

Estes Park Health and UHealth Sign Partnership Letter of Intent

Estes Park Health and its board members requested to join UHealth to strengthen the hospital's patient care and services.

Estes Park, Colo. (October 16, 2024) – The Park Hospital District, which operates Estes Park Health, and UHealth have signed a letter of intent (LOI) for Estes Park Health to join UHealth in 2025.

Estes Park Health (EPH) requested to join the health system to strengthen the health care services currently offered in the Estes Valley, to benefit EPH patients and employees, and to ensure the long-term success of the hospital and its clinics.

“Residents of Estes Valley and Larimer County, and visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park, need high-quality health care close to home. Estes Park Health has been honored to serve this area since 1975, and we recognize the hospital's future is stronger by joining a Colorado-based health system,” said Vern Carda, Estes Park Health CEO. “Today is a significant milestone in the history of health care in our community. Next year, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Estes Park Health, we are hopeful and excited to do so as part of UHealth.”

More than half of EPH's patients are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or are uninsured. UHealth, the state's largest provider of Medicaid, is committed to continuing EPH's care for patients who may have more difficulty accessing health care.



“UHealth is honored that Estes Park Health asked to join our system of hospitals and clinics.

The solid foundation they have built as their community's hospital will be strengthened as we work toward similar missions of benefitting the communities we serve and improving the lives of our patients and employees,” said Kevin Unger, president and CEO of UHealth's northern Colorado region. “We look forward to welcoming Estes Park Health's 320 staff members and providers while providing financial stability for the hospital and additional resources for the Estes Valley.”

EPH has partnered with UHealth, especially Poudre Valley Hospital and Medical Center of the Rockies, for decades to provide resources that benefit patients and the community. In 2023, Park Hospital District voters overwhelmingly authorized the district to join a health system with 80.3% support. The district's revenues will continue to be used locally to support the services and patient care provided in the Estes Valley.

As hospitals across the nation have been challenged in recent years by dramatically increasing expenses, rising uncompensated care and minimal increases in reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid, EPH has been challenged to maintain its services. The hospital has been forced to transfer or reduce obstetrics, home health and hospice services. By joining UHealth, EPH will be able to strengthen and sustain the health services it currently offers.

“We're excited for the next chapter and believe this is the right direction for Estes Park Health,” said David Batey, chair of the Estes Park Health Board of Directors.

“UHealth truly invests in its patients, its team members and the communities it serves. UHealth has stepped up and partnered with us to offer specialty care here in the Estes Valley, and they provided much-needed support during the COVID-19 pandemic and the wildfire in 2020. Health care in Colorado's mountain communities is important, and joining UHealth will allow us to ensure the Estes Valley continues to have access to excellent care.”

Over the coming months, UHealth and EPH will complete their final agreement, with an effective date expected in Spring 2025. UHealth will share more information with employees and the community during this time, easing the transition and answering their questions.

For more information about the Letter of Intent, visit [Letter of Intent Information - Estes Park Health](#).

About Estes Park Health

[Estes Park Health](#) is a nonprofit, critical access hospital with net operating revenue of over \$60 million, 320 employees, 23 inpatient beds and 22 physicians and advanced practice providers comprised of skilled, compassionate caregivers. We are a critical resource in our mountain community, providing care for our friends, neighbors and visitors, from pediatrics to geriatrics. With a persistent dedication to patient-focused care, we continue to score high on key measures in patient satisfaction surveys. Estes Park Health was founded in 1975 as the Elizabeth Knutsson Memorial Hospital per a tax subsidy voted on by the citizens of Estes Park. Today, thousands of patients—residents and visitors alike—see our health care teams for both outpatient and inpatient services.

About UHealth

UHealth is an innovative, nonprofit health system that delivers the highest quality medical care with an excellent patient experience. [UHealth](#) includes 34,000 employees, 14 acute-care hospitals and hundreds of physicians across Colorado, southern Wyoming and western Nebraska. With [University of Colorado Hospital](#) on the [CU Anschutz Medical Campus](#) as its academic anchor and the only adult academic medical center in the region, UHealth is dedicated to providing unmatched patient care in the Rocky Mountain West. Offering more than 200 clinic locations, UHealth provides extensive [community benefits](#) and pushes the boundaries of medicine through advanced treatments and clinical trials, improving health through innovation.

