

seconds seconds

save lives save lives



GUNNISON VALLEY HEALTH
FOUNDATION



2022 Case Statement



**Seconds Save Lives
is a \$10 million
capital campaign
to address a
critical need for
a new station for
Gunnison Valley
Health Paramedics.**

A realistic estimate is that the new station will reduce 911 response time by about four minutes, and new research links this quicker response to a projected 107% improvement in cardiac arrest survival rates in Gunnison County.

A larger, updated station in a better location will:

- Improve patient response time to 911 calls - saving lives
- Improve patient safety, satisfaction rates and outcomes
- Expand services, including community training
- Support the safety and health of the emergency responders
- Help our rural community recruit and retain health professionals

A new station with sleeping quarters where all ambulances and apparatus can be properly garaged and stored will greatly and positively impact patient response time.



Most people don't think of paramedics until they need to call 911. While hoping to never need to serve you, rest assured that a new station will help Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to provide you, your family and our community with the best critical care medicine and rescue services available.

“
My wife and I are especially thankful to the first responders who reached our son, Theo, when he was injured mountain biking near Gunnison. He had a serious neck injury and no feeling or movement in his extremities. Your team comforted him, and administered exactly the right medicine and technique to safely transport him to Grand Junction. We were told that he might never walk again, but your team was a critical factor in his ultimate healing.
”

Tim K.,
Theo's Father

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics (aka Gunnison Valley Health Emergency Medical Services or GVH EMS)

are vital to Gunnison County's:

- Healthcare
- Public Health
- Public Safety Systems

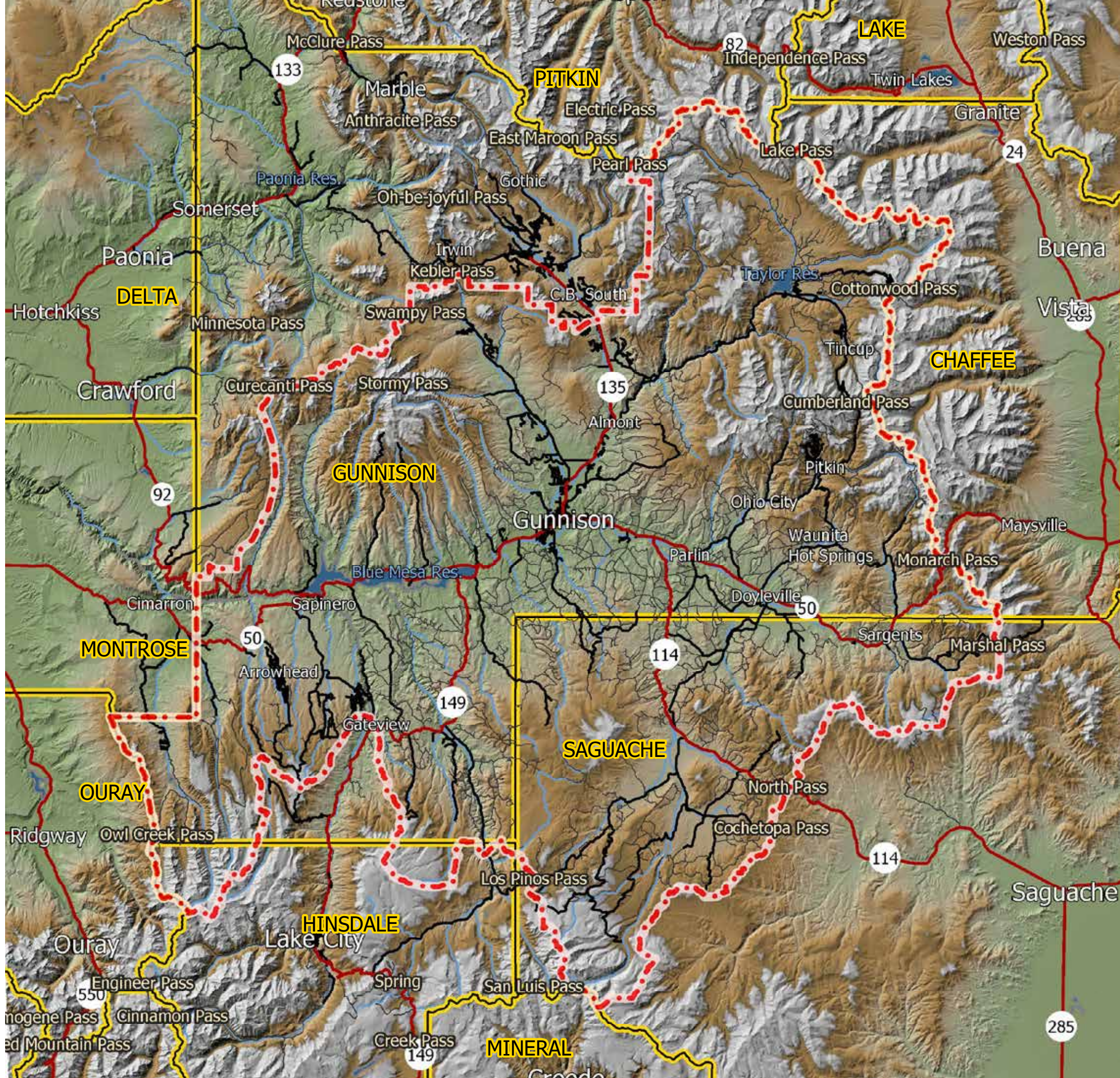
Every day, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics respond to calls for help involving injuries and acute illnesses - including heart attacks, difficulty breathing, falls, drownings, strokes and overdoses. The 24/7 staff respond to all medical emergencies, including rescue hazards.

The team is comprised of individuals certified in swift water rescue, ice rescue, avalanche rescue, wildland firefighting, HAZMAT, emergency planning, and rope rescue. They utilize response equipment including snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-road vehicles and work closely with air medical services when required.

Additionally, GVH Paramedics are an integral component of our community's ability to respond to public health crises. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, GVH Paramedics have responded to COVID-related 911 calls; helped to develop and operate the COVID-19 Call Center; and have supported the community's vaccine response. Chief, CJ Malcolm, was Co-Commander of the County's Pandemic Response with the Director of Gunnison County Health and Human Services, Joni Reynolds.

GVH Paramedics are a fully professional team, highly trained in all-hazard and critical care level response. They are the only EMS in the state cleared to transport and administer blood on ambulances and many personnel are flight paramedic certified. GVH Paramedics are considered a leader in the EMS industry, often setting the precedent of how other EMS agencies train and operate.





The service area includes Gunnison County, a large portion of Saguache County, and small sections of Montrose and Hinsdale Counties. Additionally, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics assist Hinsdale County by backing up the Lake City all-volunteer based EMS.

--- Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics Territory

Service Area

4,400 square miles. Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics serve the largest response zone in the State of Colorado. (A typical Fire or Emergency Medical Services District is 100 - 400 square miles.)

The district is massive, remote, and encompasses multiple mountain ranges. Primary service areas include Gunnison, Almont, Roaring Judy Valley, Taylor River Canyon, Taylor Park, the Collegiate and Saguache Mountains, Tin Cup, Pitkin, Ohio City, White Pine, Sergeants, Old Agency Road Area, all Saguache communities on County Road 38 towards the Sawtooths/Old Agency, Powderhorn communities, Currecanti communities, Soap Creek, the West Elk Range, Arrowhead, Little Cimarron out to Silver Jack Reservoir, Ohio Creek Valley, and the Fossil Ridge Wilderness.

There is also a formal Mutual Aid Agreement for Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to closely partner with the Crested Butte Fire Protection District Paramedics serving Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and CB South on mutual aid emergencies, a regular occurrence during peak summer and winter seasons.

Even if you do not reside within the GVH Paramedics service area, it is almost certain that you spend a generous portion of your time recreating and traveling within their response zone.

Additionally, if you are faced with a life-threatening condition out of the scope of care for Gunnison Valley Hospital, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are the primary team that will care for you and transport you to nearly any specialized medical center from Montrose to Grand Junction to Denver.

It is easy to assume that Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are available to us 24/7. The reality is that rural EMS districts are increasingly vulnerable to scaling back, or, in some cases, even eliminating service.

Growth

Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have faced rapid expansion, particularly over the past several years, while delivering some of the best service in the State of Colorado within the critical care scope of practice.

Once a mostly volunteer team of college students with a handful of professional paramedics, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics now have 21 full-time staff and 10-20 on-call staff. Twenty years ago, the department ran approximately 600 calls per year, few of which extended beyond Gunnison County borders.

Currently, GVH Paramedics respond to approximately 1,600 calls per year, and have experienced an average 10% increase in call volume every year since 2017.

This rapid expansion is caused by increased population and tourism in the region, as well as expanded service lines including critical care level interfacility transports (IFTs) to larger metropolitan hospitals outside Gunnison County.

2018 demonstrated 166 interfacility transports (IFTs) requiring 987 hours of ambulance operation and nearly 40,000 traveled ambulance miles. 2021 concluded with 281 IFTs, over 1,500 hours of ambulance operation and over 70,000 ambulance miles – a 70% increase in IFT volume and a 75% increase of time on the road in just the last three years. Frequent response is required to facilities as far away as University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora, 221 miles from Gunnison. The impacts of this expanded service on Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have been dramatic.

While morale remains relatively high, the burden of increased call volume combined with an inadequate facility to rest, rehab and respond weighs heavily on all crews. Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are in serious need of an updated ADA and OSHA compliant station.



The Challenge:

Dangerously Delayed Response Times

GVH Paramedics operate from a steel prefab modular shell designed in 1998 for:

- Fewer and smaller ambulances
- Far less equipment
- A small fraction of the current staff

There are no sleeping quarters for on-call personnel.

As the current station has never had sleeping quarters, paramedics used to respond from home to after-hours calls. Eight years ago, to reduce response times, paramedics began to sleep in GVH provided housing closer to the station.

Response time is defined as the time of the initial 911 page to going “enroute” with the ambulance leaving the station.

Industry standard night response is required to be less than two minutes from time of dispatch to going enroute. Services in urban environments often respond in less than 30 seconds.

Average response times at night for GVH Paramedics are 5 to 7 minutes due to the long distance to the station. In the winter, response time can double due to snowy and icy conditions.

Paramedics have fallen and been injured on the snow and ice trying to respond quickly to a 911 page. Staff have been knocked unconscious from slipping and hitting their heads, and others have injured their backs, knees, wrists and shoulders.



The Challenge:

The current station is crammed with personnel, paperwork and growing amounts of gear. There are serious storage problems and not enough space to garage all the ambulances and response equipment during Gunnison’s harsh winters.

The current station lacks the space to:

- Properly garage and maintain ambulances and equipment
- Adequately train, especially at the critical care level
- Perform administrative work efficiently and safely
- Allow personnel to share meals, plan for missions, debrief and destress

Only 3 of the 6 ambulances can be garaged. In the winter months, ungaraged ambulances are often impossible to start and rehab after being frozen for extended periods. There is also no room to garage two 4X4 Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs), two trailers, and one 6X6 Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) used for backcountry response.

Ambulance bays are not deep enough to house an ambulance and remove the gurney, which makes cleaning and sanitizing very challenging, especially during winter. Also, proper antennas on ambulances cannot be mounted due to low clearance in the bays.

Crew training must take place off-site in multi-use facilities. This requires additional staff time for setting up and tearing down.

Multiple staff members must share offices, and department captains are particularly impacted in terms of work productivity and privacy. Storage areas and a mop closet have been converted into offices. Boxes and supplies have piled up in hallways and common areas creating potential hazards.



The Plan:

A new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) station that will meet the needs of patients, responders and our community for at least the next 25 years.

The scope of the capital campaign project covers the replacement of the current station and addresses at least the next 25 years of paramedic service for the Gunnison Region.

Priorities for the new building include:

- Functionality
- Accessibility
- Visibility
- Longevity

The new station will be located on Highway 135 at Van Tuyl Circle. This centrally located site on a main thoroughfare will help facilitate rapid response and provide strategic access to the north and south areas of the GVH Paramedics' response zone.

The new station will feature sleeping quarters for personnel; ample storage to accommodate all apparatus on site and indoors; administrative space suited to current and future staffing models, an education and training space open to the public; and a kitchen and dining area.

** Building details may be subject to change as plans are finalized and approved.*



Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are not tax-funded like fire and police departments. For over 20 years, Gunnison Valley Health has subsidized the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department. GVH operational funding and minimal insurance reimbursements are simply not enough to fund the capital expense of a new station.

The Capital Campaign

The Seconds Save Lives capital campaign was launched in the spring of 2021. By year-end the campaign was almost halfway to the goal. We need your help to reach our goal.

Capital Campaign Goal
\$10 million

Funding	
\$2 million	Gunnison County Pledge
\$2 million	Gunnison Valley Health Match
\$ 420,000	Event Proceeds & Donations from Individuals
\$4,420,000	Raised (as of December 2021)
\$5,580,000	Needed

To Donate Contact:
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gunnisonvalleyhealth.org/savelives

Contact Jenny Birnie about naming opportunities in the new station, gifts of stock, corporate matching gifts, or pledges and payment schedules.

The Gunnison Valley Health Foundation is an IRS designated nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible. In addition, individuals who pay Colorado State Income Tax are eligible for an Enterprise Zone tax credit on their Colorado return. Donations of \$100 or more earn a 25% tax credit.

“
**While there are many
valuable charitable causes in our region, this campaign
meets one of the most fundamental needs in any
community: quick, reliable and exemplary emergency
medical services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**
”

Jenny Birnie

Director Gunnison Valley Health Foundation

Your Support

The ability of Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics to save lives and meet the needs of our rural patient population is directly related to the efficiency, size and quality of their facility and its equipment.

Making capital investments is an important part of financial viability and stability for Gunnison Valley Health.

Community support has never been so important for the patients served by Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics. Your tax-deductible donation today provides each individual who calls 911 with the best possible healthcare experience and outcome.

While hoping you never need to dial 911, GVH Paramedics are ready to provide you and your loved ones with the best emergency medicine and rescue services available.

donate today!

The next life they save could be yours.

Chief Malcolm consistently attracts and hires enthusiastic and skilled providers, while fostering a culture of learning, excellence, innovation and accountability. He truly embraces the unique challenges of rural EMS, and he encourages his crews to do the same.

Shay Krier MD, FACEP

Awards & Recognition

Despite the challenges related to their current station, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics have been honored the last two years with prestigious awards.

- **2021 EMS Executive of the Year
CJ Malcolm, Chief, GVH Paramedics**
- **2020 Colorado's EMS Ambulance Service of the Year and Physician Excellence in EMS**

Awarded by
Emergency Medical Services Association of
Colorado (EMSAC)

Western Regional EMS and Trauma
Advisory Council (WRETAC)

Chief Malcolm was recognized as an executive who has become a leader in EMS and serves as a role model for EMS managers throughout the region and state.

GVH's Paramedics/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Shay Krier MD, EMS Medical Director and Emergency Medical Physician, were recognized at the state level for EMS Ambulance Service of the Year and Physician Excellence in EMS by the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado. The EMS Ambulance Service of the Year Award honors an ambulance service which has become a leader in patient care, medical control, quality assurance, training and public education. The Dr. Valentin E. Wohlauer Award for Physician Excellence in EMS is presented to a physician who has made a substantial contribution to the advancement of EMS in Colorado.

Additionally, Gunnison Valley Health Paramedics are part of the award-winning Gunnison Valley Health system, which has received numerous accolades and recognition over the years, including:

- **Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals in America**
- **Top 25 Rural Hospitals Nationwide**



Jenny Birnie, Executive Director, GVH Foundation; CJ Malcolm, Chief; Eric Sorensen, Operations Captain; Justin Skokan, Operations Captain; Michael Taylor, Operations Captain; Jason Amrich, CEO, Gunnison Valley Health.

Campaign Leadership

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CJ Malcolm, Chief

Jill Adams, Captain of Administration

Justin Skokan, Operations Captain

Eric Sorenson, Operations Captain

Michael Taylor, Operations Captain
and Director of Education

Nick Zuber, Operations Captain

Dr. Shay Krier, Medical Director

Thank you!



Contact

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