

**COLORADO  
RURAL HEALTH  
CENTER**

*The State Office of Rural Health*

**RELEASE DATE: April 15, 2014**

Contact: Bridgette Olson, Outreach Program Manager  
303-832-7493 or bo@coruralhealth.org

**Gunnison Valley Health Recognized by the Colorado Rural Health Center for  
Outstanding Membership Engagement**

Denver, CO— Gunnison Valley Health is a community owned health system serving Gunnison County and its surrounding area. Located in the center of the state, approximately 200 hundred miles from Denver at an elevation of 7,700 feet, Gunnison's economy is primarily tourism, ranching and education.

The city and county of Gunnison is named after John W. Gunnison who explored the region in 1853. He only spent three days in the area, surveying for the transcontinental railroad route. It wasn't until the 1870s that the town began to boom as miners, ranchers and traders moved in.

In addition to the Gunnison Valley Hospital, there is a Family Birthing Center, a Senior Care Center, a Cancer Care Center and philanthropic Foundation. The hospital is a 24-bed, critical access hospital and Level IV Trauma Center, that currently participates in CRHC's Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) grant.

"CRHC's is dedicated to assessing the needs of Colorado's small rural hospitals and coordinating resources to address those needs," says Danette Swanson, CRHC's health information technology program manager.

Since 2002, the SHIP grant has provided an opportunity for rural hospitals to enhance billing and reimbursement, improve HIPAA compliance, decrease medical errors, support adoption of health information technology, and improve the quality of care provided to rural communities.

According to Swanson, who manages the SHIP program, lack of healthcare providers, community resources, and technology increase the need for assistance in strengthening and developing the rural health infrastructure. The overall goal of SHIP is to utilize funds

to support hospital activities to improve quality and efficiency of the care delivered.

Rural hospitals in Colorado are taking positive steps to implement performance improvement programs, provide for patient safety initiatives, and meet the needs of their communities. Gunnison Valley Hospital is a prime example a highly engaged SHIP participant.

Gunnison Valley Health is also contracted with CRHC's Colorado Provider Recruitment program, which helps communities recruit and retain dedicated and qualified healthcare professionals who are committed to practicing in rural areas.

In addition, Gunnison Valley Health has participated in the Colorado Resource for Emergency and Trauma Education (CREATE) program. The program provides funding for education and training for emergency medical and trauma services.

The Colorado Rural Health Center is proud to recognize Gunnison Valley Health as this month's featured member of the month. The hospital is also recognized nationally by iVantage Health Analytics as a 2013 HealthStrong™ Award winner for Excellence in Efficiency, Overall Excellence, and Excellence in Patient Satisfaction.

### **About The Colorado Rural Health Center**

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC's serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health with the mission of assisting rural communities in addressing healthcare issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change to ensure that rural Coloradoans have access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare services of the highest quality. For more information visit [www.coruralhealth.org](http://www.coruralhealth.org), call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.

###