

## Hurt away from home | Local hospital helps out-of-town patients with more than just their health

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A smooth-going vacation can take a turn for the worse when it is interrupted by a medical emergency.

What happens to patients that find themselves in a hospital in an area they aren't familiar with?

Livingston Memorial Hospital helps out-of-town patients with whatever they need.

With two major highways running through Livingston and its close proximity to Yellowstone National Park, the summer months bring many tourists to the area. With more people comes more medical emergencies.

According to the LMH Discharge Planner, Jo Tecca, between park mishaps and highway

accidents, the hospital's emergency unit stays busy.

Tecca said a majority of patients admitted to LMH in the summer are people visiting the parks.

"Yellowstone is notorious for broken bones," she said.

Last year, Tecca saw four cases where a person injured an ankle just by stepping off a tour bus.

Once a patient is at LMH, the staff sees to it that everything is taken care of for them and their family.

"We basically do whatever it takes to take care of a patient," Tecca said.

It is not uncommon for the hospital to assist a patient with housing arrangements for family members; arrange for vehicles and per-

sonal belongings to be brought to the hospital; help with flight plans and arrangements to get to the airport; or assist with insurance obstacles. In some cases, hospital employees have even given patients rides to where they need to go.

Some employees have gone well beyond their job descriptions to help visiting patients, said Sandy Marlow, community development director for LMH.

"It's not only the people in the hospital, but also the people in the community that reach out and make sure the people visiting are being helped," Marlow said.

Geri Lester, administrative assistant at LMH, said there are volunteers in the community and in the hospital who are bilingual and volunteer to help when a patient needs a

translator.

The amount of time visiting patients stay at Livingston Memorial depends on their insurance coverage and the seriousness of the injuries. Broken bones are easily treated at the hospital, but if something calls for a specialist, patients are transported to a different hospital.

Lester said each year hordes of thank-you cards arrive from people around the country thanking the hospital for its support and hospitality.

The people who have visited Livingston and were patients at LMH are extremely grateful for the support and guidance they received, Marlow said.

"It isn't unusual for patients to say, 'I'm glad it happened here,'" Lester said.