

Creating Life Better Here



**A Bold New Chapter for
Nursing Education**

**The Benefits of
Robotic Surgery**

**The Healing Power
of Art**

Summer 2025



**SAN JUAN REGIONAL
MEDICAL CENTER**

Our Mission

Better is our mission—improving lives through personalized health and care.

Our Vision

Our vision is to deliver world-class care, making life better for the communities we are privileged to serve.

Our Values

- Sacred Trust
- Personal Reverence
- Thoughtful Anticipation
- Team Accountability
- Creative Vitality

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Putting Our Patients First



A Message from Jason Rounds, President and CEO

Greetings,

San Juan Regional Medical Center is proud to be a community-owned, not-for-profit health system dedicated to serving the Four Corners community with compassionate, high-quality care. We are mission-driven, reinvesting every dollar back into improving patient care, expanding services and supporting our dedicated staff.

In the following pages of this magazine, you'll see examples of how we're putting our patients first. I'm happy to share these with you as a reflection of our ongoing commitment to exceptional care.

- We are partnering with San Juan College to create strategic solutions to New Mexico's nursing shortage, providing targeted investments that will expand access to nursing education and strengthen our healthcare workforce.
- We utilize advanced surgical care with our da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgery system, with more than 1,000 robotic surgeries providing excellent patient outcomes.
- Our EMS team has once again received top honors from the American Heart Association for exceptional pre-hospital care for heart attack and stroke patients.
- We proudly employ top-notch caregivers who are dedicated to making a difference.

When you walk through our doors, you're not just another patient – you are family. Your health and wellbeing are our top priorities. Because caring for you is our purpose, not just a job. Better is our mission, improving lives through personalized health and care.

Jason Rounds

President/CEO

Creating a Healthier Future

One Nurse at a Time

San Juan Regional Medical Center and San Juan College are partnering with purpose to deliver on a shared promise: expanding access to nursing education and strengthening our healthcare workforce.

"We are directly investing in our future workforce right here in the Four Corners, allowing us to cultivate a pipeline of exceptional nurses who are deeply rooted in our region," said SJRMC's President and CEO Jason Rounds.



We are mutually investing in the future of our healthcare workforce by expanding San Juan College's Associate Degree in Nursing program by 50 percent to ensure that every patient in our community has access to highly trained and compassionate nurses. This transformative initiative will:

- Add 32 additional student slots per year in the program
- Provide faculty stipends and two new teaching positions per semester
- Support capital investment in training aids
- Enhance student retention and scholarship support



"This marks a bold and transformative step in our shared commitment to uplifting this region through the power of education, healthcare and opportunity," said Dr. Toni Pendergrass, President.

Thank you to the New Mexico Legislature for making this vision a reality. Their thoughtful support of programs like the Health Care Delivery and Access Act allows us to focus our investments on directly benefiting New Mexicans in the communities we serve as we confront the nursing shortage at the grassroots level.



From Left: Anne Eley, Edward DesPlas, Dr. Toni Pendergrass, Jason Rounds, Cindy Baez, Sherry Paxson, Shawna Kemper

1000th Robotic Surgery

Improving Patient Care



Our Operating Room team completed their 1,000th robotic surgery with our da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgery System in February. Our da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgery System is utilized by multiple surgeons across various specialties at San Juan Regional Medical Center, including General Surgery, Urology, and Obstetrics and Gynecology.

During robotic-assisted surgery, the surgeon is 100 percent in control of the da Vinci System, which translates the surgeon's hand movements into smaller, more precise movements.

Key features and benefits of the da Vinci Xi system include:

- Advanced 3D high-definition vision
 - ♦ Crystal-clear and highly magnified view of anatomy during operation
 - ♦ Anatomy not normally visible to the human eye
 - ♦ True depth perception
- Innovative tools for a vast use of ranges
 - ♦ Wristed instruments bend and rotate far beyond the abilities of the human hand
 - ♦ Access hard-to-reach places
 - ♦ Tremor-free, intricate movement

Patient benefits of robotic-assisted surgery:

- Shorter hospital stay
- Less post-operative pain
- Lower rate of complications
- Faster recoveries





"We are so proud to celebrate our 1,000th robotic surgery and to offer this advanced surgical care to patients in our community. Integrating this innovative technology with a precision surgical team allows us to improve care for patients while providing continued excellent patient outcomes," said Kammie Monarch, Chief Nursing Executive.



Enhancing Patient Safety

AvaSure Virtual Care Program

Our caregivers have a new tool to keep patients safe while improving staffing efficiency. AvaSure is an intelligent virtual care platform designed to improve patient safety and staffing efficiency.

What is AvaSure?

Virtual Safety Attendants (VSAs) use mobile cameras called Telesitters to visually monitor up to 10 patients simultaneously. This technology is an added safety measure to prevent things like:

- Patient falls
- Pulling out medical lines and tubes
- Wandering or confusion in patients

Impact on Safety

- VSAs monitor live video feeds from a central hub
- Two-way cameras allow direct communication with patients
- VSAs can:
 - ♦ Redirect confused patients verbally
 - ♦ Use prerecorded prompts for non-English speakers
 - ♦ Alert nurses or patient care techs when necessary
 - ♦ Sound alarms for immediate staff response

Outcomes

- Prevents adverse events
- Reduces risk of falls and self-harm
- Supports caregivers in monitoring multiple patients simultaneously

"It's definitely made a big impact on safety, keeping both patients and staff safe," said nurse manager Melanie Stout, who helped implement the system. "Having that extra set of eyes helps prevent falls, reduces the risk of self-harm and supports our caregivers by helping them monitor multiple patients at the same time."

Privacy Considerations

- AvaSure rooms are clearly marked with flags outside
- Devices can be switched to privacy mode when needed
- No audio or video is recorded
- Privacy features are transparently communicated to patients and families



The program gives families peace of mind, allowing them to go home and rest knowing that we are safeguarding their loved ones with an extra set of eyes and ears, enhancing patient safety while improving efficiency and quality of care.



Exceptional Pre-Hospital Care

EMS Receives Mission: Lifeline® Gold Award

San Juan Regional Medical Center has received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline® EMS Gold achievement award, demonstrating our commitment to our patients and community by applying the most up-to-date evidence-based treatment guidelines, ultimately saving lives.

"We are honored to once again be recognized by the American Heart Association for our dedication to providing optimal care for heart attack patients," said SJRMC's EMS Chief William Coker. "The Mission: Lifeline program puts proven knowledge and guidelines to work on a daily basis, so patients have the best possible chance of survival."

The program helps reduce barriers to prompt treatment — starting from when 911 is called, to EMS transport and continuing through hospital treatment and discharge. EMS staff can begin treatment when they arrive — up to an hour sooner than if someone goes to the hospital by car.

EMS staff are also trained to provide resuscitation efforts to someone whose heart has stopped. Patients who arrive by ambulance may also receive faster treatment at the hospital.

"Optimal care for heart attack and stroke patients takes coordination between our prehospital providers and our hospital-based caregivers. By participating in the Mission: Lifeline® program, we've maintained continued commitment to providing quality care to our communities, leading the way towards better health," said SJRMC's President and CEO Jason Rounds.

San Juan Regional Medical Center has earned Mission: Lifeline EMS gold recognition consistently since 2016. This year's achievement award includes the Target: Heart Attack Honor Roll distinction for meeting specific measures on how quickly patients receive Percutaneous Coronary Intervention in the Cath Lab following EMS first contact.

**Awarded for
excellence in
heart attack care**

**Committed to
Quality**



This honor highlights our commitment to offering rapid, research-based care to patients experiencing the most severe form of heart attacks and strokes.



American
Heart
Association.

EMS

**2025
GOLD**

TARGET: HEART ATTACK HONOR ROLL

Mission:
Lifeline®

Committed to Care

Nurses Honored with Suzanne Smith Nursing Excellence Awards

Congratulations to our newest recipients of the Suzanne Smith Nursing Excellence Awards. The awards are named in honor of former Chief Nursing Officer Suzanne Smith in recognition of her many contributions over her 38-year nursing career at San Juan Regional Medical Center.





Nurse Leader- Diana Cross

Diana is the manager of the Surgical and Observation Units. Her proactive approach as a leader not only enhances the quality of care provided to our patients but also nurtures a healthy and dynamic working environment that empowers the nursing staff. She actively supports and mentors her staff, ensuring that each team member feels valued and equipped to deliver outstanding care. Diana also helps recruit new nurses, engaging with nursing students and encouraging them as they embark on their nursing journey.



Emerging Nurse Leader-Bryan Ender

Bryan is an ICU nurse with strong dedication to patient care, leadership and continuous improvement. He was one of the very first Unit Champions in the hospital; using his initiative, adaptability and ability to lead by example to help shape the success of this role. Bryan's impact extends beyond the quality care he provides daily to his patients. He has spearheaded multiple initiatives that have significantly improved staff efficiency and satisfaction, as well as ensuring safer and more standardized patient care.



Excellence in Nursing- Jessica Scott

Jessica is a Vascular Access Specialist and member of the Professional Resource Team with extensive experience, compassion and a strong commitment to patient care. She enhances the care she provides for both pediatric and adult patients by utilizing tailored, evidence-based care with clear communication, alleviating anxiety and helping patients feel informed and at ease. Jessica also mentors new staff and nursing students, guiding them through the skills they need to successfully perform patient procedures.



Early Career- Leah Neergaard

Leah is a graduate nurse on the Childbirth Unit who exemplifies outstanding leadership and delivery of patient care. She truly goes above and beyond to ensure that expectant mothers receive the care they need. She works hard to follow each family's individual birth plan and offers support and education on the medical necessity of any needed changes. Leah is a positive role model and team player, providing support to her colleagues and seeking opportunities for growth and personal improvement.

The Healing Power of Art

The caregivers on San Juan Regional Medical Center's Pediatrics Unit are utilizing art to help their patients heal. The unit has an Inspiration Station, a rolling cart with art supplies and art therapy tools donated by Inspire heART, available to patients and their family members.

The kits are also a big hit at community events and health fairs, teaching families how to use art to express their emotions in a safe and creative way.



"We want to cater to children and families who may need a little distraction to get their mind off the stress of being in the hospital," pediatric nurse Allison Bergdoll said.

Distraction via art comes in many forms. Sometimes, it's as simple as offering a coloring sheet, some markers and stickers. Bergdoll is also creating craft kits and mindfulness activities that can be taken to the Emergency Department for pediatric patients or their family members who need additional support.



"Hopefully we get to make it a good experience for them," Bergdoll said. "They can learn a few coping skills or learn how to understand, process and redirect negative emotions."



Fish are friends
not food!



healing
the world
1
bandaid
at a time



Nurse Jessica Moberg is also leaving her artistic mark on the Pediatrics Unit, while brightening her patients' day. She creates colorful works of art in patient rooms and at the nurses' stations that puts smiles on faces at a time when people need it most. Patients can even request a cartoon character and Jessica will draw it on their door.

"We see people on their most difficult days. Sometimes it's just about making that human connection, letting them know you are human too. You really do get that this is a bad day for them and if a funny picture makes them smile or forget their misery for a little bit, then it's worth my time to do it. It gives me so much joy!" Moberg said.



Compassionate and Convenient Care

A Look at Our Outpatient Nursing Clinic



"I love our patients and the relationships we build after seeing them regularly with ongoing appointments. They tend to open up and tell their stories. We also get to welcome their families on their healthcare journey as we build a bond of sacred trust," said Patient Care Tech Jenny Sam.

In addition to the close relationships the caregivers form with patients, the patients also enjoy the convenience of getting the treatments they need close to home. The Outpatient Nursing Clinic can accept orders from any provider across the country so patients can stay here instead of repeatedly traveling out of town for their treatment.

"I had one patient tell me that our staff is better at paracentesis than the staff at a much bigger metropolitan hospital she was going to," Stout said. "SJRMHC and our community have an amazing team ready to take care of them should they need it."

Our Outpatient Nursing Clinic was created in 1991 to meet the needs of patients who needed infusions and other medications they couldn't get at their doctor's office. Today, the clinic is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. seven days a week, where a team of 10 experienced nurses care for 20 to 40 patients a day, completing close to 500 procedures a month.

The services include IV infusions, chemotherapy and ongoing care for chronic diseases. The clinic also functions as the pre-and-post procedural area for interventional radiology and cares for outpatients and inpatients needing paracentesis or thoracentesis, which makes it unique. This keeps patients' hospital length of stay shorter and is convenient and cost-effective.

"We have a lot of patients who need these services," clinic manager Melanie Stout said. "The nursing and support staff have a lot of experience and special training as well as a love for the community and taking care of the patients they consider family."

Some patients visit the clinic every day for several weeks. Others with chronic illnesses may be seen for years. Because of this, the staff get to know the patients very well.



"I have been coming here once a week for four years. The staff are absolutely wonderful. They go above and beyond. I feel like I can call them family. I couldn't ask for better care." - Patient

Dedicated to Making a Difference

Choosing to be a caregiver at San Juan Regional Medical Center means joining a mission-driven team dedicated to making a real difference in the lives of patients and the community every day. We are fortunate to have many long-term caregivers creating life better here.

Caring for Generations

"I have been blessed with the opportunity and abilities to care for the patients that I have seen over the many years here at SJRMC. I am now caring for the children of some former patients."

– Bonnie Higgins, Pediatric Unit, 45 years



A Second Family



"I really do feel that SJRMC is like having a second family. I basically grew up here in the hospital and have learned a lot. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work in several different areas, and really love the role I am currently in. This is a great place to work!"

– Teresa Becker, Volunteer Services, 40 years

Grateful for this Journey

"I never thought I would be celebrating 40 years here. The joy of caring for patients has always been there for me. This work anniversary is a reminder of how far I have come, and I am proud of my accomplishments and feeling grateful for this journey here at SJRMC."

– Virginia Garcia, EEG, 40 years



Advancing Technology and Care



"It has been a privilege to be involved in the healthcare of this community. Witnessing the advances in laboratory technology as well as the improvements throughout our hospital has been impressive. What I enjoyed most has been working alongside so many amazing caregivers and caretakers from every department."

– Dorothy Ackley, Laboratory, 35 years

Making a Meaningful Difference

"One of the most rewarding aspects of serving our community and patients for the past 35 years in radiology has been the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in people's lives every day. I cherish the sense of community at SJRMC. Working alongside colleagues who share the same passion for patient care has been an inspiration."

– Troy Fuhrman, Radiology, 35 years



Shimmering Wings

A Sculpture of Hope and Beauty



San Juan Regional Medical Center is committed to providing a healing environment for our patients, visitors and caregivers. Our Healing Garden is designed to foster peace and tranquility, facilitate healing and promote health. One stunning feature you'll find nestled among the flowers and grasses is a butterfly sculpture titled "Shimmering Wings." Local artist Christy Clugston, CEO of Inspire heART, created the sculpture out of metal and shards of broken glass and donated it to the hospital.

"Butterflies symbolize transformation, rebirth, renewal. I wanted something that would make people know that no matter what your situation is, you can come out on the other side and be better for it," Clugston said.

The project was truly a labor of love and a group effort. Clugston's father did the welding, and her husband helped epoxy the wings. Multiple departments from the hospital worked on the logistics of getting the butterfly and placing it in the garden.

"Something I took away from this whole process is we can do so much more when we all work together. We are meant to lift each other up and help each other," Clugston said.

The butterfly is located in the middle of the Healing Garden and is visible from patient rooms that overlook the garden. We hope it will play a role in hope and healing for our patients, visitors and caregivers for years to come.

Healthy, Fun Recipes for On-the-Go Families

The caregivers at San Juan Regional Medical Center's Metabolic and Bariatric Institute not only teach their patients about choosing better for optimal health – they are living healthy lifestyles themselves and having lots of fun sharing their tips and tricks on social media.

Check out some of the healthy recipes recently shared by the clinic's assistant director, Physician Assistant Meghan Ritz, aka "My Plate Meg."



Noodle Jar

A quick, simple and healthy lunch on the go.

Prep at home with ingredients of your choice:

- Add cooked frozen shrimp, edamame, leftover roasted veggies, a handful of spinach, soy, sweet chili sauce plus uncooked rice vermicelli noodles to a jar.

When you are ready to enjoy:

- Add a packet of bone broth and hot water.
- Let the jar sit for about 5 minutes to soften the noodles and warm the thawed shrimp.
- Give it a stir and enjoy.

"This was a snap to prep and so tasty. A warm and cozy fiber and protein packed soup for lunch. It's better than instant ramen and just as easy."

Pizza Crackers

A great snack for kids (or adults)

- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Place saltine crackers (choose the ones without the salted tops) on baking sheet.
- Top with a spoonful of marinara sauce (look for options without added sugar.)
- Add shredded mozzarella cheese and any additional seasonings or toppings of your choice.
- Bake in the oven at 400° for about 5 minutes, until the cheese begins to melt and bubble. Enjoy!

"The cheese and marinara sauce add a nice bump of fiber and protein. It's definitely more than your average pizza flavored snack crackers. There are fewer additives, too!"



Follow us on social media for more quick, easy and healthy recipes.





Celebrate Life.



SAN JUAN REGIONAL
MEDICAL CENTER

lifebetterhere.com

**This corner of the world is our corner.
Here we have chosen to live, work and play.**

The caregivers of San Juan Regional Medical Center are working together in a common vision to deliver world-class care making life better for the communities we are privileged to serve.