

CT Scanning Services Coming to the Ruby Valley Hospital

Before the end of the year, Ruby Valley residents will no longer need to travel to Butte, Dillon or Ennis if they need a CT or CAT scan. The Ruby Valley Hospital has purchased a refurbished Toshiba Aquilion 16 Gantry Long Couch Computed Tomography (CT) scanner. It will soon be installed in a facility adjacent to the hospital.

The Ruby Valley Hospital's CEO, John Semingson, is pleased that the hospital will soon be able to offer CT scanning services. "The CT unit will greatly reduce the number of emergency trips to Dillon and Butte that are required of the volunteers at Ruby Valley Ambulance. Also, pre-surgery CT scans can be performed locally and the results sent to the requesting surgeon," said Semingson. Since the cost of a CT scan is the same whether it's done in Butte or Sheridan, having a local source for the scan will reduce healthcare costs by eliminating a significant travel expense.

Mary Ann Birdsill, head of the Ruby Valley Hospital's radiology department, explains that the 16 multi-slice scanner produces a 3D image from multiple X-rays that are reassembled using a digital geometric process. "When a patient comes to the emergency room due to an accident or acute discomfort, a CT scan can rule out or confirm conditions such as appendicitis, ruptures or bleeding," said Birdsill. A CT scanner can see hundreds of different levels of density and create images of tissues inside a solid organ. It is the preferred scanning technology for cancer, pneumonia, bleeding in the brain, broken bones, lungs and organs in the chest cavity, vertebrae, organ tearing and organ injury.



CEO, John Semingson and Radiology Manager, Mary Ann Birdsill are eager to open the new CT scanning facility.

A former storage building near the east side of the Hospital is currently being remodeled and refitted to accommodate the scanner and the work area for the radiology department staff.

The Ruby Valley Hospital has hired locally owned JDL Construction, Rossiter Electric, 4 Rivers Concrete and Brown Plumbing & Heating to prepare the facility. “There will be a covered walkway between the hospital building and the CT scanning facility, so that we can easily move

patients and gurneys back and forth, regardless of the weather,” said Semingson. The remodeling and system installation should be completed by mid-November. Two weeks of staff training will follow the system installation and the scanner is expected to be ready for patients in early December.

Dennis Holschbach, CFO for the hospital, said that the cost of the CT scanner and the remodeling will be approximately \$300,000. “These units are necessary, even in a small critical access hospital like Ruby Valley, to keep up with the current standards for care,” said Holschbach. He is glad that this service that should reduce our local healthcare expense and make life a little easier for Ruby Valley residents.

The Ruby Valley Hospital has been designated a Critical Access Hospital and is a Level 5 Montana Trauma Receiving Facility.

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