

Health Connect



ANTELOPE VALLEY
HOSPITAL

A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

A community newsletter from Antelope Valley Hospital

Fall 2016



**Comprehensive Community
Cancer Center at AVH**
Saving lives one patient at a time

ROBOTIC SURGERY:
THE NEWEST FRONTIER

IT'S FLU SEASON
TAKE STEPS NOW TO STAY HEALTHY



In this issue

- 2 Message From the Chairman of the Board
- 2 Nike Donates Baby Shoes to Honor Local Olympian
- 3 It's Flu Season
Take steps now to stay healthy
- 4 What is a Hospitalist?
The care of hospital patients is their specialty
- 5 Robotic Surgery:
The Newest Frontier
- 6 Comprehensive Community Cancer Center
Saving lives one patient at a time
- 8 Message From the CEO
- 8 AVH Earns National Recognition for Raising Awareness of Organ Donation
- 9 Helping Young People Make Appropriate Choices
- 10 Hospital Highlights
- 11 AVH Foundation Gala Lights Up the Night
- 12 Join Our Team of Volunteers



Good Things Happening for AVH and Our Community

If you've been seeing some changes and improvements at Antelope Valley Hospital, it's not your imagination. This summer we installed new incubators and isolettes in our Women's and Infants Pavilion and also added 60 new state-of-the-art patient beds. We are also in the process of significantly updating our patient monitoring system in both the emergency department and the ICU as a way to enhance both clinical care as well as the overall patient experience.

But more than just looking back, I have tremendous anticipation for all of the good things to come. For example, we will soon begin the process of converting to an entirely new information system to help better ensure efficiency and accuracy throughout the hospital. We're also looking at how we can touch even more of our local residents through expanded health fairs, community outreach programs, and taking better advantage of online communication to share important health information.

Perhaps most significantly, we're working hard to address the tremendous volume in our emergency department, which is the second busiest in all of Los Angeles County with more than 120,000 patient visits annually. Here we are exploring everything from remodel and expansion to increased staffing to improving basic communication between staff and patients (and their families).

Our new advertising campaign says, "If you think you know Antelope Valley Hospital, think again." I would encourage you to do just that because building on your continued support over these past 60 years, I know that the best is yet to come.

Doddanna Krishna, M.D.
Chairman of the Board

Nike Donates Baby Shoes to Honor Local Olympian

Palmdale native **Paul George** helped Team USA win gold at the Olympics in Rio this summer. To honor this achievement, Nike donated 30 pairs of baby shoes to babies born at Antelope Valley Hospital. The shoes came with an inspirational message that encouraged babies to achieve greatness one day.





It's Flu Season

Take steps now to stay healthy

Flu season is here, and that means it's time to take steps to safeguard your health and the health of your loved ones. The Centers for Disease Control recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. In addition to a flu vaccine, other common sense precautions you can take to prevent the spread of flu and other illnesses include:

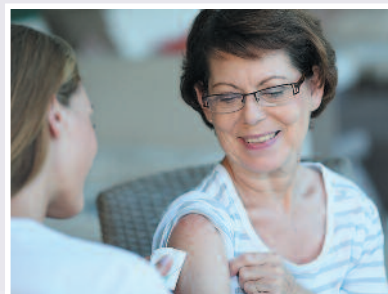


- Avoid close contact with people who appear to be ill, such as those who are coughing or sneezing.
- If you are sick, limit contact with others to prevent infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and don't reuse it. Throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are easily contaminated such as doorknobs, light switches and faucets.



If you do contract the flu, antiviral drugs can make your symptoms less severe and shorten the time you are sick. These drugs work best when they are started within two days of getting sick. See your doctor for a prescription if you think you have come down with the flu.

And remember: The best way to prevent the spread of germs at any time of year – not just flu season – is frequent handwashing using soap and water. If soap and water are not available, the next best thing is an alcohol-based antibacterial hand lotion. By following these simple tips, you stand a much better chance of staying healthy this flu season.



SAVE THE DATE

Free Flu Shots on November 9

AVH will once again offer free flu shots to the community at a drive-thru flu clinic on Wednesday, November 9, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the City of Hope front parking lot. Adults only, 18 years and older. Supplies are limited. Vaccines will be administered on a first-come, first-served basis.



What is a Hospitalist?

The care of hospital patients is their specialty

When most people think of a physician specialist, they tend to think either by medical specialty (cancer, heart, kidney, etc.) or age (pediatric, geriatric, etc.). However, there is a third kind of specialist – those who are “site specific,” such as working in the emergency department or in critical care. The fastest growing of all of these specialists are “hospitalists.”

Hospitalists are doctors whose primary professional focus is the general medical care of hospitalized patients. Antelope Valley Hospital is fortunate to have both a general hospitalist group on staff as well as a hospitalist group focused specifically on obstetrics.

Because these physicians are specially trained in hospital care, they bring expertise in the care of common inpatient disorders far beyond what a traditional family practice physician or other generalist provides. As a result, hospitalists are able to recognize patients requiring special attention, anticipate problems, and rapidly respond to crises and changes in a patient’s condition.

There are many other advantages for the patient that hospitalists bring as well. For example, because hospitalists have no private office practice to juggle, they are more available to speak with patients and their families throughout the day or to order and review

test results and facilitate efficient care. Hospitalists also improve the communication in “shift handoffs” between day and evening nursing, and that helps provide better continuity of care for the patient. And hospitalists have been shown to better facilitate connections with post-hospital discharge providers such as home health, skilled nursing, specialized rehabilitation and others.

Ironically, hospitalists are good for patients who aren’t hospitalized as well. Because of their very presence, primary care physicians are able to spend more time with their patients in their office – rather than running back and forth to the hospital. This is particularly important today as advances in medical technology have made it possible for more and more care to be delivered in the physician’s office. Working with a hospitalist provides the primary care physician the ability to focus their attention in this area and thus better master these needed outpatient skills – all with the confidence in knowing that their hospitalized patients are receiving the best care possible from specialists in that field.

Today every major medical center in the country has hospitalists as an important part of their care and quality team. Antelope Valley Hospital is no exception.



Robotic Surgery:

The Newest Frontier

Physicians at Antelope Valley Hospital perform nearly 8,000 surgeries each year. These doctors are supported by an exceptional team of specially trained anesthesiologists, registered nurses, technologists and other professionals as well as by the latest operating room technology available.

One of the highlights of AVH's operating room is the nationally acclaimed *da Vinci*® Surgical Robot – often simply referred to as “Robotic Surgery.” Physicians receive special training before using the *da Vinci* system, but what it can do and how it does it is truly amazing. Here's how it works:

- A very small 3D camera and tiny surgical instruments are placed inside the patient through small incisions. The camera gives the surgeon a magnified 360-degree view of the operative field.
- Throughout the robotic surgery the surgeon sits at a special console.
- Using the console's hand and foot controls, the surgeon remotely moves robotic arms attached to the surgical instruments.

Because robotic surgery is a minimally invasive technique, incisions are smaller and there is less blood loss resulting in fewer complications. Patients also

benefit by having minimal scarring and a quicker return to daily activities.

The cutting-edge technology of the *da Vinci* allows AVH to offer robotic surgery for urologic; gynecologic; and ear, nose and throat concerns. The hospital is also one of the few in the Los Angeles area to have specialized oral equipment that attaches to the robot, allowing surgeons to perform Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS) on the head and neck. TORS can be used to remove tumors on the throat, voice box, base of the tongue or tonsils.

“Previously patients undergoing this surgery required a hospital stay of a week or more, but that is no longer the case. Thanks to robotic surgery many of these cases can be done on an outpatient basis,” says Satish Vadapalli, M.D., who performs these surgeries on a regular basis at AVH. “TORS can also be used for a 30-minute surgery to treat sleep apnea. Patients who undergo the procedure are ‘back to normal’ in one week.”

For more information on surgical services at AVH, visit avhospital.org/services/surgery.



Satish Vadapalli, M.D.

Comprehensive Community Cancer Center at AVH

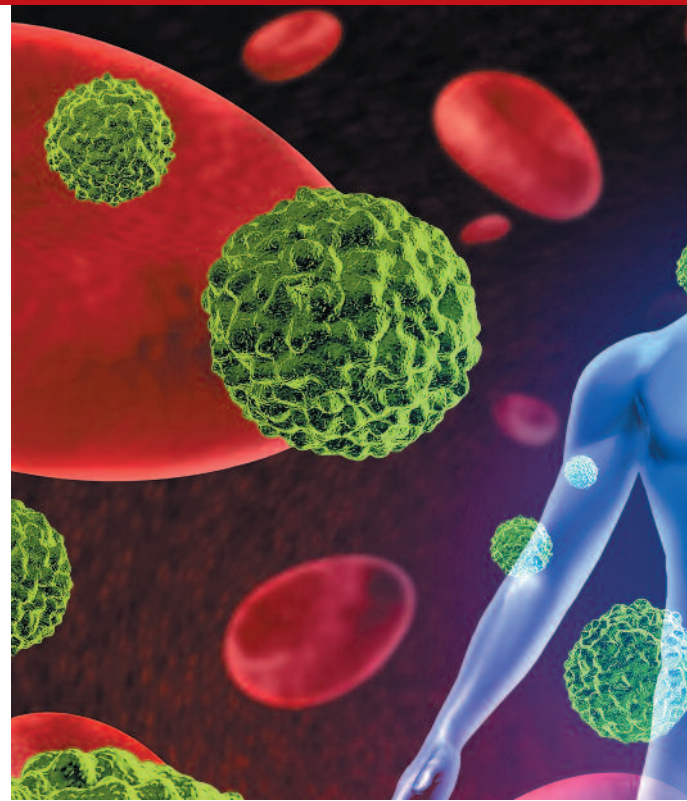
Saving lives one patient at a time

They are the three words that no one wants to hear: “You have cancer.” And in the moments after those words are said, life changes for everyone who hears them.

Cancer is a complex disease that ranks as the second leading cause of death in the U.S. But the good news is that thanks to scientific breakthroughs in treatments and advancements in technology, more people than ever before are surviving cancer.

To continue the fight against cancer, Antelope Valley Hospital works in partnership with City of Hope’s world-class oncology specialists to offer the community a cancer program that has earned national accreditation from the Commission on Cancer, a multi-disciplinary program of the American College of Surgeons. AVH is the only hospital in the area to receive this prestigious designation.

For patients’ care and peace of mind, the designation as a National Comprehensive Community Cancer Center is significant. It means AVH has demonstrated that it continuously meets or exceeds specific quality standards of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered cancer care.



The hospital offers a broad array of cancer-related services along the entire continuum of care, from screening and prevention to diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. The cancer team also engages in lifelong follow-up of patients to track recurrent disease and end-of-life care. Information about clinical trials, genetic counseling, psycho-social support and survivorship services are also available as part of the comprehensive cancer program.

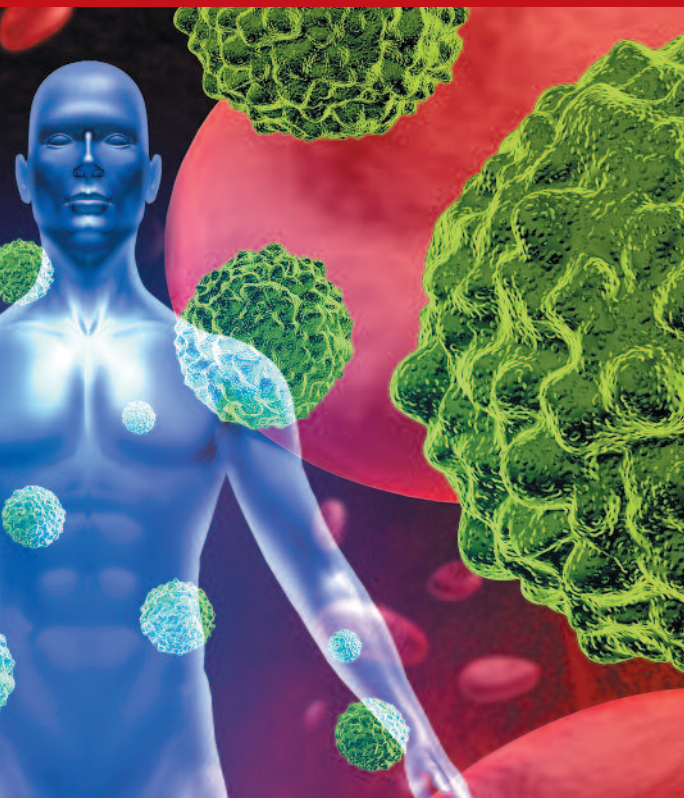
In addition, AVH offers a free support system for cancer patients that helps improve access to healthcare information, reduce the number of delayed and missed appointments, and results in improved patient care and better outcomes.

When it comes to cancer, residents in the Antelope Valley have a powerful ally in the treatment of malignancies of all kinds. And those are fighting words that anyone touched by cancer would welcome.

Pictured left: Cancer Program Coordinator Patricia Karnstedt, RN, MSN, OCN, (left) and Cancer Patient Navigator Michelle Paez.

Pictured right: Cancer survivor Amanda Bailey with her children, Vincent and Viktoria.





“Because oncology has become so specialized, connecting cancer patients with the services they need, when they need them, is an important service,” notes AVH Cancer Program Coordinator Patricia Karnstedt, RN, MSN, OCN. “AVH offers the expertise of a patient navigator to guide patients to their visits with medical and radiation oncologists, surgeons, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists, and other cancer specialists.”

Support Makes a Difference During Cancer Treatment

In early 2015 local resident Amanda Bailey was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. She knew right away she wanted to be treated at City of Hope Antelope Valley. Before her chemotherapy could begin, Amanda suffered a blood clot and was admitted to Antelope Valley Hospital. That’s where she met Michelle Paez, the hospital’s cancer patient navigator who provides supportive services to AVH patients throughout their cancer journey.

“Michelle was amazing,” says Amanda. “She made the process a lot easier for me.”

During Amanda’s three-day stay as an inpatient at AVH, she had her first chemotherapy treatment. She continued her treatment as an outpatient at City of Hope where she had chemotherapy every two weeks for five months.

During that time Michelle continued to check up on her. “She would check on me even after I was discharged,” says Amanda. “When I had challenges with insurance, she would call and handle things. I would call her, and she would say she was going to call me right back. She would work things out, and call me right back. Her follow-up was amazing. Insurance is the last thing you should have to worry about when you’re trying to get better. It’s hard on the family, too. She made less to worry about.”

Amanda also had great support from her fiancé, Jesus, and her parents, one of whom would always be with her during her treatments. When she started losing her long hair, she decided to shave her head. “My 6-year-old son, Vincent, didn’t want me to do it, but when I told him it was something I had to do, he and my 3-year-old daughter, Viktoria, wanted to help. That made shaving my head easier – it was a family affair.”

Amanda is grateful for the treatment she received at Antelope Valley Hospital and City of Hope. Now cancer-free, she enjoys spending time camping and going to the beach with Jesus and their kids.

“You have to decide right away when you’re diagnosed that you’re not going to lay down,” she says to other cancer patients. “I feel very blessed that I got the best care in the world.”





Making Healthcare Special: Our Pledge to You

Hospitals have often been described as a place where “high tech” and “high touch” come together like nowhere else. Certainly this is true at Antelope Valley Hospital where the combination of these two essentials allows us to continue to deliver the highest quality care to our community.

This issue of *HealthConnect* is a stunning example of what this combination is all about – from the high-tech wonderment of robotic surgery to the high-touch personalization of pet therapy to our nationally accredited cancer center, which brings together the best of both. But what makes both of these possible?

High tech requires a hospital to have the dollars it needs to purchase and provide the latest state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment equipment. That is why in this issue we salute and say “thank you” to our generous donors who joined together last month in a memorable gala at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. We need their support – and the support of others like them – to continue to be the best we can be.

High touch means hiring from the heart and making sure that everyone who wears an AVH badge knows the special responsibility and trust they carry. This includes the nurse who not only helps heal a patient’s physical wounds but takes the time to appreciate the emotional scars that often come with an injury or illness. It is the therapist who understands how his or her aging patient feels a helplessness that can be eased with a gracious smile. It is the transport team that offers an encouraging word, the pharmacist who cares about precision, and the volunteer who helps assure the family that somebody cares.

High tech and high touch are what makes healthcare special. And providing it is our pledge to you and your family every day of the year.

John Rossfeld
Chief Executive Officer



AVH Earns National Recognition for Raising Awareness of Organ Donation

Nearly 22,000 California residents are waiting to receive lifesaving hearts, livers, lungs, kidneys and other organs. However, there are not enough donors to meet the growing need, which is why 18 people die every day in the U.S. waiting for an organ transplant. The national waiting list currently holds more than 123,000 people.

“Organ and tissue donation is an incredible gift,” said Denise Scott, education specialist, critical care services at Antelope Valley Hospital. “Joining the donor registry gives hope to those in need while leaving a legacy of generosity for the donor and his or her family.”

Antelope Valley Hospital is among a select group of hospitals nationwide that was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for its work in promoting enrollment in California’s organ donor registry. In 2015 AVH was recognized as the top-performing hospital for organ donation by OneLegacy, the organ and tissue recovery organization serving 240 hospitals in the seven-county greater Los Angeles area. Along with that recognition AVH received a \$10,000 grant from OneLegacy to build a donor memorial.

“Medical professionals do everything they can to save lives, and the doctors who work to save your life are not the same doctors involved with organ donation,” says Scott. “It is only after every attempt has been made to save a life that the appropriate medical professionals review a patient’s medical and social history to determine if they are a candidate for donation.”

Throughout the organ donation process at AVH, the donor’s body is treated with respect and dignity with the recovery of organs conducted in an operating room by qualified surgeons or qualified recovery personnel. To learn more about organ donation or to register to become a donor, go to www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org.

Helping Young People Make Appropriate Choices



In the early morning hours of April 20, 2014, Giselle Mendoza, a 16-year-old high school student, was at home sleeping when fate took a tragic twist: a young man driving under the influence lost control of his car and crashed into the family's apartment, killing Giselle instantly.

The senseless tragedy sent grief and shock waves throughout the close-knit Palmdale community. Miguel Coronado, an educator in the Antelope Valley Unified School District, began raising funds to bury Giselle, since her grieving family did not have the funds to do so. Another caring individual, Dr. Doddanna Krishna, chairman of the board of directors at Antelope Valley Hospital, was determined to help ensure that such a devastating loss never happened again. Dr. Krishna asked Miguel to help him find a way to educate area youth on the real dangers of drugs and alcohol and the toll they take on the community.

"Dr. Krishna appointed me as chairman of an AVH subcommittee on alcohol, drugs and tobacco awareness and tasked me with forming a committee to address this issue," says Miguel. He invited prominent city leaders to join him on the committee, and together they created the program called Making Appropriate Choices (MAC).

"We didn't want to tell kids *what* to do, we wanted to raise awareness on the effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco so kids can make their own choices," Miguel says. He coordinated with the principal of Cole Middle School in east Lancaster, Francisco Pinto, and instructor Rick McMahan to meet with about 30 students once a week during their lunch period. The students were encouraged to make appropriate choices, get good grades, and avoid getting into trouble. At the end of the school year, the students were rewarded with certificates and a trip to Six Flags Magic Mountain. So far two groups of students have completed MAC.

The program has been so well received that MAC is now being taught as a regular class at Cole Middle School.

"We're hoping MAC equips kids to make the right choices," says Dr. Krishna, who arranged for AVH's support of the program, that includes providing the tickets for Six Flags and coordinating the awards ceremony. "If we save even one life, then Giselle will not have perished in vain."

MAC Committee Members

Miguel Coronado, Ed.D.
Planning Commissioner
City of Lancaster

Sergeant Theresa Dawson
Lancaster Sheriff's Station

Officer Gil Hernandez
California Highway Patrol

Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Eastside Union School District

Rick McMahan
Teacher
Cole Middle School

Francisco Pinto
Principal
Cole Middle School

Liza Rodriguez
Criminal Justice Commissioner
City of Lancaster

Angela Underwood-Jacobs
Council Member
City of Lancaster

Hospital Highlights

Pet Therapy is Great Medicine

Shaking a paw or petting a friendly pup can be great medicine. Pet therapy has been used for decades to provide patients with relief from long days or weeks in the hospital. The therapy dogs at AVH bring smiles to the faces of our patients and staff during their visits. The dogs and their handlers are trained volunteers, and we are grateful for their service.



Oncology Department Dedicated to Dr. Shamasunder

The AVH oncology department was recently dedicated to **Hesaraghatta Krishna Rao Shamasunder, M.D.**, in recognition of his lifelong contributions to our cancer patients. The ceremony was attended by his family, physicians, nurses and hospital staff. Pictured here is one of “Dr. Sham’s” granddaughters.



Screening for Skin Cancer

Tess Iriarte, NP-C, from AVH Community Clinic, examines Palmdale resident **Pam Metzgus** at a free skin cancer screening event sponsored by Antelope Valley Hospital and City of Hope. In addition to the free screenings, the event included a bounce house for kids, food trucks and educational presentations by City of Hope physicians.



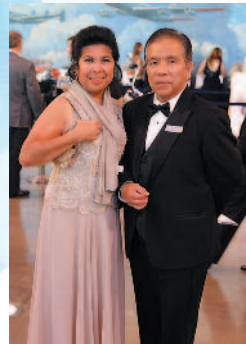
Thanks to all who “Walked a Mile in Her Shoes” to Support AVH

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event on September 10. More than 300 people joined the walk, including Palmdale Mayor **Jim Ledford**, Assemblyman **Tom Lackey**, Deputy District Attorney **Lyle Riggs**, Lancaster Sheriff’s Station Captain **Patrick Nelson**, Palmdale Sheriff’s Station Captain **Dennis Kneer** and L.A. County Assistant Fire Chief **Gerald Cosey**. The annual event raises awareness about all types of violence as a community health issue in the Antelope Valley.

Gala Lights Up the Night

More than 350 people attended the Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation's annual gala last month at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley. Between ticket sales, the silent and live auctions, and in-kind gifts, the event raised more than \$175,000

to support the hospital's emergency department. We were honored to once again have Congressman **Steve Knight** serve as master of ceremonies.



HealthConnect

Fall 2016

HealthConnect is published by the Antelope Valley Hospital marketing department four times a year as a service to the community. For inquiries, email marketing@avhospital.org.

Board of Directors

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Mukund Shah, M.D.

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Pramod Kadambi, M.D.

Antelope Valley Hospital Contact Numbers

Main Number

661-949-5000

Admitting | Registration

661-949-5411

Emergency Department

661-949-5115

Outpatient Surgery

661-952-1100

Blood Donor Center

661-949-5622

Mental Health Services

661-949-5250

OB Clinics

Lancaster

661-726-6180

Palmdale

661-726-6325

Information in this publication is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health. Information should not be considered medical advice or treatment, nor should it be used as a substitute for a physician consultation.



Join Our Team of Volunteers

Antelope Valley Hospital is looking for community-minded volunteers who want to help others, gain valuable experience in a healthcare setting, and form lasting friendships. Anyone over the age of 15 can assist patients, visitors and staff in many different departments and with tasks around the hospital.

“The volunteers at Antelope Valley Hospital represent a diverse variety of backgrounds, ages, interests and experience levels,” says Mary Binkowski, director of volunteer resources. “We rely on the talent of our volunteers to support our staff by greeting, visiting with and escorting patients and their families; distributing comfort items; filing, organizing and other clerical duties; and much more.”

Volunteers attend an orientation and receive job-specific training. Flexible scheduling is available. To find out more about volunteering at AVH, call the volunteer services department at **661-949-5105** or download the volunteer application at avhospital.org/about/volunteer.

Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

- Reception Desk
- Gift Shops
- “New to You” Thrift Shop
- Labor and Delivery
- Pediatrics
- Nursing Units
- Office/Clerical
- Dietary
- Outpatient Treatment Center
- Surgery Waiting Room
- Emergency Department
- Pet Therapy
- Transportation

The hospital also offers a teen volunteer program that provides high school and college students with the opportunity to observe firsthand how important quality healthcare is to the community. It also offers a volunteer auxiliary, comprised of adults, which raises funds for AVH through the hospital gift shop, thrift shop, bake sale and other events.

