

SIERRA VISTA HOSPITAL: PROUD TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY AS A CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL

JANUARY, 2025



One of only 13 rural hospitals in New Mexico to be designated as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH), Sierra Vista Hospital (SVH) provides emergency and critical care services to Sierra County and beyond, bringing peace of mind to our residents, many of whom live in remote areas of Sierra County's 4,236 square miles. Our emergency department serves travelers, visitors, and residents alike with 24/7 expertise and care. Without Sierra Vista, the only alternative to emergency medical services would be facilities in Socorro (73 miles north) or Las Cruces (75 miles south).

Sierra Vista Hospital emergency department providers are trained to provide advanced life-saving measures, including trauma resuscitation, advanced cardiac life support, advanced airway management, and stabilization. Plus, our 25-member EMS team, one of the few Critical Care Ground Transports in the entire state, assists onsite and in the field with specialized teams that include crisis intervention, swift water rescue, and technical rescue. We also partner with several helicopter EMS services, enabling us to quickly transport patients to our hospital and well as to other facilities for specialized care when needed.

The Critical Access Hospital (CAH) designation was created by Congress in 1997 in response to hundreds of rural hospital closures in the 1980s and early 1990s. Congress did so with two main goals in mind: (1) reduce the financial vulnerability of rural hospitals and (2) improve healthcare access by ensuring that essential health services would be available in rural communities.

To qualify as a Critical Access Hospital, we must be located more than 35 miles from another hospital, participate in the Medicare program, be licensed as an acute care hospital, and furnish 24-hour emergency care services seven (7) days a week. Additionally, we can have no more than 25 beds and must maintain an annual average length of stay of 96 hours or less for acute care patients.

While critical care is our primary responsibility, we also provide additional healthcare services through our Rural Health Clinic, Walk-in Clinic, and Community EMS program as well as lab, radiology, behavioral health, rehabilitation, and transitional (swing bed) services. Because of these additional services, our county residents and visitors enjoy the convenience of regular and walk-in health care, saving them time and money that would be spent on traveling to facilities outside of Sierra County while bringing exceptional health care close to home.