

Summary of the 2025 Public Meeting:

1. Improved Communication and Accessibility

- **Communication Gaps:** There's a significant need for easier access to communication with live support, as many patients struggle with online portals. Test results should be delivered more promptly and through various methods, including phone calls or printed copies, especially for those without easy access to technology.
- **Provider Concerns:** Many patients feel providers at CMM are dismissive or rushed, especially those with complex health issues. Patients are looking for more time and follow-up care with their providers.
- **Coordinated Care:** Participants expressed frustration with siloed healthcare systems and emphasized the need for better communication between providers and integrated care, especially in terms of sensitive patient data protection.
- **Outreach and Community Engagement:** Increased community education and engagement to ensure people are aware of available services and resources.
- **Increased Awareness:** Many were unaware of existing community health initiatives, with suggestions to use flyers or email calendars for better communication. Health fairs and more preventative care services, like blood pressure checks, were also requested.

2. Access to Healthcare

- **Specialized Care:** There's a growing need for more specialized services, such as pulmonary, geriatric, neurology, and rheumatology, as well as education around conditions like shingles, stroke prevention, and diabetes management.
- **Access to LGBTQ+ Services:** Gaps in services like STI testing, HIV treatment, and LGBTQ+-specific mental health care were highlighted, with a call for more locally available resources.
- **Elderly Care:** More services for the aging population, like functional medicine and nutritional support, are desired.
- **Youth and Family Care:** Pediatric care, including support for neurodiversity and family mental health, is another priority. The lack of resources for youth with health issues or special needs was noted, and the community expressed a desire for more support for families in these situations.

3. Social Drivers of Health & Other Barriers

- **Insurance/Financial Issues:** Participants expressed frustration with the healthcare system prioritizing insurance over patient care, which becomes even more complicated for the uninsured. Lack of billing transparency and confusion over additional charges was a concern.

- **Reducing Barriers to Access:** Many participants mentioned difficulties navigating the healthcare system, especially for those who are uninsured or underinsured. Vail Health should prioritize creating clear pathways for patients, whether through dedicated navigators or simplifying the process of accessing resources.
- **Expand Care Models for the Uninsured:** With a high number of uninsured in the community, Vail Health should explore creative solutions, such as partnering with employers or offering more affordable care options for the uninsured.
- **Specialist Access:** The difficulty accessing specialist care led to a call for quicker appointments or partnerships with larger health systems to reduce wait times.
- **Transportation:** Elderly patients need better transportation options to appointments, and parking issues at some facilities (e.g., Edwards) were noted.
- **Centralized Facilities:** Many residents, particularly in areas like Eagle and Gypsum, need healthcare services located centrally, as travel, especially in bad weather, can make it difficult to reach distant facilities.
- **Emergency Services:** Limited and expensive emergency transportation was a major concern, especially for those living in rural areas.
- **Improved Transparency:** Vail Health should offer clearer upfront communication about pricing, service coverage, and insurance details.

4. Healthcare System Experience and Cultural Sensitivity

- **Empathy and Respect:** There's a desire for more empathy in patient care, particularly in Vail, where many feel treated as financial transactions. Glenwood's system was praised for its more compassionate approach.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The community requested better understanding of cultural differences, especially for the Hispanic community, and improved language support.
- **LGBTQ+ Care:** Participants pushed for better training for healthcare staff on LGBTQ+ issues, including gender identity and pronouns, and the expansion of gender-affirming care services.
- **Health Literacy:** A focus on improving health literacy, especially in navigating the healthcare system and understanding medical and financial options, was emphasized.
 - Mira and the Eagle Valley Community Foundation surveyed Eagle County residents who identify as Latino and found that of those not insured, 59% say it is due to the insurance premiums and 11% report it is due to health literacy.

5. Behavioral Health

- **Behavioral Health Needs:** Mental health services, including preventive care, are in high demand. Participants recommended small, manageable steps for improving health and creating flexible programs for those with busy lives.

What Vail Health Should Keep Doing

- **Holistic and Multidisciplinary Care:** Shaw's model of holistic, whole-person care should be expanded. Eagle Urgent Care is praised for its efficient, patient-focused service.
- **Valet Services:** The valet service, especially for elderly or mobility-challenged patients, was appreciated.
- **Collaboration with Behavioral Health:** Vail Health has made progress in integrating behavioral health services and should continue fostering partnerships outside of clinical care. This supports a holistic approach to health, benefiting the community by addressing both physical and mental health needs.
- **Access to Care and Preventative Services:** There is a strong emphasis on bringing care to the people, including community paramedics and educational outreach. This helps address barriers such as transportation, cultural competency, and socioeconomic status, which contribute to health disparities.