

# HEALTH CARE

## Illnesses prompt increased precautions at NC hospitals

A busy flu season and winter illnesses are increasing emergency department and physician office visits as well as hospitalizations across our state.

Many North Carolina hospitals are reporting higher than usual occupancy rates and announcing restrictions on hospital visitors to protect patients' health during flu season.

The North Carolina Healthcare Association, formerly the North Carolina Hospital Association, encourages North Carolinians to support hospital visitation policies and help prevent the spread of illness.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in addition to an annual flu shot, practicing the follow-

ing good health habits can help keep you and others around you healthy this winter:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home from school, work and errands when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands regularly, preferably with soap and water.

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is sick.

If you are sick, your primary care provider should be your first point of contact. If you have the flu, your primary care provider can determine whether anti-

viral drugs could help reduce the length and severity of your illness. Urgent care centers, e-visits or virtual visits, and walk-in clinics provide a variety of options for treatment of non-life threatening conditions.

If experiencing a health emergency, such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, go to the nearest emergency department.

## SEARCH group talks successes of 2017, upcoming plans for 2018

The local ad hoc group Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare, or SEARCH, had its final meeting of 2017 Dec. 5 at Burnsville First Baptist Church.

Around 40 people attended the meeting and heard about the group's accomplishments since forming this past summer and outlined goals and opportunities for 2018.

SEARCH formed shortly after Mission Health announced a proposal to close the labor and delivery unit at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine. Its mission statement is, "To assure safe, quality, affordable, accessible healthcare for Mitchell and Yancey county citizens."

Susan Larson reported at the meeting SEARCH's task force chairs met recently and re-organized its goals, which are to preserve, strengthen and expand access of essential medical services in our area; to empower greater involvement in decisions affecting the healthcare of our residents; and to monitor the effects of changes in local healthcare services and engage with providers, Mission and the community if problems arise.

In a meeting with Blue Ridge Regional Hospital CEO Becky Carter and Mission Health Regional Advocacy Director for Government and Commu-

nity Relations Cara Truitt SEARCH learned about a change in the hospitalist system at Blue Ridge Regional, which is from 11 p.m.-7 a.m. there won't be a physician on the floor. Questions requiring a response from a physician will be handled through Eagle Telemedicine but a physician will continue to be in the Emergency Department.

"The situation in surgery is two surgeons must cover both McDowell and Blue Ridge Regional hospitals; the third surgeon will not be returning nor will the locum tenens," according to the minutes from the Dec. 5 SEARCH meeting. "In response to questions asking what Mission Health is doing to rectify this situation, Carter said Mission is actively recruiting surgeons and there are changes in the works that could increase surgical access at BRRH."

SEARCH member Risa Larsen reported on a meeting in Marion called "Increasing Health Coverage in Rural North Carolina" sponsored by the Rural Center, Care for Carolina and NC Child at which North Carolina Rep. Josh Dobson, R-85, explained House Bill 662, which has the potential to significantly decrease the number of uninsured in North Carolina.

The bill has not yet been adopted.

The idea of having a roundtable discussion with elected officials about rural healthcare is being considered, possibly with the help of the Rural Center, according to the minutes.

The group then identified 41 challenges and 36 opportunities facing local health care that will be used to plan for 2018.

SEARCH's first meeting of 2018 was 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, in the fellowship hall at Trinity Episcopal Church in Spruce Pine.

### SEARCH Task Forces and Descriptions

• **Communication with BRRH Board, BRRH Foundation Board and Mission Health Board: establish channels of regular communication with these boards.**

• **Media Relations: Create a continual presence in local media and on social media, and an occasional presence outside of the region.**

• **Government Relations: Maintain contact with elected officials, encourage their participation and monitor their actions about health care.**

• **Monitor Outcomes: Monitor the effects of hospital policies and practices on the well-being of our citizens.**

• **SEARCH Infrastructure: Organize meetings, set the agenda and communicate with interested people and parties. Perform research on health care issues in the community as a basis for formulating our position and action plan.**

• **Plan B: Explore ways of sustaining and expanding essential healthcare services in our local area.**

• **Community Outreach: Learn about the needs and desires for healthcare in our local community as well as the barriers to fulfilling them. Construct models to meet those needs.**

## Mission named among nation's 'Best and Brightest in Wellness'

ASHEVILLE – Mission Health has been named a Best and Brightest in Wellness company for the third consecutive year by the National Association for Business Resources, or NABR.

This award program highlights organizations nationwide that promote a culture of wellness and implement and evaluate their employee wellness efforts.

It celebrates companies making their businesses and employees thrive while creating a healthier community for everyone.

As part of its services, it identifies businesses across the nation that promote healthier workplaces and are deemed exemplary in their approach to employee wellness and work site health while enriching their communities.

Mission Health provides a multitude of programs aimed at improving employee wellness – from smoking cessation, weight loss, strength training, massage and mindfulness practice classes such as yoga and tai chi, to its region-wide, award-winning wellness publication, My Healthy Life.

Over the past year, additional evidence-based programs such as Resiliency 101, nutrition counseling and virtual

healthy weight programs have brought more opportunities to team members across the region.

Mission Health Chief Human Resources Officer Sheila Meadows said workplace wellness is not just a trend, but a practical necessity for successful workplaces.

"Well developed and sensitively designed wellness programs not only benefit our individual team members, they also benefit our patients and Mission Health as a whole," she said. "Everyone wins; when our employees feel their very best they can be their very best for you."

NABR performs an assessment of all nominee organizations as measured by Synbella, a comprehensive wellness firm that helps organizations create balance in mind, body and spirit for their team members through comprehensive wellness programs.

The NABR evaluation process includes data analysis, performance comparison against established benchmarks and examination of each organization's overall corporate culture along with a specific emphasis on whether work site health has a measurable and positive effect on the community at-large.

## GIRLS

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### Mitchell 48, Polk 33

The Mitchell High School Lady Mountaineers basketball team extended its win streak to 11 games Friday, Jan. 12, with a 48-33 win at Polk.

Class 1A No. 1-ranked Mitchell (13-1) was led in scoring by senior center Morgan Buchanan, who scored 17 points in the win and senior guard Megan

Dellinger added nine.

	1	2	3	4	Final
Mitchell	14	11	14	9	48
Polk	9	9	2	13	33

MITCHELL 14 11 14 9 – 48: Z. Cloer 2, Phillips 3, Dellinger 9, McMahan 6, M. Cloer 2, Johnson 5, Hall 4, Buchanan 17

### Mitchell 63, Draughn 29

The Lady Mountaineers crushed visiting Draughn Wednesday, Jan. 10, by a score of 63-29.

The win was the Lady Mountaineers' 10<sup>th</sup> straight and the team's second win over the Wildcats this season.

Mitchell senior guard Emma Duncan led all scorers with 14 points and senior Zoe Cloer added 10. Sophomore Hannah McMahan and freshman Marley Cloer scored 9 points each. Senior center Morgan Buchanan had 8 points to go with her game-high 12 rebounds.

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
Draughn	5	8	7	9	29
Mitchell	12	15	20	16	63

MITCHELL 12 15 20 16 – 63: Dellinger 4, McMahan 9, M. Cloer 9, Johnson 2, Biddix 1, Hall 2, Z. Cloer 10, Buchanan 8, Huskins 4, Duncan 14

## WRESTLING

Continued from page 9

to the opportunity to get some fresh competition and team building."

### Mitchell vs. Mountain Heritage results:

113 pounds: Emily Burleson (MITC) over Leeann Peterson (MOHE) (Fall 1:34); 120 pounds: Dylan Lowery (MITC) over Will Calkins (MOHE) (Fall 4:51); 126 pounds: Coltin Marlowe (MITC) over (MOHE) (For.); 132 pounds: Joseph Maltba (MITC) over Dalton McIntosh (MOHE) (Fall 3:19); 138 pounds: Joshua Forbes (MITC) over Danny Leemaster (MOHE) (Fall 0:39); 145 pounds: Thomas Smith (MOHE) over Micah Staton (MITC) (Fall 0:35); 152 pounds: Christian Angel (MOHE) over Shelby Twiddy (MITC) (Fall 3:56); 160 pounds: Ryan Richardson (MITC) over Joseph Shade (MOHE) (Fall 1:10); 170 pounds: Micha Galton (MOHE) over John Cox (MITC) (Fall 1:25); 182 pounds: Garrett Buchanan (MITC) over Alan Penland (MOHE) (Fall 1:14); 195 pounds: Dalton Hollifield (MOHE) over Mason Bullis (MITC) (Fall 0:59); 220 pounds: Isaiah Watts (MOHE) over Samuel Shook (MITC) (Fall 1:55); 285 pounds: Hudson Boone (MITC) over Josh King (MOHE) (Fall 1:43); 106 pounds: Dakota Tehandon (MITC) over (MOHE) (For.)

**Mitchell vs. Owen results:** 220 pounds: Kaleb Woods (OWEN) over Samuel Shook (MITC) (Fall 2:00); 285 pounds: Hudson Boone (MITC) over Daniel Patton (OWEN) (Fall 0:51); 106 pounds: Emily Burleson (MITC) over (OWEN) (For.); 113 pounds: Elijah Smith (MITC) over (OWEN) (For.); 120 pounds: Dylan Lowery (MITC) over Noah Lehman (OWEN) (Fall 0:33); 126 pounds: Coltin Marlowe

(MITC) over (OWEN) (For.); 132 pounds: Joseph Maltba (MITC) over Aiden Nalley (OWEN) (MD 8-0); 138 pounds: Joshua Forbes (MITC) over Alex Harper (OWEN) (TF 17-0 2:17); 145 pounds: Wesley Melton (OWEN) over Cameron Schofield (MITC) (Fall 0:53); 152 pounds: Bruce Williams (OWEN) over Zebulon McKinney (MITC) (Fall 0:41); 160 pounds: Tanner Riddle (OWEN) over Ryan Richardson (MITC) (Fall 3:37); 170 pounds: Jordan Cox (MITC) over Jenri Galdamez (OWEN) (Fall 5:17); 182 pounds: Garrett Buchanan (MITC) over Kameron Harper (OWEN) (Fall 1:07); 195 pounds: Jose Guardian (MITC) over Devan Knighton (OWEN) (Fall 0:27)

### Mitchell vs. Polk County results:

195 pounds: Jose Guardian (MITC) over Hayden Shumate (POCO) (Fall 4:00); 220 pounds: Samuel Shook (MITC) over Blake Rackley (POCO) (Fall 2:29); 285 pounds: Devin Panchyshyn (POCO) over Hudson Boone (MITC) (Dec 4-2); 106 pounds: Emily Burleson (MITC) over (POCO) (For.); 113 pounds: Dylan Lowery (MITC) over Triston Watkins (POCO) (MD 15-6); 120 pounds: Elijah Smith (MITC) over Abdias Ramirez (POCO) (Dec 18-14); 126 pounds: Coltin Marlowe (MITC) over Preston Burnett (POCO) (Fall 2:45); 132 pounds: Joseph Maltba (MITC) over Evan Miller (POCO) (Fall 1:24); 138 pounds: Joshua Forbes (MITC) over Brennan Worthington (POCO) (Fall 2:53); 145 pounds: Brady Hall (POCO) over Cameron Schofield (MITC) (Fall 0:58); 152 pounds: Dillion Knighton (POCO) over Zebulon McKinney (MITC) (Fall 0:37); 160 pounds: Ryan Richardson (MITC) over Mitchell Yoder (POCO) (Fall 1:18); 170 pounds: John Cox (MITC) over Trey Thompson (POCO) (Fall 1:51); 182 pounds: Garrett Buchanan (MITC) over James Smith (POCO) (Fall 0:39)

# 1x3

Sound like math?

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It's newspaper jargon for an ad that is 1 column wide and 3 inches deep.

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