

HRRMC Employee Legacies

Peg Arnett, RN, BSN – Director of Education

Peg Arnett describes herself as having been a student her entire career, but to countless people during her 35 years with HRRMC, she was a teacher.

Peg's storied career in healthcare began long before she came on board at the hospital. Upon moving to Salida in 1983, she started teaching first aid and CPR to rural and frontier communities outside of the Upper Arkansas Valley. Bringing practical education to people in this capacity marked the dawn of her outreach efforts. Her investment in community only grew from there. She was the driving force behind the creation of local home health programs and hospice care, which still serve residents of Chaffee County today through HRRMC. She also volunteered extensively in the schools, using her passion to educate and inspire local youth in science.

It was a natural transition when Peg accepted a position as nursing educator at HRRMC in 1998. She taught advanced instructor classes in ACLS, PALS, IV Certification and EMT training. From 2001-2009, she directed the student nursing program—which she herself pioneered—at the hospital. The program awarded associate degrees in nursing through Trinidad State Junior College and Colorado Mountain College.

Peg was recognized for serving as interim vice president of patient services on four separate occasions, successfully leading the nursing team with her positive attitude and a commitment to the highest level of patient care. In 2017, she was inducted into the HRRMC Hall of Fame, which honors individuals who have made an enduring commitment to quality health care in the Upper Arkansas Valley.

During 2020, amidst a quickly evolving COVID-19 pandemic, Peg offered critical expertise and support as HRRMC prepared for its goal of achieving The Joint Commission Accreditation. That fall, HRRMC was awarded the Gold Seal of Approval for Critical Access Hospital Accreditation. There's no doubt that Peg directly contributed to that success.

For as great of an impact as she has made locally in terms of health and education, Peg's commitment to giving back knows no bounds. Beyond the Salida Hospital District, she has traveled on 17 mission trips to deliver healthcare to underprivileged communities worldwide. A plaque in the Healing Garden dedicated to Peg reads "Service Above Self." Peg has exemplified this motto in so many ways.

Peg officially retired from her full-time position in March of this year, but has since returned in a PRN role. So while her time with HRRMC is not truly over, it is only appropriate that she be recognized for her legacy as Director of Education in this year's Nursing Review. What she accomplished in her primary role, as well as in the myriad projects considered "other duties as assigned" during her tenure here is remarkable. She has been a progressive agent for change and advancement at every turn—and as we all know, there have been many turns.

Thank you, Peg, for all that you have contributed to HRRMC and to our community. We are grateful that you will continue to write your story here, and we look forward to being part of it.