collecting forensic evidence. After the exam, there is a private shower available for the patient.

Logan Health is committed to providing care to survivors of sexual assault, and their goal is to provide this service at no cost to the patient. They will work with different resources to exhaust all options of payment, so the patient does not receive a bill.

With the recent passage of House Bill 79, Montana's legislature will establish a statewide network to support sexual assault survivors. Logan Health's SANE program will have guidance on the standardization of care and will collaborate with other SANE programs within Montana.

“One of our big initiatives is to one day have a tele-SANE program, which would allow us to virtually reach hospitals in rural locations and help walk nurses there through the evidence collection process,” said Wilson. “That would save the patient from having to drive a long distance to get this service. With the state's coordination, we can hopefully make things better for the patient. It is a challenging role, but it's so important to the community.”



Logan Health Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners pose in front of the Emergency Department in Kalispell with the CortexFlo camera.



Virtual health removes barriers to care

It is easy to imagine all of the circumstances that may prevent patients from receiving the care they need: unexpected weather conditions, transportation barriers, childcare challenges, and even work-related concerns. These common situations often mean patients must delay their care or put off receiving any care at all, causing problems down the road. In an effort to expand access to quality health care across the state, Logan Health's virtual health services provide another option. Virtual health is a way of accessing care that accounts for the realities of life and meets patients where they are, improving access for everyone.

Logan Health's virtual services continue to expand, now offering many ways to connect with a provider virtually, including through home-based appointments, on-demand care and after-hours pediatric care. Scheduled home-based visits are the typical virtual care experience and can be a great option when providers are far away. For those who need prompt care for common concerns, such as sickness, pink eye, rashes or medication refills, Logan Health On-Demand Virtual Care connects them with a provider right away to resolve those issues. Likewise, Logan Health partners with the platform Montana Pediatrics to provide parents with after-hours pediatric

care from Montana-based providers. With all of these options, the right care is just a click away.

Removing barriers to care is not just convenient. It greatly improves the lives of our patients. **In 2023, Logan Health hosted roughly 18,000 virtual visits, saving a grand total of 2.4 million miles of travel and \$400,000 in fuel.** Logan Health On-Demand hosted 400 visits, and 65 of those patients reported that they wouldn't have received care anywhere else if the virtual services had not been available. Patients were also pleased with the setup, and 85% of them said they would recommend virtual care to their friends and family. With experience using our intuitive platforms, patients of all ages expressed that the method of connecting was easy, contradicting the misconception that virtual care is only used by younger patients. In fact, the oldest telehealth patient served last year was 98 years old. Patients of all ages are pleased with this new way of receiving care, and their providers are just as excited.

Lauren Gary, FNP-C, is one of more than 300 clinicians who provides telehealth services through Logan Health Virtual Care. She has seen firsthand how this new kind of care changes patients' lives. "I started offering telehealth visits about four years ago and quickly fell in love with how easy and convenient it was for my patients. It allows our remote patients to have easier access to care, and for families with young children, it makes visits less stressful. For those with elderly patients or loved ones, it removes the complexity of getting them to and from the office."

Another benefit of virtual care is flexible scheduling. "In my opinion, the best thing about telehealth is the opportunity to be more available for my patients," said Lauren. "This allows them to get in sooner, discuss their specific health needs, and most importantly, get them feeling better faster."

Patients have expressed so much gratitude to providers like Lauren for these services. "I did not feel like going to an urgent care," one patient

wrote. "My doctor listened and was a compassionate provider. The nurses rocked. They gave me assurance and walked me through the connection process. Thank you for offering this type of care."

Some loved that it helped them reclaim their time, "I love not having to drive over an hour round trip to have a check up and blood review!" Others were in situations where care would normally be inaccessible, "I was out camping, got sick, and was able to connect with my doctor. It was very convenient and allowed me to get the medications I needed." All patients knew that their care was important and that they mattered. "This really feels more patient-centered. Thank you for making it easier to get care."

In all of these ways and more, virtual health is eliminating the boundaries and barriers of receiving essential care. By improving access, patients save resources, have a more comfortable experience and get back to what matters in life. The providers and staff at Logan Health are excited to offer this new level of care and see it expand to meet the needs of patients all over the state.



A life saving problem:

How an incidental finding saved a life

When Paul Uken met with his primary care provider in September 2023, he knew there was something wrong. Not long before, he had encountered a urologic issue and was worried he was bleeding internally. His doctor ordered a CT scan of his bladder and kidneys to determine if there were any abnormalities. The scan did not indicate any issue with either the bladder or the kidneys, but it did catch something else. The image picked up the lower part of the lungs, and a small lung nodule looked problematic. While still very small, growth of these nodules often indicates cancer.

By all accounts, Paul was a health-conscious man. The 76-year-old had quit drinking alcohol and smoking in 1995 and 1996, respectively. He had also survived a bout with prostate cancer thanks to his decision to do proactive screenings. During his battle with prostate cancer, a scan noticed the same lung nodule, but at the time, it was deemed not a major risk. However, this time around, it appeared to have grown. His doctor recommended a closer look.

Paul was referred to Logan Health Heart & Lung for further testing, where Bethany Weiler, MD, a pulmonologist with the clinic, ordered a second CT scan, this time of Paul's lungs. Because of his history with cancer and elevated risk level, he was placed into Logan Health's High Risk Pulmonary Nodule Clinic, which prioritizes patients with high-risk cases to expedite their treatment plan.

Just months earlier, Logan Health had added the Ion Endoluminal System, a minimally invasive robotic-assisted platform used to biopsy lung tissue, even in the outermost parts of the lung. This new, state-of-the-art technology would allow much greater reach than ever before and the ability to diagnose even the smallest cases of lung cancer.

"Dr. Weiler explained that they were going to go in and mark the nodule using GPS technology," Paul recalled. "Then they had this entire system developed to follow that marking. That was so cool how they were able to do that." The Ion uses a biopsy marker feature, which allows the physician to track exactly where the nodule in question is.

After having the lung tissue biopsied, Paul received the news he had been expecting. "They knew it was going to be malignant," he recalled. "The CT scan showed that the nodule had feelers coming off it, which indicated cancer. So, I kind of knew what was coming." Paul was diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer. "Lung cancer has always been in the back of my mind," he continued. "I used tobacco – smoking and chew – for more than 30 years. So, it was always something I knew was a possibility." While the news of cancer dealt a blow to Paul, Dr. Weiler instilled optimism because of how early it was caught.

Unlike many other cancers, lung cancer does not cause symptoms until the later stages, when it has already spread. So, the fact that the cancer was incidentally picked up in stage 1 was extremely lucky for Paul. With such an early diagnosis, time was of the essence.

Thanks to Paul's priority level within the High-Risk Pulmonary Nodule Clinic, he was scheduled for surgery with Dr. Luis Alberton, thoracic surgeon at Logan Health, within a week. "It was all very fast after that," he said. "One week I'm being diagnosed with lung cancer and the next week I'm on the operating table."



Paul Uken (left) and Rennie Corrigan in November 2023.

An infographic on a dark blue background featuring a wireframe illustration of a human torso. The lungs are highlighted with a more detailed, interconnected node-and-line pattern. Three white circular markers are placed on the left side of the image, with white lines extending from them to the right, framing three text boxes. The top box is connected to the upper right lung area, the middle box to the center of the lung, and the bottom box to the lower left lung area.

Third

most common cancer diagnosis
in the United States

Nearly half

of all lung cancers are diagnosed
at stage 3 or 4

Incidence of those who will be diagnosed
with lung cancer in the next 12 months:

- **Nationally – 35 out of 100,000**
- **Montana – 45 out of 100,000**
- **Flathead Valley – 70 out of 100,000**

Dr. Alberton conducted a lobectomy, removing the cancerous portion of Paul's lung. The procedure was conducted using the da Vinci robotic surgical system, a minimally invasive platform. Using this technology, Dr. Alberton, one of the region's most renowned robotic surgeons, was able to operate through small incisions between Paul's ribs. With this technique, there was no need to break or spread the ribs, thus allowing for a far quicker recovery time for Paul.

"What I found absolutely remarkable was his recovery," said Rennie Corrigan, Paul's significant other. "Within two weeks he was playing nine holes of golf. Another week later, he played eighteen holes and came home and started bagging leaves. The recovery time was amazing!"

"The first couple weeks I noticed a difference," said Paul. "There was certainly difficulty taking deep breaths, which was to be expected since



Drs. Luis Alberton and Bethany Weiler pose with their team following the first ever Ion robotic bronchoscopy case at Logan Health Medical Center in June 2023.

part of the lung was removed. But now, I feel like my lung power is pretty much back to where it was before the surgery."

Paul admitted that he was lucky that the cancer was caught when it was. If not for an incidental urologic issue (a condition that was later cleared by his urologist), his lung cancer would not have been found early. It probably would have been discovered in a later stage, increasing the chances of it being fatal.

"If there were to be one takeaway from my story, it would be that lung cancer screening is necessary to see what is going on in there," said Paul. "If that hadn't happened, there would've been no way to see what was there and they never would've caught my cancer."

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends yearly lung cancer screening with low dose CT scan for those who meet all the following criteria:

- Age 50-80
- Have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history
- Smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years

A pack-year is smoking on average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-year history by smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.

If you are at risk, ask your health care provider for a referral, or call Logan Health Lung Cancer Nodule Clinic at (406) 751-5392.

Providing statewide trauma services close to home

You do not get to choose when an emergency happens, so having lifesaving trauma care and resources available nearby is critical. And with a highly rural population sometimes living hundreds of miles from the nearest trauma center, trauma survival rates in Montana are lower than much of the rest of the country.

When Billings Clinic and Logan Health united in 2023 to create a Montana-based, independent health system, one of the primary goals was to create a statewide complex care network to serve residents no matter where they live. A key part of those unified services is the combined expertise, teams and resources of two of Montana's largest trauma centers, creating a statewide trauma network.

Combined, their Emergency Departments – where nearly every trauma patient first enters the hospital – treat about 80,000 patients annually. These are patients that come from all 56 counties in Montana and many surrounding states.

Logan Health operates a Level III Trauma Center in Kalispell and is designated by the State of Montana as an area trauma hospital. The full team offers a suite of multi-specialty services and comprehensive trauma care.

In August of 2023, Billings Clinic became Montana's first American College of Surgeons verified Level I Trauma Center and the state's first comprehensive trauma center. This means that Billings Clinic has shown that it provides system leadership and the highest level of comprehensive trauma care for all injuries, and that it has the right people and resources to do so effectively and consistently.

Getting to someone in need quickly also helps save lives. That is why both Billings Clinic and Logan Health offer emergency air transportation services that can rapidly bring skilled emergency providers across the region. Logan Health's Advance Life-Support and Emergency Rescue Team (A.L.E.R.T.) air ambulance service utilizes an airplane and a helicopter, while Billings Clinic's MedFlight operates an airplane out of Billings and a helicopter out of Bozeman. These serve as a mobile ICU or emergency department while a patient is taken to the hospital and both transport about 1,500 patients annually.

Having these resources and programs available means that patients across Montana and northern Wyoming have top-notch trauma care available close to home. Patients and their families can stay closer to home to get the care they need, when they need it.

But the services extend far beyond the hospitals' walls. Education and training are also key parts of Billings Clinic and Logan Health's commitment to trauma care. This includes working with a regional trauma network that connects facilities throughout Montana and Wyoming. This allows facilities to share resources and expertise, with specialized training at rural facilities from trauma specialists, so that much of that lifesaving care can be administered before a patient needs transport. Additionally, community education from both teams helps to spread awareness, train people in lifesaving care, and provide injury prevention education to the general public.

As the trauma needs of the region continue to grow, Billings Clinic and Logan Health are committed to enhancing services and keeping trauma care close to home.





2023 AWARDS ★ AND ★ RECOGNITION

The annual Logan Health Kids triathlon is for children 4-13 years of age who want to compete in a triathlon.



Logan Health Medical Center was named **2024 Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital** by the Chartis Center for Rural Health



Logan Health – Whitefish received a **5-star overall rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** and a 5-star rating in patient experience



Logan Health Medical Center earned **Top Hospital Designation for Community Investment** from the Lown Institute



Logan Health received American College of Cardiology's 2023 Chest Pain **MI Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award**



Logan Health – Conrad and Logan Health Medical Center each earned the **EON Center of Excellence Award**



2023 Performance Leadership Award for excellence by The Chartis Center for Rural Health

Quality:

Logan Health – Chester
and
Logan Health – Conrad

Outcomes:

Logan Health
Medical Center

Patient Perspective:

Logan Health – Whitefish





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