

## Newcastle Meeting Summary

### What Is Working Well in Newcastle

- Hospital services.
  - High quality and effective Emergency Department
  - Radiology and lab services are high-quality, allowing most patients to receive testing locally. "Wellness Wednesdays" off community access to common lab tests at reduced cost. The hospital is installing a new CT scanner.
  - Good communication between the hospital, public health, and EMS.
- Physician services.
  - Good, dedicated doctors and primary care providers.
  - The local clinic has demonstrated significant improvement over the past year, with positive feedback on new hires and management.
  - VA "community care" program is working well for veterans.
  - The hospital is bringing in more specialists, such as ENT and endocrinologists. .
- The local pharmacy is reliable and functions well.
- Physical therapy services in the community are considered excellent.
- The local nursing home is considered a community asset, along with the Senior Center.

### What Is Not Working Well in Newcastle

- Lower access due to provider recruitment and retention difficulties.
  - Attracting and retaining healthcare providers is a persistent challenge in the small, remote town.
  - High provider turnover at the clinic has led to a lack of community trust, particularly in primary care and locum clinicians.
  - Residents often have to travel to Gillette, Rapid City, or Denver for specialty care, including OB/GYN, pediatric specialty, and orthopedic care.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coverage
  - Inter-facility patient transfers can take a limited ambulance crew out of service for up to 13 hours.
  - There have been recent instances where critically sick patients could not be transferred in a timely manner due to a lack of available ambulance services.
- Behavioral health.
  - Most care is delivered via telehealth, which presents challenges for patients.
  - The costs associated with Title 7 and Title 25 (involuntary commitment for mental health crises) create a major financial burden for the county, which is described as an "unfunded mandate".
  - The county struggles to budget for the unpredictable and high costs of medical and mental healthcare for the jail population.

### What Newcastle Needs

- Recruitment and retention.
  - Particularly in primary care, so they can build a relationship and trust with patients.
  - Workforce pipeline, starting with high school students, and going through nursing and other allied health professionals.
- EMS coverage.
  - Better system for managing inter-facility transfers, or dedicated transport teams.
  - Level 1 Trauma Center in Wyoming could save transport time and resources.
- Specialty services
  - Diabetes care (e.g. nutrition, eye exams, podiatry), OB/GYN services (including midwives), pediatrics, ortho and general surgery, geriatrics.
- Sustainable financials
  - One-time federal funding should be used for sustainable investments, such as training or equipment, rather than creating new programs or salary obligations that the community cannot afford long-term.
  - Goal of building a financially stable, self-sufficient local healthcare system.