

ANNUAL REPORT

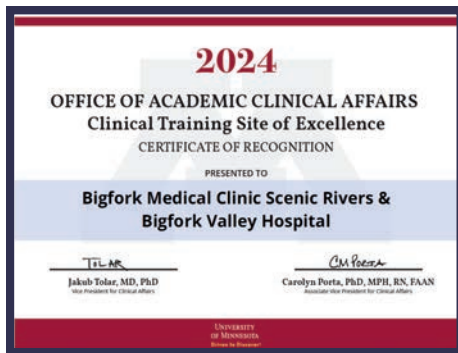
2024-2025



Bigfork Valley

Hospital • Clinics • Communities

Where skill meets compassion.



Grant Recipient



Surgical Technician Apprentice Program



Exceptional Performing Member Sites

✓ Bigfork Valley Hospital





Bigfork Valley

Mission

The Mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.

Vision

The Vision of Bigfork Valley is to provide the highest quality health care experience to every life we touch.

Values

Trust / Reliance on our commitment to provide visionary leadership, quality care, communication, confidentiality and excellence of service.

Respect / Holding our patients, clients, elders and fellow employees in high esteem; recognizing their diversity of beliefs and lifestyles and that each deserves equal care and understanding.

Compassion / A sincere desire to support and assist our patients, clients, elders and their families.

Quality / Striving towards optimal health care outcomes consistent with evidence-based practice.

Stewardship / Responsible management of patient care, service delivery, company assets and natural resources.

Safety / Maintaining systems and processes that create and support a protective environment.

ANNUAL REPORT

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A Word from our CEO...



Nathan Hough, CEO

At our last Annual Meeting, Bernie and I had been in Bigfork for about six months, and in all honesty, we were still adjusting and getting settled into our new home. It's a year later, and we are still adjusting and settling in, but in a better way. Currently, we are adjusting to things at home, such as "Where do we park the plow truck?" and "Does the lawnmower or the side-by-side get the best spot in the garage for the summer?" We understand we will be having these discussions again in a few months, as the answers will change for winter. A couple of weeks ago, Bernie and I were headed to church, and out of the blue, she said, "I'm sure glad we came to Bigfork."

The activity with Bigfork Valley has kept me busy, and I am very much enjoying the opportunity to work with this team. On the financial standing of the facility, we have done a very good job of reinvesting in the organization while keeping the bottom line in the black. The Board, leadership, and staff did a great job last year in that balancing act, as the year-end financials presented to the Board showed a net loss of \$115,000. However, those financials did not include \$120,000 of funds related to revenue. Based on those numbers, we finished the year at our goal of breaking even.

In the financial audit, we addressed a number of years' worth of "bad debt" that we had been holding. In doing so, our audited financials appear poor, but this audit adjustment truly had no impact on the financial viability of Bigfork Valley, it simply makes the bottom line appear as though we went backwards. I want the community to know that is not the case, and we have been able to accomplish a lot in the past year.

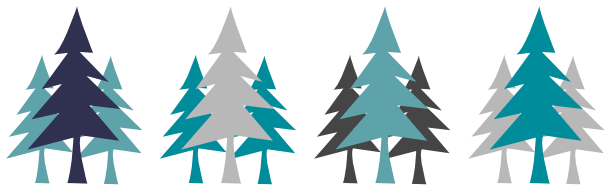
I mentioned in my annual update last year that I felt the Board and staff of this organization are here to take care of their community, and I can absolutely attest that is still the case. We are constantly looking for ways to improve, add services closer to home, and get better. Later in this annual report, some of the recognition Bigfork Valley has received in the last year will be shared in more detail. But as a place that now has a 5-star nursing home (the highest CMS rating available), a hospital that is once again in the top 20 in the nation for patient satisfaction, and is a 2024 Workplace Excellence Award winner by Align, we are still striving to improve every day.

Please enjoy this annual report, which helps summarize what we have been doing over the past year, and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thank you.

Nathan Hough

2024 FINANCIAL UPDATE



Financial Highlights

Our operating revenues decreased by \$592,527 or 2.3%, and our operating expenses increased by \$1,352,644 or 4.9%.

- Net patient and resident service revenue decreased by \$755,941 or 3.4%.
- Employee FTEs increased by 4.4% from 159 in 2023 to 166 in 2024.
- Salary and benefits costs increased by \$1,358,399 or 10.7%.
- Professional fees and purchased services decreased by \$127,599 or 2.6%.
- Drug and supply costs decreased by \$172,778 or 3.1%.
- Utility expenses increased by \$82,694 or 12.3%.
- Other expenses (i.e., government surcharges, employee recruitment, and training) increased by \$60,504 or 3%.

Capital improvements approved in 2024

Department	Description	Cost
Acute Care, Surgery, ER	Mindray Patient Monitoring System 3-year lease (excludes interest)	\$150,000
Chiropractic	Chiropractic Table ***	\$8,185
Courier	Courier Car	\$23,010
Dietary	36' Range for Aspen	\$11,495
Emergency Department	Stretcher & Mattresses	\$22,195
Hospital Pharmacy	Non-Acute Win2019 Upgrade (Omniceil)	\$12,576
Imaging	Radiology Room Upgrade (Equipment) ***	\$236,138
IT	Security Camera Upgrades	\$17,557
Long-Term Care	Mechanical lift Sara Flex, Maxi Move, & Bariatric Chair - Arjo ***	\$19,375
Materials	Furniture Project (Clinic & ER) ***	\$30,729
Plant Operations	New Entry Doors (x2)	\$11,565
Plant Operations	LTC Heating Controls	\$10,997
Plant Operations	AC Compressors for Surgery	\$10,799
Specialty Clinic	Olympus Ear Nose & Throat Scope 3-year lease (excludes interest)	\$43,313
Surgery	Sterrad NX - Sterilizer	\$40,410
Surgery	Ultrasonic Washer	\$61,164
Surgery	Olympus Endoscopy 190 Scopes, Processor, Etc. 3-year lease (excludes interest)	\$86,730
Villa	Villa Gutter Replacement	\$8,656

Total \$804,894

*** Indicates a grant funded project

Capital Equipment

In 2024, we completed a full equipment upgrade in one of our radiology rooms, supported by grant funding from the State of Minnesota. This enhancement has improved imaging quality and increased staffing efficiency. We also finalized the remodel of our decontamination room, a carryover project from previous years, also funded by a state grant. Additionally, we began updating facility furniture, investing approximately \$30,000 in 2024. This multi-year initiative aims to improve patient comfort and ensure easier cleaning across our spaces.

2024 FINANCIAL UPDATE continued

Major Carryovers from 2023

Department	Description	Cost
Acute Care	Lucas 3 Chest Compression System & Life Pack Defibrillator	\$51,906
Dietary	Aspen/Villa Kitchen Countertops & Cabinets	\$19,212
Emergency Room	Decontamination Room Remodel ***	\$58,463
Specialty Clinic	Ear Nose & Throat Computer & Software	\$3,003
Specialty Clinic	Ear Nose & Throat Exam Chair	\$8,190
Specialty Clinic	Ear Nose & Throat Microscope	\$13,485
Specialty Clinic	Ear Nost & Throat Cabinets	\$29,964

*** Indicates a grant funded project

Total \$184,224

Grants

In 2024, we were awarded \$110,000 of the Minnesota Department of Health's Rural Hospital Capital Improvement grant. These funds will be paid to Bigfork Valley in 2025.

**NORTHERN ITASCA HOSPITAL DISTRICT
DBA: BIGFORK VALLEY HOSPITAL
STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND 2023**



	2024	2023
OPERATING REVENUES		
Net Patient and Resident Service Revenue (Net of Provision for Bad Debts of \$594,817 in 2024 and \$272,210 in 2023)	\$ 21,675,466	\$ 22,431,407
Other Revenue	3,582,813	3,437,025
Equity Earnings in Joint Ventures	173,354	155,728
Total Operating Revenues	25,431,633	26,024,160
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Salaries	11,316,416	10,163,596
Employee Benefits	2,709,992	2,504,413
Professional Fees and Purchased Services	4,868,503	4,996,102
Drugs and Supplies	5,314,340	5,487,118
Utilities	754,317	671,623
Depreciation and Amortization	2,054,446	1,903,022
Other	2,065,347	2,004,843
Total Operating Expenses	29,083,361	27,730,717
OPERATING LOSS	(3,651,728)	(1,706,557)
NONOPERATING REVENUE (EXPENSES)		
Tax Levy for Operations	1,000,000	836,220
Interest Expense	(304,172)	(307,580)
Investment Income	235,170	111,405
Unrealized Gain on Investments	221,588	338,858
Gain on Disposal of Capital Assets	1,625	-
Noncapital Grants and Contributions	746,540	242,328
Gain on Sale of SISU	-	358,638
Total Nonoperating Revenue	1,900,751	1,579,869
DEFICIT OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	(1,750,977)	(126,688)
CAPITAL GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS	134,028	14,472
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	(1,616,949)	(112,216)
Net Position - Beginning of Year	15,961,340	16,073,556
NET POSITION - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 14,344,391</u>	<u>\$ 15,961,340</u>



Materials Management

The Materials Management Department continues to play a critical role in the daily operations of Bigfork Valley by ensuring the timely procurement, delivery, and management of essential medical supplies, equipment, and services. The team works diligently behind the scenes to keep hospital departments well-stocked and prepared, streamlining ordering processes, reducing costs, and improving delivery times.

This year, the department was instrumental in supporting a major furniture capital project, overseeing everything from planning and ordering to installation and quality checks. In addition, the team played a key role in coordinating multiple other capital projects, ensuring that materials and equipment arrived on time and met project specifications.

Beyond large initiatives, Materials Management contributes to the hospital's overall efficiency every day by working closely with clinical and support staff to anticipate needs, address supply chain challenges, and manage vendor relationships. Their efforts not only keep costs in check but also directly impact patient care by making sure providers have the right tools at the right time.



Safety

This year, a primary focus was reestablishing our MOAB (Management of Aggressive Behavior) Team. I attended a three-day training in Mora, Minnesota, to become a certified program trainer. I continue to work with MOAB International to Bigfork Valley. Once established, this will allow us to provide in-house training for our staff and response team.

The MOAB Team plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of our facility. When a situation arises involving an agitated individual on our campus, the team is called to de-escalate the situation and, if necessary, assist with removing the individual from the premises in a safe and controlled manner. In addition, I have worked to strengthen our safety program by organizing and performing all required monthly, quarterly, and annual testing.

Monthly testing includes:

- Exit signs and emergency lighting (30-second battery backup test)
- Fire extinguishers (verified placement and charge)
- AED machines (ensuring charge and pads are in working order)
- Emergency weather and elopement boxes (supplies present, batteries in good condition)
- Fire drills (completed monthly)
- Eyewash stations (checked for expiration and flushed for flow)
- Decontamination cart (supplies checked and organized)

Quarterly testing includes:

- Sprinkler flow test (proper water flow within the required timeframe)

Annual testing includes:

- Fire extinguishers (inspection with LVC)
- Outlet testing (ensuring outlets across hospital, surgery, nursing home, and Aspen are safe, functional, and able to hold a plug)
- Fire doors (checked for proper closure and sealing)

Grant Report

Sandra Leblanc-Boland / Grant Writer



2025 Grants		
GRANTS	Project	Awarded
MDH Rural Hospital Planning & Transition	Specialty Clinic Services	\$ 49,500.00
Bigfork Business Revitalization	LTC / Villa Exterior	\$ 2,936.31
MN DHS CARES Dementia	Online Dementia Training: 3 Years	\$ 14,994.00
MN Care Force Incentive	Assisted Living Staff Incentive Payments	\$ 4,620.00
MDH SHIP	Revenue Cycle Management and Charge Master Review	\$ 9,929.00
Blandin Foundation	New Electronic Health Records System	\$ 250,000.00
MDH Home & Community Based Services	Assisted Living Loan Forgiveness	<i>Pays employee directly</i>
MN DHS CANF	Critical Access Nursing Home Designation	<i>Approved</i>
Operation Round Up Spring	Fitness Center Equipment	\$ 159.96
Summer Healthcare Internship	Two Summer Interns	\$ 3,456.00
MDH Workplace Safety for HCW	MOAB Training and Panic Buttons LTC/AL	<i>Approval pending</i>
USAC Healthcare Connect	Partial support of Paul Bunyan internet	<i>Approval pending</i>
TOTAL Grants		\$ 335,595.27
DONATIONS		
BVCF	Gift Nest Cooler	\$ 1,369.00
BVCF	Multiple Departments	\$ 8,810.00
BVCF	Middle School Scrubs Camp	\$ 564.00
BVCF	LTC bariatric beds and mattresses	\$ 5,000.00
BVCF	PT- Shockwave Therapy	\$ 15,000.00
TOTAL Donations		\$ 30,743.00
TOTAL Grants and Donations		\$ 366,338.27



Information Technology

Staff

- Jeff Fontana, IT Manager
- Jerry Denny, IT Technician
- Joseph Jacobson, IT Technician

Services Provided

- Implement and manage all hospital IT infrastructure to include:
 - Cybersecurity
 - Servers and computers
 - Applications
 - Enterprise backups
 - Networking
 - Phones
 - Printers
 - Door security
 - Security cameras
 - Digital signage

Upcoming Goals

Bigfork Valley IT is implementing a new security initiative. It will allow 24/7 monitoring of all devices in our environment by a security operations center. It will also include additional security and monitoring of our Microsoft 365 tenant and advanced web filtering and Internet security.

Community Engagement

- CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) done onsite monthly through local food shelf.

REVENUE CYCLE AND BUSINESS OFFICE

The Revenue Cycle Department and Business Office at Bigfork Valley play a vital role in supporting patients and ensuring accurate, efficient billing processes. Our team consists of 13 staff members across Admissions, Health Information Services (HIS), and the Business Office.

We are often the first point of contact for patients through Admissions, where staff gather accurate and up-to-date demographic and insurance information. Health Information Services (HIS) is responsible for analyzing medical records for completeness and serving as the permanent home for patient records. This department also fulfills requests for medical records from patients and other healthcare facilities. Once care is provided, coding accounts and charge entry are completed, followed by final reviews in the Business Office to ensure claims are accurate before submission. Together, these departments work to provide patients with a smooth experience while maintaining compliance and accuracy in all aspects of the revenue cycle.

Health Information Services

- Successfully attested to Promoting Interoperability, a Medicare program, by using certified EHR technology and meeting all measured quality standards.
- Continued to increase patient adoption of MyCare at Bigfork Valley, our patient portal.

Admissions & Business Office

- Senior Services billing continued to operate in Point Click Care and is staffed internally.
- Hospital billing advanced through continued collaboration with Tegria, including staff education and outsourced billing services.

	2022	2023	2024
Total Inpatient Days	894	546	647
Total Emergency Room Visits	1541	1565	1524
Total Outpatient Surgicals	753	711	682
Total Outpatient Visits	21,043	20,540	19,781



Rehabilitation Services

The Bigfork Valley Rehab Department continues to exemplify dedication, flexibility, and excellence in patient care. Despite ongoing staffing challenges throughout 2024, our team rose to the occasion, delivering compassionate, high-quality rehabilitation services aligned with Bigfork Valley's mission and core values. This year highlighted the department's resilience and unwavering commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our patients and community.

Department Overview

The Rehab Department provides comprehensive therapy services across a broad spectrum of patient populations, including:

- Inpatients
- Outpatients
- Nursing Home Residents
- Swing Bed Patients
- Emergency Department Referrals

Our therapists deliver skilled, individualized care in areas such as:

- Orthopedic Rehabilitation
- Vestibular Rehabilitation
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Customized treatment programs based on patient-specific needs



Staffing Overview

Despite national workforce shortages, our department maintained a dynamic and responsive team in 2024:

- Full-Time Staff:
 - 3–4 Physical Therapists (with supplemental traveling therapists)
 - 1 Occupational Therapist
 - 1 Physical Therapy Assistant
 - 1 Administrative Assistant
- Part-Time Staff:
 - 1 Physical Therapy Aide
- Casual/PRN Staff:
 - 1 Speech Therapist
 - 1 Administrative Assistant



Our team also contributed beyond direct patient care. Notably, Alan Detmer served as a Clinical Instructor for physical therapy student Misty Worcester, who signed a Letter of Intent to join Bigfork Valley in Fall 2025—demonstrating our commitment to mentorship and recruitment.

Rehabilitation Services continued

Key Metrics & Growth

2024 was a strong year for both patient engagement and service delivery:

- **Patient Visits:**
 - 2024: 13,580
 - 2023: 13,506
- **Growth in Billed Services:**
 - +11.4% over 2023
 - +15.1% over 2022
 - +26.5% growth over the past two years

These figures represent sustained expansion and increased community trust in our rehabilitation services.

Professional Development

Our therapists pursued ongoing professional development through both in-person and online continuing education courses in 2024. This investment supports licensure, fosters clinical excellence, and ensures we continue delivering evidence-based, up-to-date care to our patients.

Community Engagement

Our department remains deeply engaged with the Edge of the Wilderness community. Contributions include:

- Hosting job shadow opportunities for students exploring rehabilitation careers
- Participating in career fairs and community education events
- Volunteering in local organizations as coaches and supporters
- Representing Bigfork Valley with professionalism and compassion in all community interactions

Looking Ahead to 2025

We remain focused on continuous improvement and meaningful impact. Our 2025 priorities include:

- Expanding service offerings and specialty areas
- Investing in staff training and development
- Strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration to improve patient outcomes

With growth, innovation, and community engagement at the forefront, the Rehab Department is excited to continue its mission in 2025, delivering care that heals, empowers, and connects.



Chiropractic

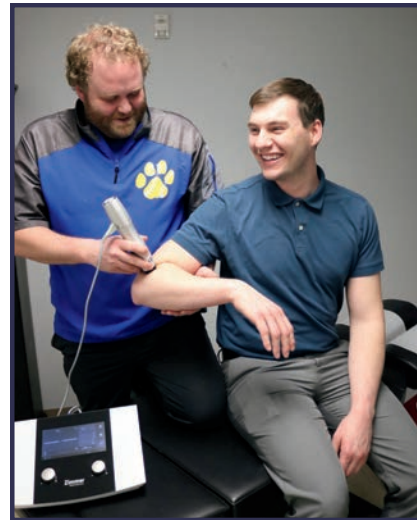
2024 was a year defined by growth, development, and strategic investment in the future of chiropractic care at Bigfork Valley. As a continuation of our expansion, we welcomed Dr. Michalla Dunaj-Compo in April 2023. Her expertise and dedication have significantly enriched the department's ability to serve the community. Together, Dr. Olson and Dr. Dunaj-Compo worked diligently to advance their clinical skills, apply evidence-based treatment strategies, and deliver valuable outreach both within and beyond the clinic walls.

Department Overview

The Chiropractic Department provides a comprehensive range of services to address musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction, with a focus on conditions of the spine and extremities. Our approach combines traditional chiropractic care with modern, research-informed techniques—ensuring personalized, effective treatment for each patient.

Services Provided:

- Manual and low-force chiropractic manipulation
- Myofascial therapy
- Acupuncture / dry needling
- Decompression cupping
- Active care and rehabilitation
- Kinesiology taping
- Cervical and lumbar traction
- Sports physicals
- Functional movement screening
- Other evidence-based therapeutic modalities

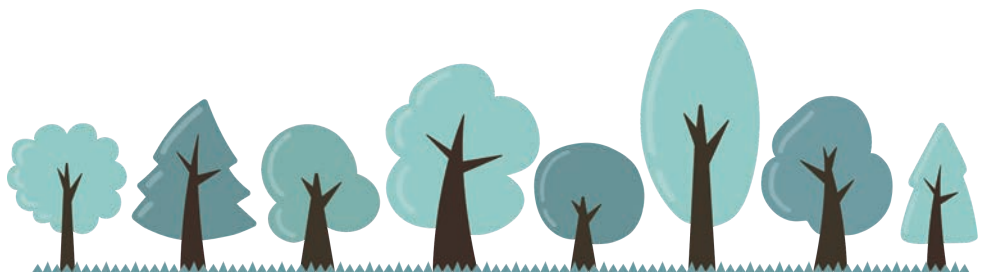


This diverse offering enables us to support a wide range of patient needs, from acute injury recovery to long-term performance and wellness.

Staffing Overview

Our 2024 team structure included:

- Full-Time:
 - 2 Chiropractors
 - 1 Administrative Assistant
- Casual / PRN:
 - 2 Administrative Assistants



The addition of a second full-time chiropractor allowed us to expand patient access, reduce wait times, and further our commitment to quality care.

Annual Statistics & Service Volume

The department continued to show steady growth and operational efficiency throughout the year:

- Procedures Provided: 6,625
- Average Patient Wait Time: 3.9 days post-referral
- Financial Note: Revenue slightly decreased due to short-term onboarding costs associated with our expanded staffing. However, these investments are expected to yield long-term gains in access, volume, and continuity of care.

Chiropractic continued

Professional Development

Our chiropractors remain committed to lifelong learning and clinical excellence. In 2024, professional development efforts included:

- Participation in continuing education through seminars and advanced coursework
- Submission of clinical research contributing to the advancement of chiropractic science
- Strengthening collaboration with interdisciplinary teams to improve patient outcomes
- Engagement in ongoing clinical skill development aligned with best practices

Community Engagement

Our department is proud to serve not only within the clinic but also throughout the community. 2024 outreach activities included:

- Sports Medicine Support: Provided sideline care during football and basketball seasons
- Athletic Performance Programs: Developed training and conditioning plans using the Functional Movement Screen (FMS) system
- Concussion Management: Conducted baseline assessments and guided safe return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols
- Educational Presentations: Spoke to local student organizations and service groups
- Student Mentorship: Acted as preceptors for students and chiropractic interns, including collaboration with Palmer College of Chiropractic

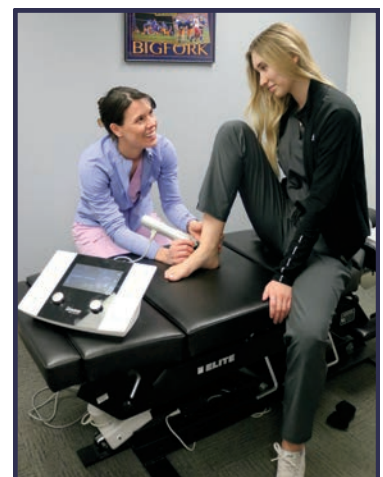
These initiatives reflect our mission to advance both clinical care and preventive health education in the Edge of the Wilderness region.

Looking Ahead to 2025

As we move into the coming year, the Chiropractic Department is focused on the following strategic goals:

- Expand appointment access for high-demand services
- Enhance evidence-based practices across all treatment modalities
- Increase educational outreach and public awareness efforts
- Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration for more integrated patient care

The Chiropractic team remains committed to delivering exceptional care, supporting patient wellness, and making meaningful contributions to the health of our community in 2025 and beyond.



Fitness Center

Since its opening in 2005, the Bigfork Valley Fitness Center has remained a vital part of the community's health and wellness landscape. The year 2024 was no exception—marked by significant growth, strategic development, and continued financial success. For the second consecutive year, the department exceeded budget expectations, reflecting strong community engagement and effective leadership.

Department Overview

The Fitness Center is committed to supporting individuals of all ages and fitness levels in achieving their personal wellness goals. Whether through independent workouts, personal training, or group fitness classes, the Center provides a welcoming, accessible environment that promotes healthy living.

- Key Services Offered:
 - Personal Training
 - Group Fitness Classes
 - Open Gym Access for Independent Use

Staffing Overview

In 2024, the Fitness Center was supported by a small but dedicated team:

- 0.5 FTE Fitness Center Director
- 0.2 FTE Personal Trainer
- Administrative Oversight:
 - Rehab Administrative Assistant
 - Allied Health Services Manager

A notable staffing highlight this year was the addition of Jayme Rahier in July. Jayme brings energy and expertise to both personal training and group class instruction, ensuring continuity as Sue Myers, who has led the Center since 2005, begins planning for her retirement. This thoughtful transition positions the department for ongoing strength and sustainability.

Annual Statistics & Achievements

- Individual Memberships (2024): 327
- Growth Over Previous Years:
 - 125% increase from 2023
 - 28% increase from 2022
- Milestone: Achieved profitability for the second consecutive year

These accomplishments underscore the department's progress in engagement, accessibility, and financial viability.



Fitness Center continued

Challenges & Opportunities

A key challenge remains the aging fitness equipment, most of which is between 12–20 years old. The team continues to pursue cost-effective solutions to maintain a safe, modern, and appealing environment for members.

In 2024, the department also established a membership benchmark goal to serve as a foundation for long-term planning and sustainability.

A major opportunity was realized through a new partnership with Itasca Medical Care. The Fitness Center is now certified to provide fitness benefits to IMCare Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) members. These members now receive:

- Full fitness center membership
- Locker access
- Personal training services

This milestone significantly broadens access for older adults in the region and further strengthens our role in preventive health.

Community Engagement

The Fitness Center continues to play an important role in promoting an active, healthy lifestyle throughout the Bigfork Valley community.

- Ongoing initiatives include:
 - Outreach and programming to boost community participation
 - Collaboration with other departments on hospital-wide wellness goals
 - Advocacy for healthy habits across all age groups

Staff remain committed to finding new, innovative ways to engage, support, and inspire individuals in their wellness journeys.

Looking Ahead to 2025

In the year ahead, the Fitness Center will focus on:

- Pursuing equipment upgrades and capital improvements
- Retaining and growing active memberships
- Enhancing community wellness programs and partnerships
- Exploring grant funding and fundraising opportunities to support long-term facility improvements

As we build on the momentum of the past two years, the Bigfork Valley Fitness Center remains a trusted, accessible, and essential part of our community's commitment to better health.



Pharmacy

MISSION

The mission of Bigfork Valley Pharmacy is to provide excellent pharmaceutical care rooted in skill and compassion.



RETAIL PHARMACY

Statistics:

The total number of retail pharmacy prescriptions that were processed from January 1st to July 31st of 2025 came to 24,257. This is an increase of over 700 prescriptions in comparison to the same period last year. Prescriptions are dispensed on-site, mailed out, packaged for our assisted living tenants and long-term care residents, and couriered to our tele-pharmacy locations in Bigfalls, Floodwood, and Northome.

Services Provided:

- 340B Prescription Services with SRHS Clinics
- Drug Disposal Events for Community
- Educational Materials and In-services
- LTC Prescription Services
- Mail and Courier Services
- Medication Therapy Management
- Non-Sterile Compounding
- SMI Cold Therapy and DME
- Outpatient Prescription Services
 - Bigfork Campus
 - Tele-pharmacies in Bigfalls, Floodwood, & Northome
- Over-the-counter items
- Prescription counseling
- RxLocal Refill System
- Safe Medication Disposal Education
- Other Services

Accomplishments:

- Our pharmacy now offers the option for telephone notifications when prescriptions are ready for pick up. This has been greatly received by our community.
- Additionally, our pharmacy now offers large print labels to assist our patients who have low vision. These labels meet the requirements of the MN Statutes and are available upon request.
- A drug disposal event was held for our community in conjunction with the Itasca County Sheriff's Office on May 1st. The event was a success and over 28 pounds of medications were collected for safe disposal.



Pharmacy continued

HOSPITAL PHARMACY

Statistics:

- 7,355 medication orders were evaluated, corrected or recommendations suggested, verified and released for distribution by our team of pharmacists from January 1st to July 31st of 2025.
- 11,207 medication doses were dispensed either through automated dispensing cabinets, of which our pharmacy technician stocks, or through medication preparation in the inpatient pharmacy during this same period.

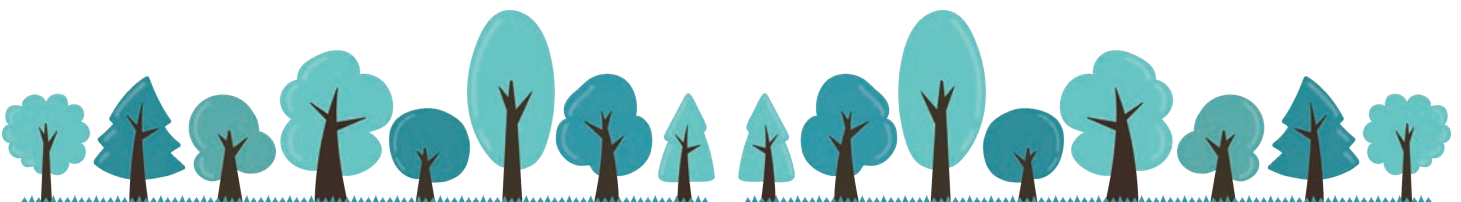
Services Provided:

- Antibiotic Stewardship
- Discharge Medication Counseling
- Immunization Services
- Medication Reconciliation
- Non-sterile Compounding
- Pharmacist-Managed Vancomycin Dosing
- Pharmacist-Managed Warfarin Dosing
- Sterile Compounding



Accomplishments:

- Our Director of Pharmacy, Dr. Sara Eliooff, PharmD, continues to co-lead our multi-disciplinary Antibiotic Stewardship Committee along with Dr. Eric Scrivner, MD. Together, they ensure appropriate antibiotic use for better patient outcomes and reduction of antibiotic resistance. Their committee has retained the honor of being included in the MDH Gold Honor Roll since its inception. We are eager to implement new stewardship initiatives with our EMR conversion to Epic in the coming year, as the program has robust stewardship features imbedded throughout its modules.
- Dr. Eliooff also leads our Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, which establishes policies on the use of drug products and therapies and identifies drug products and therapies that are the most medically appropriate and cost-effective to best serve the health and interests of our given patient population.
- Both pharmacies underwent their state survey in July. The surveys were completed without a single deficiency.



Surgery and Outpatient Services

The Surgical and Outpatient Services Department has experienced several exciting changes in 2025, with even more developments on the horizon. Our team remains committed to expanding services and delivering exceptional care to patients in our community and surrounding areas.

Highlights from 2025:

- Our Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship Program continues to progress successfully. Our apprentice is now more than halfway through the curriculum and is preparing to sit for the national certification exam in winter 2026 to become a Certified Surgical Technologist.
- In May, we welcomed Dr. Benjamin Roy, who now provides General Surgical Services twice per month. His specialties include endoscopy (colonoscopy and upper endoscopy), hernia repair, gallbladder removal, excisions, appendectomy, and more. Dr. Roy has been a valuable addition to our team.
- We are working to expand our gynecological services to better meet the needs of local patients who currently travel for care that could be provided here with minimal equipment upgrades. Beginning this fall, we plan to offer additional providers and an expanded list of procedures, including hysteroscopies, dilation and curettage (D&C), laparoscopic tubal ligations, and more.
- Dr. Lemker recently introduced the use of Orthogrid AI technology during hip replacement surgeries. This advancement improves surgical efficiency while reducing radiation exposure in the operating room, furthering our commitment to patient safety and quality outcomes.

Accomplishments:

- Achieved 100% barcode scanning compliance in medication administration for two consecutive months, ensuring accuracy and enhancing patient safety.



Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac Rehabilitation plays a critical role in helping patients recover and thrive. Research shows that patients who attend 36 cardiac rehab sessions have a 47% lower risk of death and a 31% lower risk of heart attack compared to those who attend only one session.

Program Updates:

- **New Equipment:** Purchased and installed new exercise equipment, including a SciFit machine and treadmill, providing a refreshed and modernized gym space.
- **Enhanced Safety:** Added updated informational posters and new hand hygiene stations to promote health and safety during workouts.
- **Patient Support:** Introduced new admission welcome packages, which include a “swag bag” with a stress ball, patient education materials, healthy recipes, and sample workouts to encourage patients on their recovery journey.

Specialty Clinic

The Specialty Clinic has experienced significant growth in 2025, with new service lines being introduced and existing ones expanded to better meet the needs of our community. Our ongoing goal is to continue developing services that bring quality care closer to home.

Highlights from 2025:

- **Diabetes Care Expansion:** We welcomed Dr. Helterbrand, Diabetic Specialty MD, who provides care for uncontrolled Type I and Type II diabetes, gestational diabetes, insulin pump management, continuous glucose monitoring, and diabetes-related complications. Telehealth diabetes education and dietitian visits have also increased, becoming a vital resource for patients. The rapid growth of this service highlights the great need for diabetes care in our service area.
- **Wound Care Services:** Returning in August, wound care will now be offered weekly in the Specialty Clinic by Dr. Baich. Our team will also receive support from Healogics, ensuring access to ongoing education, clinical decision-making support, and additional resources. This addition means community members no longer need to travel to receive wound care services.
- **OB/GYN Services:** OB/GYN care is transitioning from Dr. Lane Meyer to Dr. Katy Johnson (Grand Itasca) and Dr. Alexander Bader (Sanford Bemidji). Both providers are committed to delivering outpatient obstetric and gynecology services locally. Gynecology care will continue through the Specialty Clinic, with surgical procedures available in our Surgery Center, helping ensure patients receive comprehensive care close to home.
- **Cardiology Outreach:** Beginning in late summer, Mia Dobbs, APRN (Sanford Bemidji), will provide monthly cardiology outreach services, expanding local access to heart health care.
- **Specialty Support Services:** We welcomed Amanda Perkovich, Nurse Practitioner, to the Specialty Clinic team. Currently training alongside providers, she will soon begin seeing her own patients for pre- and post-operative care.



Dr. Christina Helterbrand



Amanda Perkovich, NP

Radiology

SERVICES PROVIDED

X-Ray	DEXA scan
CT	Nuclear Medicine
MRI	Interventional Procedures
Ultrasound	EKG
Mammography	Echocardiograms



GOALS

- To provide high quality diagnostic images and outstanding patient care while learning and advancing our skills.
- To implement a new Picture Archive Communication System or PACS into the hospital.
- To continue to partner with Lake Superior College to provide quality training for students in the area to become Rad Techs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

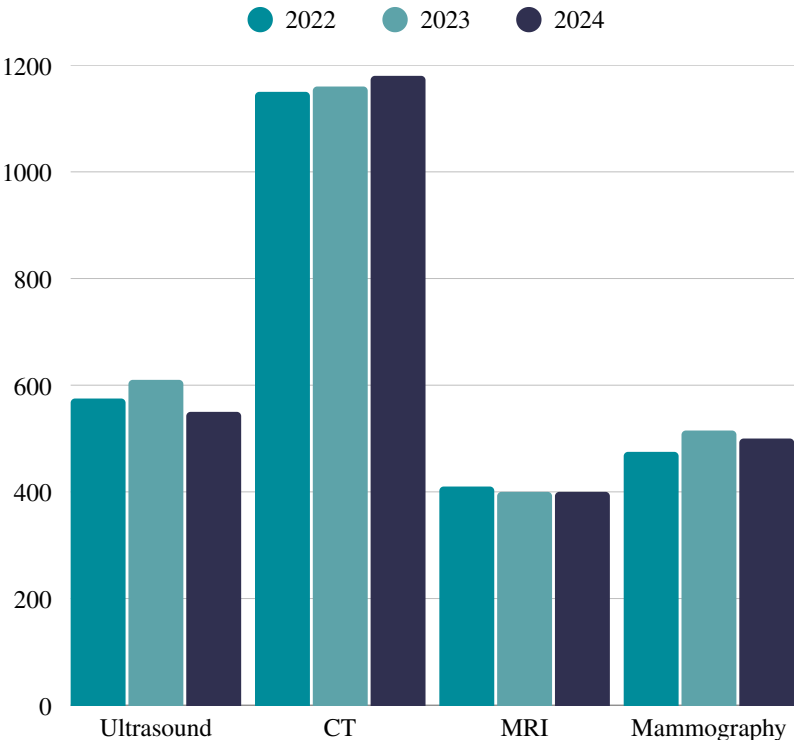
- We passed our inspection through the FDA/MQSA in Mammography.
- We were able to hire a new technologist to fill the open full-time position that we have been filling with temp staffing for the last year.
- Partnered with VRAD’s Breast Imaging team for all mammography reads that include real-time diagnostic exams and results.

STAFFING

Katie Gilbertson RT, Manager of Radiology
 Cindy Aultman, RT
 John Jacobson, RT/CT
 Kristen Pitzen, RT/M
 Jailyn Cleath, RT
 Mary Christensen, RT/M
 Tanya Hemphill, RDMS/Sonographer

STATISTICS 2024-2025

Total Procedures.....	6208
X-Ray.....	2526
CT.....	1202
Mammography.....	468
Ultrasound.....	442
DEXA scan.....	131
MRI.....	388
Nuclear Medicine.....	7
Cardiology (ekg/echo).....	1044



Laboratory



STAFF

- Vance Koppelman, MLS, Laboratory Manager
- Londa Storlie, MLS, Outreach Laboratory Supervisor
- Dawn Johnson, MLT
- Caci Richards, MLT
- Dylan Ellis, MLT
- Emily Brinker, MLT
- Aaron Saude, MLT
- Rhonda Lambrecht, Lab Assistant
- Maura Riley, Floodwood Clinic
- Sandra Spindler, Floodwood Clinic
- Kim Houwman, Courier
- Judy Pinette, Courier



SERVICES PROVIDED TO:

- Bigfork Valley Hospital
- Scenic Rivers Clinics in Bigfork, Floodwood, Northome, Bigfalls, and Eveleth.

TESTING SERVICES OFFERED:

- Chemistry, Immunology, Hematology, PCR testing, urinalysis coagulation, kit testing, and microbiology.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hired a new Laboratory Assistant after the previous assistant transferred to another department.
- Promoted our laboratory intern, a recent Medical Laboratory Technician graduate, into a vacated position.
- Continued support from casual employees to help with on-call needs.
- Technology & Equipment
- Replaced our 23-year-old blood culture instrument with an updated model to enhance reliability and accuracy.
- Preparing for the implementation of EPIC, a new Laboratory Information System (LIS), to improve workflow and integration across departments.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- In April, in celebration of Laboratory Week, we offered free comprehensive metabolic and lipid panels to Bigfork Valley employees.
- Regulatory
- Successfully completed our State CLIA inspection in May 2025 with positive results.

MISSION

To provide quality service in a timely, accurate, and efficient manner to ensure high quality patient care and enhanced patient health.

Acute Care

Quality Improvement & Patient Safety

In 2024, the Acute Care Department continued to prioritize quality, safety, and process improvement through strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts.

Key highlights include:

- **Board Engagement:** Hospital Board members were invited to attend Quality Assurance Performance Improvement (QAPI) meetings, enhancing transparency, and shared responsibility.
- **Peer Review Enhancement:** The peer review process was refined to offer more pertinent and actionable feedback, increasing its value in improving clinical practice.
- **Infection Control:** Significant updates were made to infection control policies, with a focus on water management and laundry services to ensure compliance and safety.
- **Technology Integration:** Barcode scanning for patient and medication identification was expanded to the Emergency Department, utilizing available technology to reduce medication errors and promote patient safety.

Equipment & Infrastructure Updates

This year brought important equipment upgrades and facility improvements that enhance our clinical capabilities and patient care experience:

- New Defibrillators were acquired in May for use in both the hospital and ED; all medical and nursing staff received training on the new devices.
- A complete equipment inventory review was conducted with Agiliti, our biomedical maintenance partner, ensuring operational readiness and contract compliance.
- Midline catheters are now available in addition to PICC lines, offering more flexible IV access options for patients.
- A new pacemaker interrogator was acquired through Medtronic, supporting cardiac care in the ED.
- Emergency Department entrance improvements were completed with new cement work to enhance safety and accessibility.

Staffing & Workforce Development

2024 was a productive year for staffing growth, leadership, and workforce development within Acute Care:

- Two new full-time RNs from the local area joined the team, strengthening our community connection.
- Nursing staff enrolled in the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) Triage Curriculum to further their ED competencies.
- The first DAISY Award at Bigfork Valley was presented to Nikki Jones, recognizing excellence in compassionate nursing care.
- Karlee Mann was hired as Utilization Review / Care Coordinator, a new role supporting care transitions, workflow efficiency, and service optimization.
- Staff actively promoted healthcare careers through participation in SCRUBS Camp and speaking engagements at Greenway High School's Healthcare Career Explorations class.
- Nursing leadership participated in specialized training, including:
 - Minnesota Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication
 - FEMA's Mass Fatalities Planning and Response for Rural Communities

Acute Care continued



Patient Advocacy & Community Engagement

Advocacy for patients and community engagement remained central to the department's mission in 2024. Key initiatives included:

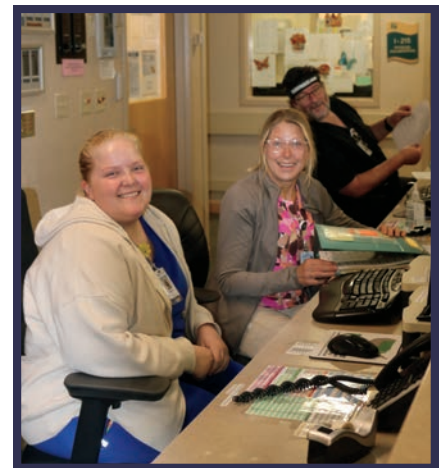
- Pie and Preplanning Event coordinated by Haley Page, LSW, providing education on aging-related topics such as fall prevention, hospice, advanced directives, and pre-planned burials.
- Follow-up phone calls for discharged hospital and ED patients are now conducted in-house, improving care continuity and patient support.
- Patient & Family Advisory Committee: Community members are invited to help shape hospital decisions. Recruitment for new members is ongoing.
- Haley Page also offered Medicare Open Enrollment assistance, helping patients navigate their options.
- Participation in Stratis Health's Learning Action Network as part of the Minnesota Critical Access Hospital initiative, addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) such as transportation, housing, food security, personal safety, and utility access.
- Continued involvement in a Minnesota Department of Health grant promoting swing bed program utilization, in partnership with Allevant Solutions, LLC.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, the Acute Care Department remains committed to:

- Elevating quality and safety through evidence-based practice
- Supporting workforce excellence and recruitment
- Strengthening patient-centered care and community advocacy
- Investing in equipment, technology, and infrastructure to enhance service delivery

The Acute Care team at Bigfork Valley continues to lead with compassion, clinical excellence, and a deep commitment to the people we serve.



Dietary

We are proud to report that as of this year, our Dietary Department is fully staffed and operating at full capacity. Our dedicated team consists of 7 full-time, 4 part-time, and 4 casual cooks, allowing us to keep all facility kitchens open and fully functional.

Kitchen Operations & Equipment Updates

Over the past year, several key equipment upgrades have supported our continued commitment to food quality and safety:

- Aspen Kitchen: New stove installed and a new dishwasher added.
- Tamarack Kitchen: Received a new dishwasher.
- Villa Kitchen: Installed a new refrigerator/freezer unit.
- Main Kitchen: Undergoing a range oven overhaul; a new warmer was purchased late last year.

Wanigan Enhancements

The Wanigan café continues to evolve, offering more options to meet the needs of staff, patients, and visitors. Recent additions to the Grab-N-Go cooler include:

- Fresh sandwiches
- Fruit and protein packs
- Boiled eggs
- Protein bars, chips, and bagels

We also offer a hot meal, salad bar, and soup Monday through Friday from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM. Catering services remain available for all meeting groups at Bigfork Valley.

Meal Service Overview

We continue to provide consistent and quality meals across our facility:

- Aspen: ~23 meals per service, three times daily
- Villa: ~22 for lunch, ~12 for supper
- Hospital: ~2–3 meals per service, three times daily
- Catering: ~3–5 meetings per month
- Wanigan: ~60 meals served daily (Monday–Friday)



Cookie Production

An essential part of our hospitality—cookies! While exact numbers are hard to track, we estimate baking approximately 4,500 cookies per month, delighting staff, patients, and guests alike.



Plant Operations

Staffing

Josh Kinn: Plant Operations Manager

- **Maintenance Technicians**

- 5- Full-Time employees
- 1- Part-Time employee
- 2- Casual employees

- **Housekeeping**

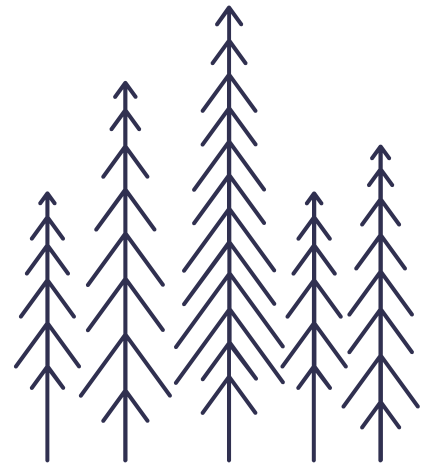
- 9- Full-Time employees
- 3- Casual employees

- **Gardener**

- 1- Casual employee

- **Janitor**

- 1- Full-Time employee



Housekeeping

Our Housekeeping staff and Janitor continue to play an essential role in keeping Bigfork Valley clean and welcoming. Even when short-staffed, the team consistently goes above and beyond to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for patients, residents, visitors, and staff. We are grateful for their dedication and commitment.

Gardening

This past year, we welcomed Mary as our new gardener. She has brought great energy and care to her work, making our campus grounds more inviting and beautiful for all who visit.

Maintenance

The Maintenance team experienced a few staffing changes this year but remains a hardworking and committed group. Their efforts keep our facilities running smoothly while also enhancing and improving spaces across campus.

Completed Projects

- Replaced all exterior doors in the Villa
- Installed new main entrance door
- Remodeled Villa dining and fireside areas
- Patched and painted operating rooms in the Surgery Center
- Created a new education room in Long-Term Care
- Replaced the ER sidewalk
- Updated boiler controls
- Upgraded several washing machines at the laundromat
- Implemented a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) to streamline and track work orders



Current & Upcoming Projects

- Replacing siding above bay windows in Long-Term Care
- Upgrading Johnson Controls software
- Replacing the Long-Term Care entrance sidewalk
- Removing dead trees along the river
- Remodeling the Specialty Clinic



Long-Term Care



Nursing Assistant Training

- We continue to provide onsite training with flexible hours.
- Last year we collaborated with the college and schools for high school credits in the 2024/2025 school year and had students complete their test on site.
- We started two TMA classes for current employees and those who have completed the class and received their certificates were Ayiana Dial, Annie Barber, Hallie Rahier, Anastasia Haatja, and Josephine Kinn.

Transportation and Resident Activities

- Hired a new bus driver to continue to offer residents transportation for appointments and events.
- Besides medical appointments, residents have gone on numerous fun trips like Bingo in Gunn Park, Edge of the Wilderness Discovery Center, Scenic Drives, Bello Lake drive for fall color tours, Lights in the Pines, Wilderness Days and local restaurants.

Achievements and Surveys

- Five-star facility rating
- We are now a contracted facility with Veterans Affairs and able to offer increased help for veterans in our community.
- We were selected as a Critical Access Nursing Facility.



Future Plans

- Tamarack has been revitalized and now has four long term care residents residing in the unit.
- Current census is at 23 and we continue to work towards expanding our census with the opening of the Tamarack unit.



It has been a busy year with many changes taking place. We are very thankful for the hard work and dedication Deb Morell provided during her time as our DON. Deb stepped down and is now enjoying her role as Infection Preventionist and Educator. We welcomed Paula McKellar as our new Director of Nursing and we are excited to have her be part of the team. Our staff continues to provide excellent care and compassion to our residents here at Bigfork Valley.



Assisted Living

Staffing

- Clinical Nursing Manager (1)
- Housing Coordinator (1)
- CNA (4)
- CNA/TMA (2)

Census

- All Villa apartments are fully occupied
- Assisted Living residents (14)
- Independent Living residents (20)

Completed Projects

- Exterior siding staining completed
- Living room and dining room refreshed with bright, warm new paint
- Continued upgrades with new appliances in resident apartments
- Ongoing replacement of flooring and light fixtures in apartments
- Garden boxes added to the riverside patio for resident use

Leadership Highlights

- Jillian Haataja earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Public Health certification
- Melanie Caron was awarded a HCBS Scholarship and is nearing completion of her LPN licensure. She is expected to transition into her new role in Spring 2026.

State Survey Success

Our Assisted Living facility recently completed a state survey, receiving commendation from the lead surveyor for both quality of care and staff professionalism. With no critical deficiencies identified, we are proud of this outstanding result.

Satisfaction Survey

At the close of 2024, our Resident and Family Quality of Life and Satisfaction Survey reflected exceptional outcomes, with scores continuing to rise in 2025. Over 90% of residents and families reported satisfaction, placing Bigfork Valley Villa among the highest-rated facilities in Itasca County. This recognition highlights our dedication to personalized care, community connection, and ongoing improvement.

Resident Engagement

Resident engagement remained a top priority throughout the year. With the combined efforts of our campus transportation team, Villa staff, and community outreach partners, residents enjoyed a wide variety of meaningful activities and outings. From music concerts and dinner trips to Bingo nights and seasonal celebrations, these experiences enrich daily life while fostering stronger bonds with the community.



Gift Nest

The Gift Nest: A Year of Growth and Community Connection

The Gift Nest reopened on December 2, beginning an exciting new chapter of growth and community connection. Since then, it has expanded both its offerings and its reach, bringing fresh energy to the hospital's gift shop and creating meaningful opportunities for patients, visitors, and community members to enjoy.

Thanks to generous support from local organizations, exciting improvements were made this year. A grant from the Bigfork Valley Community Foundation funded a flower cooler, allowing The Gift Nest to offer fresh floral arrangements year-round. A generous \$5,000 donation from the Bigfork Valley Auxiliary further enhanced the shop's ability to bring in unique products, while an anonymous donor funded new signage on Main Street and at the hospital entrance, making the gift shop easier to find.

The shelves have been refreshed with special new offerings. Readers have enjoyed works from several Minnesota book authors, while gourmet items from Terrapin Ridge Farms have become popular gift selections. Fahlo animal-tracking bracelets remain a customer favorite, and we have now stocked new Bigfork clothing. Always committed to supporting local talent, The Gift Nest continues to seek out Minnesota-based vendors to showcase their work.

The Gift Nest's role extends beyond retail, it also gives back to the community. This year, it supported the Bigfork Fire Department's Ham Bingo fundraiser with donations and silent auction items, and provided valuable learning opportunities for youth. Proceeds from the Gift Nest supported the purchase of the new Shock Wave Therapy System, a new service being offered in Bigfork Valley's Chiropractic office. The shop celebrated student intern Annie as she graduated from Bigfork High School and has welcomed Brooklynn, who is a senior in the 2025-2026 year, to gain hands-on retail experience.

Looking ahead, The Gift Nest is excited to continue growing with the help of volunteers. Shoppers are invited to stop in, explore the latest selections, and know that every purchase supports both the hospital and the community. Our current hours are Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m..

