

# Network News



**EASTERN  
MONTANA  
TELEMEDICINE  
NETWORK**



## Telemedicine a Plus for Poplar Patients

Driving 430 miles to see her son and daughter in a Helena medical facility isn't possible for Poplar mother Bernice Martin. Instead, Martin travels less than 10 blocks to get an up-close view of her children, thanks to telemedicine services offered through EMTN at North-east Montana Health Services.

"It's hard communicating through the telephone but now I get to see their smiles and waves while talking with them," Martin said. "This is such a great idea for the community...it's been so helpful to me."

Martin is one of a number of Poplar residents who are accessing telemedicine for counseling, rehabilitation, mental health, and medical care.

The bottom line: Medical appointments and diagnosis can be far less of a hassle for patients unable to travel from rural areas. "It's just like a regular office visit," said FNP Judy Lauridsen, of the Riverside Clinic, who uses the telemedicine services with a Salt Lake City hospital for a local burn patient, who would have been severely compromised by a trip to Utah. "It was so much easier than I ever thought it would be," said Lauridsen, who has 33 years of medical experience. "I was impressed with its ease."



Using a hand held video camera, Lauridsen showed the burn damaged and healing tissue as a doctor in Salt Lake City examined the wounds on a television monitor in his facility.

"He was able to do everything as if I had been there in his Salt Lake office," said the burn victim, who asked not to be identified. "It's still difficult for me to travel long periods of time and this saved me a lot of time and discomfort on the road."

The burn victim's skin is extremely sensitive to temperature extremes and the patient could have been at-risk on the road. "It could have been more dangerous for this patient (to travel) so telemedicine worked out great for him," Lauridsen said.

Excerpt from article written by Richard Peterson

## Education for Montana and Wyoming's Nurses

*What is PET?*

Evaluating Hereditary Risk for Cancer

*I am Joe's Colon*

Hypertension: Current Standards and Treatment

These titles are only four of the Nursing Grand Rounds programs that have been offered through the Professional Development Department at Billings Clinic. Beginning in January of 2006, this new monthly educational program has been available to nurses in the convenience of the workplace. These forums also reach beyond the walls of the Billings Clinic. Sites across Montana and Wyoming are offered the programs through telemedicine.

Following the initiation of the Nursing Grand Rounds classes within the Billings Clinic, nurse educators Lisa Peterson and Kristen Loper were approached by EMTN to extend the offerings to nurses and other health care providers in the region. They were quick to realize the benefit of sharing these educational opportunities with others and on February 8th of 2006, Nursing Grand Rounds was launched via telemedicine.

Over 200 individuals have attended Nursing Grand Rounds via telemedicine since its inception. Although the attendance at Billings Clinic has been excellent, there are some months that the number of individuals attending via telemedicine surpassed those on site.

The objectives of Nursing Grand Rounds are to:

- Deliver education on new healthcare trends that is up-to-date and relevant to nursing
- Promote and enhance professionalism in nursing through education
- Offer nurses the opportunity to earn contact hours

Trisha Mangus, a nurse and educator at North Big Horn Hospital in Lovell, Wyoming comments:

"The medical-surgical coordinator will schedule her nurses meetings for the day of Nursing Grand Rounds so that many can attend. I know that the information on domestic abuse was appreciated and we look forward to the offering on cultural diversity".

**Telefact: Over the past 12 months EMTN has connected Wyoming and Montana patients to providers for 1089 mental health and 1020 medical consults.**