

West Valley, St. Al's join forces

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CALDWELL — West Valley Medical Center and Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center have formed an alliance to enhance health-care offerings at the Caldwell hospital.

Officials said the partnership means local patients can benefit from some of St. Alphonsus' specialized services without going to Boise.

"This allows a community-based hospital to leverage the resources of a larger hospital," West Valley CEO Kathy Moore said. "It elevates the sophistication of services. (Patients) won't have to travel all the way to Boise anymore to get some of the services like they've had to in the past."

Leaders from both hospitals say the collaboration specifically serves Caldwell in four ways:

Improved access to primary care, specialty and sub-specialty physicians.

Access to state-of-the-art technologies and applications available at St. Al's.

A broader scope of services offered in Caldwell, specifically in pain management, rehabilitation, an anti-coagulation clinic and cardiac protocols.

Better patient outcomes and reduced health-care costs.

"This alliance with Saint Alphonsus reinforces West Valley Medical Center's commitment to providing superior care to members of our surrounding local and rural communities," Moore said. "Our patients and their families will now have greater access to highly specialized services, physicians and state-of-the-art technology right here in Caldwell's community hospital."

One of those technologies is the RP-7 Remote Presence Robot.

The robot, which is located at West Valley but can be controlled by physicians at St. Al's, features a sophisticated two-way camera system that simultaneously displays the controlling doctor's face while allowing the physician to thoroughly scan the patient.

The \$250,000 robot will allow specialists to observe and guide local surgeons during complicated procedures. It also means doctors can visit patients face to (digital) face, even if the two aren't in the same physical location.

"This will not replace doctors or nurses," Dr. Don Fox, who demonstrated the new robot at West Valley on Monday. "This helps bring overextended physicians back to the bedside."

Saint Alphonsus Chief Executive Officer Sandra Bruce said the Boise hospital has a long history of working with West Valley Medical Center through the Saint Alphonsus Medical Group, which has 22 Caldwell physicians and mid-level practitioners who manage 73,000 annual patient visits.

Dr. Douglas Hill, chief medical officer for Saint Alphonsus Medical Group said the alliance is beneficial to both hospitals.

"It allows Saint Alphonsus to expand the physician group at West Valley, partner with rural clinics, extend the continuum of care, and deploy scarce technological and intellectual resources across to outlying communities," he said. "In a nutshell, it's a bridge to advanced healing capabilities."



Health care: Collaboration will bring St. Alphonsus technologies to Canyon