

seconds seconds

save lives save lives



GUNNISON VALLEY HEALTH
FOUNDATION



**Seconds Save Lives
is an \$8.5 million
capital campaign
to address a
critical need for
a new station for
Gunnison Valley
Health Paramedics.**

A realistic estimate is that the new station will reduce 911 response time by about four minutes, and new research links this quicker response to a projected 107% improvement in cardiac arrest survival rates in Gunnison County.

A larger, updated station in a better location on the Gunnison Valley Health Campus will:

- Improve patient response time to 911 calls - saving lives
- Improve patient safety, satisfaction rates and outcomes
- Expand services, including community training
- Support the safety and health of the emergency responders
- Help our rural community recruit and retain health professionals

A new station with sleeping quarters where all ambulances and apparatus can be properly garaged and stored will greatly and positively impact patient response time.



Most people don't think of paramedics until they need to call 911. While hoping to never need to serve you, rest assured that a new station will help Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to provide you, your family and our community with the best critical care medicine and rescue services available.

“
My wife and I are especially thankful to the first responders who reached our son, Theo, when he was injured mountain biking near Gunnison. He had a serious neck injury and no feeling or movement in his extremities. Your team comforted him, and administered exactly the right medicine and technique to safely transport him to Grand Junction. We were told that he might never walk again, but your team was a critical factor in his ultimate healing.
”

Tim K.,
Theo's Father

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics (aka Gunnison Valley Health Emergency Medical Services or GVH EMS) are vital to Gunnison County's healthcare, public health and public safety systems, and they do their jobs from a building that risks their health and safety and compromises their ability to best meet the needs of their patients and community.

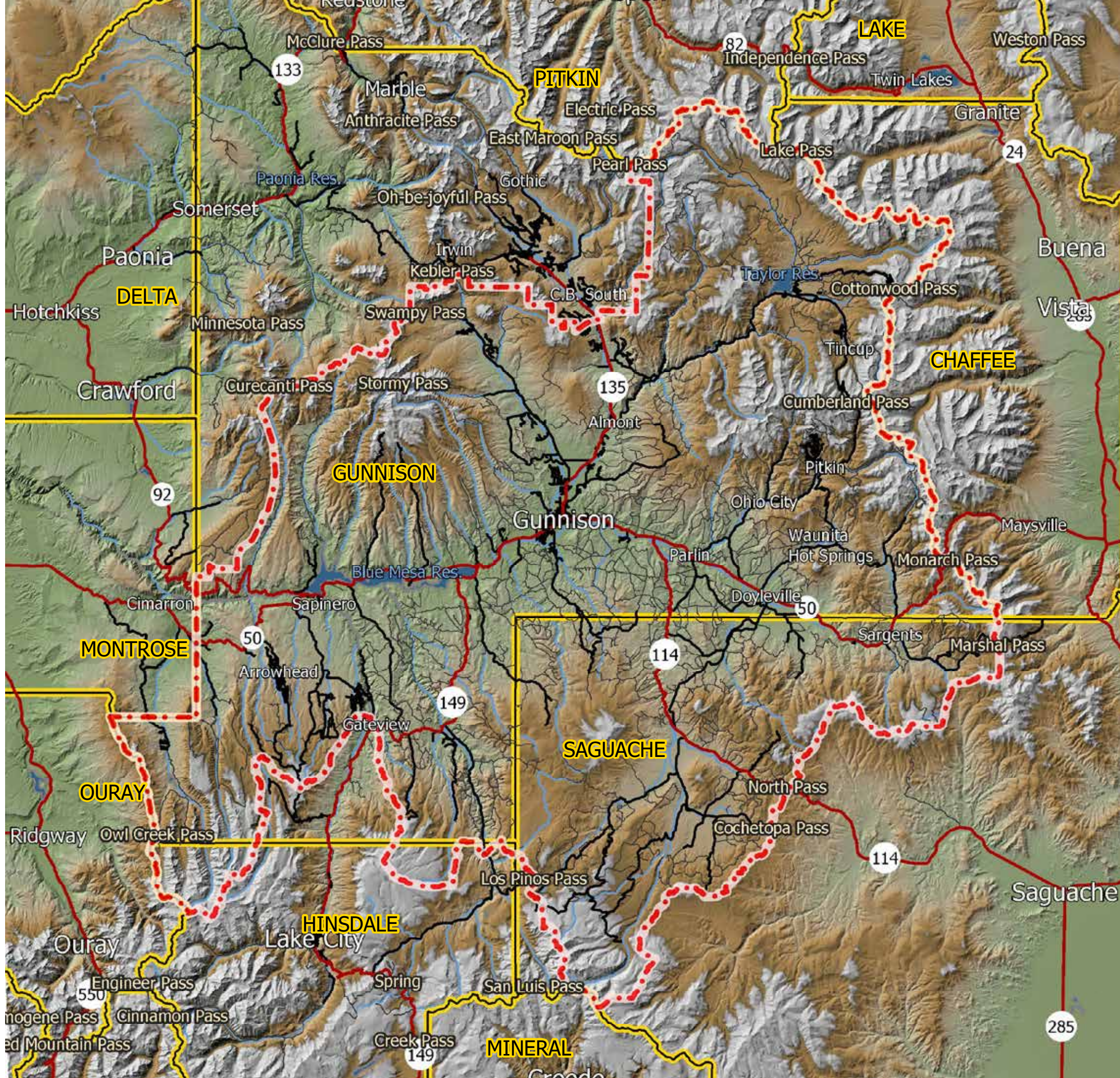
Paramedics serve as a healthcare safety net by providing emergent, urgent and preventive medical care as the first step of the healthcare continuum. Paramedics fill healthcare gaps with cost-effective, 24/7 medical care that assesses and navigates patients to the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Each and every day, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics respond to calls for help involving injuries and acute illnesses - including heart attacks, difficulty breathing, falls, drownings, strokes and overdoses. The 24/7 staff respond to all medical emergencies, including rescue hazards.

The team is comprised of individuals certified in swift water rescue, ice rescue, avalanche rescue, wildland firefighting, HAZMAT, emergency planning, and rope rescue. They utilize response equipment including snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-road vehicles and work closely with air medical services when required.

Additionally, as strongly demonstrated throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are an integral component of our community's ability to respond to public health crises. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have not only been part of the front line – they are the first line. They respond to COVID-related 911 calls; they have helped to develop and operate the COVID-19 Call Center; they support the community's vaccine response; and Chief, CJ Malcolm, is Co-Commander of the County's Pandemic Response with the Director of Gunnison County Health and Human Services, Joni Reynolds.






Service Area

4,400 square miles. Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics serve the largest response zone in the State of Colorado. (A typical Fire or Emergency Medical Services District is 100 - 400 square miles.)

The service area includes Gunnison County, a large portion of Saguache County, and small sections of Montrose and Hinsdale Counties. Additionally, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics assist Hinsdale County by backing up the Lake City all-volunteer based EMS.

The district is massive, remote, and encompasses multiple mountain ranges. Primary service areas include Gunnison, Almont, Roaring Judy Valley, Taylor River Canyon, Taylor Park, the Collegiate and Saguache Mountains, Tin Cup, Pitkin, Ohio City, White Pine, Sergeants, Old Agency Road Area, all Saguache communities on County Road 38 towards the Sawtooths/Old Agency, Powderhorn communities, Currecanti communities, Soap Creek, the West Elk Range, Arrowhead, Little Cimarron out to Silver Jack Reservoir, Ohio Creek Valley, and the Fossil Ridge Wilderness.

There is also a formal Mutual Aid Agreement for Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to closely partner with the Crested Butte Fire Protection District Paramedics serving Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and CB South on mutual aid emergencies, a regular occurrence during peak summer and winter seasons.

 Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics Territory

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have faced rapid expansion, particularly over the past several years, while delivering some of the best service in the State of Colorado within the critical care scope of practice. While morale remains relatively high, the burden of increased call volume combined with an inadequate facility to rest, rehab and respond weighs heavily on all crews. Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are in serious need of an updated ADA and OSHA compliant station.

Growth

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have grown tremendously over the past two decades. Once a mostly volunteer force run by college students with a handful of professional paramedics, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics now have 21 full-time staff and 10-20 on-call staff.

Twenty years ago, the department ran approximately 600 calls per year, few of which extended beyond Gunnison County borders. Today, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics respond to approximately 1,500 calls per year and have experienced more than a 10% increase in volume every year since 2017.

This rapid expansion is caused by increased population and tourism in the region, as well as expanded service lines including critical care level interfacility transports (IFTs) to larger metropolitan hospitals outside Gunnison County.

2018 demonstrated 166 interfacility transports (IFTs) requiring 987 hours of ambulance operation and nearly 40,000 traveled ambulance miles. 2020 concluded with 260 IFTs, 1,486 hours of ambulance operation and over 70,000 ambulance miles – a 57% increase in IFT volume and a 50% increase of time on the road. Frequent response is required to facilities as far away as University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora, 221 miles from Gunnison. The impacts of this expanded service on Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have been dramatic.

During a meeting with the whole emergency services department, Gunnison Valley Health CEO, Rob Santilli, asked the crew if they had one wish, what would it be? All gave the same resounding answer: “To be able to respond from an adequate station that has sleeping quarters.”

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics

The Challenge:

Dangerously Delayed Response Times

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics currently operate out of a steel prefab structure designed in 1998 to serve as a station for a mostly volunteer force with fewer and smaller ambulances. As the station has never included sleeping quarters, paramedics used to respond from home to after-hours calls.

Eight years ago, in an attempt to reduce after-hours response times, paramedics began to sleep in provided housing. Sleeping quarters for Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are located at the Mountaineer Village Apartments and a GVH-owned condo at the corner of Denver and Colorado.

Response time is defined as the time of the initial 911 page to going “enroute” with the ambulance leaving the station.

Industry standard night response is required to be less than two minutes from time of dispatch to going enroute. Services in urban environments often respond in less than 30 seconds. Average response times at night range from 5 to 7 minutes due to the long distance to the station. In the winter, response time can double due to snowy and icy conditions.



The Challenge:

Lack of space to properly maintain and store equipment

Only 3 of the 6 ambulances can be garaged.

In the winter months, ungaraged ambulances are often impossible to start and rehab after being frozen for extended periods. These ungaraged ambulances are frequently brought into rotation for mass casualty incidents and vehicle maintenance rotation.

Bays are not deep enough to house an ambulance and remove the gurney, which makes cleaning and sanitizing very challenging, especially during winter.

No room to garage two 4X4 Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs), two trailers, and one 6X6 Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) used for backcountry response.

Apparatus must be washed indoors during the winter. Water gets everywhere in a space not designed for indoor washing of large ambulances, and vehicles must be washed at least every 48 hours during a crew shift.

Bays are very tight and do not allow ambulances to pull-through. Ambulances must be backed in, a well-recognized industry safety hazard.

Proper antennas on ambulances cannot be mounted due to low clearance in the bays.

Because of the immense 4,400 square mile size of the Gunnison Region and current communications infrastructure limitations, the performance antenna recommended is three feet higher than what will fit.

Not enough crew lockers, and lockers are too small for clothing and professional gear.

COVID-19 protocols require extra Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and there is no room to effectively store and sanitize this additional gear.

Ambulance bays are stifling hot in the summer and freezing during the winter, making it difficult to carry out even minor routine equipment maintenance.



The Challenge:

Lack of space to adequately train, especially at the critical care level

Some training must take place off-site in multi-use facilities. This requires additional staff time for setting up and tearing down.

Training locations are separate from the station. Typically, Paramedics/Police/Fire have a classroom space dedicated to training with high fidelity mannequins always set up and ready for daily crew training. A 2021 EMT course is planned at the Western Colorado University campus, but teaching a course separate from the station places an additional burden on instructors.

Inability to maintain Training Center Status. Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics were previously partnered with the State of Colorado and Western Colorado University as a designated Training Center. Prior to 2018, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics hosted all regional Emergency Medical Training (EMT) courses, as well as a Reserve Program, but is currently unable to continue due to space limitations and increased call volume.

The Challenge:

Lack of administrative office space for the crew to work efficiently and safely

Multiple staff members must share offices, and department captains are particularly impacted in terms of work productivity and privacy.

Storage areas and a mop closet have been converted into offices.

Boxes and supplies have piled up in hallways and common areas creating potential hazards.

Emergency responders have undertaken station remodel and construction projects to attempt to make more room.





The Challenge:

Current station poses safety, physical and mental health issues for the crew

No fire suppression system (sprinklers). Also no smoke or carbon dioxide detectors in the station, under building codes that are now outdated.

No emissions scrubbing systems for vehicles backing in and out of bays. The number one carcinogen first responders are subjected to is diesel truck exhaust. The carcinogens linger on responders' skin and get into clothing and gear stored in crew lockers located directly behind the backed-in ambulances.

Egress and entrance problems. The location of the current station and ambulances leaving and returning pose risks to the responders, as well as the public.

Insufficient rest for personnel. A significant increase in call volume and sleeping quarters in a complex that also houses college students does not facilitate adequate rest.

Risks to personnel associated with after-hours response. Walking alone late at night and often in snowy, icy conditions has caused slips and falls – some of which have resulted in serious injuries.

Crew communication and cohesion challenges. Separate sleeping quarters do not facilitate crew cohesion.

No space large enough to prepare a crew meal and eat together. The condo and apartment have kitchens, but they are too small for a seven-person crew to prepare and share a meal in close proximity to the ambulances. Sharing meals supports crew communication and unity.

No space to plan for missions, debrief or distress. There is no ability for crews to gather or find personal space in the station or to enjoy any outdoor space at the station.



With a total of six full-time staff on shift every day plus support staff, the station is crammed with personnel, paperwork and ever-expanding amounts of gear. There is no area to properly train, an extremely small area to rehab equipment, serious storage problems and an inability to keep all of the apparatus and response equipment garaged during Gunnison's harsh winters.

As first responders, we are passionate about helping our community and saving lives. To be recognized as the 2020 EMS Ambulance Service of the Year in Colorado is an enormous achievement, especially during a pandemic year.

CJ Malcolm

Chief Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics

The Plan:

A new station that meets the needs of the patients, responders and our community for at least the next 25 years.

The scope of the capital campaign project covers the replacement of the current station and addresses at least the next 25 years of paramedic service for the Gunnison Region. Priorities for the new building include functionality, accessibility, visibility and longevity.

The new building* will be located at the corner of North Taylor Street and East Denver Avenue across from Gunnison Valley Hospital. North Taylor Street was specifically designed to facilitate emergency response. The new signature building will be easily accessible and visible as part of the Gunnison Valley Health campus. The new station will feature sleeping quarters for personnel; ample storage to accommodate all apparatus on site and indoors; administrative space suited to current and future staffing models, an education and training space; and a kitchen and dining area.

** Building blueprints and updated details will be available as plans are finalized and approved. Some of the following details may be subject to change.*

I have been awed at the energy and relentless reserves brought by the entire Gunnison emergency services agency under Chief Malcom's leadership. They have truly made Gunnison County safer and have led the work to reduce the COVID-19 impact in measurable ways. Gunnison County is served well by the emergency services team and Chief Malcom's leadership.

Joni Reynolds, RN/CNS, MSN,
Director of Gunnison County Health
and Human Services

The new station plans include:

- 4 double bays to house 8 ambulances and vehicles.
- EPA and OSHA compliant engine bays that will utilize direct capture devices to remove emissions
- Parking areas outside the station for trailers and decommissioned ambulances
- Shop area to store, maintain and rehab equipment
- Secure storage area for medications and Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) equipment
- A room for education and training with A/V capabilities:
 - Capacity up to 30 persons*
 - Used for crew meetings and training*
 - Emergency Medical Training (EMT) classes and CPR/First Aid programs*
 - Also serves as a community meeting room open to the public*
 - Separate public restroom*
- 9 bedrooms
- Private and shared bathrooms
- Administrative space including:
 - Chief's office*
 - Assistant Chief's office*
 - Shared office space for 3 Captains*
 - Shared office and work area that accommodates at least 6 staff daily*
- Fully equipped kitchen and dining area including:
 - 3 refrigerators to accommodate the three rotating A, B, C shifts. There are three rotating crews at all times equating to a minimum of 20 individuals needing to store food.*
 - Dining area and table large enough to accommodate crews sitting and sharing meals*
- Living room
- Weights and exercise room
- Laundry room
- Deck and patio areas

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are not tax-funded like fire and police departments. They are funded by Gunnison Valley Health and insurance reimbursements. The annual operating budget of Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics is \$1.6 million and does not include capital expenditures, such as a new building.

Capital Campaign

Capital Campaign Goal:

\$8.5 million

Funds To-Date:

Gunnison Valley Health Match of \$1 million

Funds Needed:

Grants and Government Funding est. \$2 million

Donations from Individuals est. \$5.5 million

To Donate:

Contact Jenny Birnie, *Executive Director*

Gunnison Valley Health Foundation

gunnisonvalleyhealth.org/savelives

jbirnie@gvh-colorado.org

970.642.8400

711 N. Taylor Street, Gunnison, Colorado 81230

While there are many valuable charitable causes in our region, this campaign meets one of the most fundamental needs in any community: quick, reliable and exemplary emergency medical services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Jenny Birnie

Director Gunnison Valley Health Foundation

Your Support

The ability of Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to save lives and meet the needs of our rural patient population is directly related to the efficiency, size and quality of their facility and its equipment.

Making capital investments is an important part of financial viability.

Community support has never been so important for the patients served by Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics. Your donation today provides each individual who calls 911 with the best possible healthcare experience and outcome. While hoping you never need to dial 911, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics is ready to provide you and your loved ones with the best emergency medicine available.

The next life they save could be yours.

“Of the 200+ ambulance organizations in the state, GVH Paramedics have an enormous service area, provide outstanding care at the highest level, and are an excellent partner in the community. Furthermore, Dr. Krier is an exemplary medical director who is actively engaged, works closely with the EMT’s and paramedics under his supervision, and serves as a role model to physicians statewide.”

Sean Caffrey

EMS Association of Colorado Vice President
and Crested Butte Fire Protection District
CEO

Awards & Recognition

Despite the challenges related to their current station, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics were honored last year by the State of Colorado with a prestigious award.

2020 Colorado’s EMS Ambulance Service of the Year and Physician Excellence in EMS

GVH’s Paramedics/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Shay Krier MD, EMS Medical Director and Emergency Medical Physician, have been recognized at the state level for EMS Ambulance Service of the Year and Physician Excellence in EMS by the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado. The EMS Ambulance Service of the Year Award honors an ambulance service which has become a leader in patient care, medical control, quality assurance, training and public education. The Dr. Valentin E. Wohlauer Award for Physician Excellence in EMS is presented to a physician who has made a substantial contribution to the advancement of EMS in Colorado.

Additionally, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are part of the award-winning Gunnison Valley Health system, which has received numerous accolades and recognition over the years, including:

Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals in America

GVH has been named one of the iVantage Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) in the United States eight times, scoring in the top 100 of Critical Access Hospitals on the iVantage Hospital Strength INDEX™. The INDEX is the industry’s most comprehensive rating of acute care hospitals and the only one to include the country’s nearly 1,300 Critical Access facilities, measuring them across multiple performance metrics.

Top 25 Rural Hospitals Nationwide

According to the iVantage INDEX, GVH ranks in the top 1.2% of over 2100 rural hospitals over a variety of measures including quality, patient perspective, charge, and financial stability. That means that GVH performs in the top 25 of all rural hospitals in the country.



Jill Adams, *Captain of Administration*; **Jeff Elmore**, *GVH Owners Representative*; **CJ Malcolm**, *Chief*; **Don Haver**, *Chair, GVH Board of Trustees*; **Justin Skokan**, *Operations Captain*; **Rob Santilli**, *CEO*; **Dr. Shay Krier**; **Jenny Birnie**, *Executive Director, GVH Foundation*; **Nick Zuber**, *Operations Captain*; **Michael Taylor**, *Operations Captain*

Campaign Leadership

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Lucy Zavala

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics Leadership Staff

CJ Malcolm, Chief

Jill Adams, Captain of Administration

Justin Skokan, Operations Captain

Michael Taylor, Operations Captain,
Director of Education

Nick Zuber, Operations Captain

Dr. Shay Krier, Medical Director

Dr. Hannah Heinrich, Senior Science and
Technology Advisor

Thank you!



Contact

For information or to donate:

Jenny Birnie, *Executive Director*

Gunnison Valley Health Foundation

gunnisonvalleyhealth.org/savelives

jbirnie@gvh-colorado.org

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