



Northern Arizona Healthcare

FY2026

Quality & Safety Report



Table of contents

A culture of caring	2
FY2026 outstanding achievements	3
Improved discussions improve outcomes	4
FMC's Bariatric Program attains re-accreditation	5
Safety begins in Sterile Processing	6
Specialized care, tailored to northern Arizonans	7
Supported colleagues: Employee Wellness	8
Support our community: Lifesavers in action	9
Ready to respond: Prepared for any emergency	10
Making an impact: Proactive measures prevent hospital visits	11
Caring for our communities around the world	12



A CULTURE OF CARING

Dear patients, families, colleagues and community members,

We at Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) are pleased to share our successes in patient safety and quality of care during fiscal year 2026.

We are honored to care for you when and where you need us most. We're also proud of the high-quality care we offer, as evidenced by numerous awards, recognitions and accreditations. These accolades don't just happen; they are the result of tireless efforts to improve outcomes for each patient. We earn them every day when we care about what we do for those we serve. That enthusiastic dependability is the foundation of our culture of caring.

In this report, you will see how our culture of caring leads to increases in quality outcomes and decreases harm.

- Awards from third-party watchdog organizations like The Leapfrog Group and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services confirm we are leading the state in patient safety and high-quality care.
- Internal initiatives like Dave's Safety Lunches and Dave's Experience Lunches prompt advances in care and confirm our commitment to continuous improvement.
- Safety recognitions and celebrations like the NAH Lifesaver Award and our annual NAH Safety Week remind us of our dedication to patients, colleagues and community.

We are incredibly proud of all that we have achieved through our tireless dedication to quality and safety improvements. That is who we are. That is what we provide. Together, we are strengthening our culture of caring.

Sincerely,

Jake Lansburg
Vice President of Care
Transformation and Quality
Northern Arizona Healthcare



FY2026 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

We are incredibly proud of our continued excellence in quality and safety, further evidenced by recognitions and awards earned in FY2026:

Both NAH hospitals received Spring 2026 Leapfrog Group "A" Grades for excellence in patient safety.

- Verde Valley Medical Center (VVMC) received its fourth "A" grade in a row
- Flagstaff Medical Center (FMC) received its seventh "A" grade in a row



NAH received the 2025 Safety Excellence Award from **ECRI and the ISMP Patient Safety Organization**, recognizing our comprehensive, system-wide approach to advancing a culture of safety, accountability and transparency.

Both NAH hospitals received 4-star **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** Hospital Ratings for strong clinical outcomes, reliable care processes and consistent focus on patient safety.

- FMC maintained its 4-star CMS Hospital Rating
- VVMC improved from 3 stars to 4 stars



FMC was named one of America's Best-in-State Hospitals for 2026 by **Newsweek Magazine**. FMC was ranked #9 out of over 85 hospitals in the state, and was the highest ranked rural hospital due to our quality metrics, reputation, patient reported outcomes and patient experience measures.

FMC and VVMC have each achieved certification as a **Cribs for Kids®** National Safe Sleep Hospital. This certification recognizes our commitment and rigorous adherence to best practices in infant safe sleep.



NAH was named a 2025 Wellbeing First Champion by **ALL IN: Wellbeing First for Healthcare** for supporting our health workers' access to mental healthcare by removing intrusive and stigmatizing language in our credentialing applications.

IMPROVED DISCUSSIONS IMPROVE OUTCOMES

As part of NAH's journey to high reliability, the organization's daily review of patient care, safety, staffing, facilities and operations has undergone a significant transformation, emerging as one of the most impactful leadership touchpoints across the system. What was once a routine phone call has evolved into a dynamic, predominantly in-person forum that is reshaping how leaders communicate, collaborate and solve problems together.

At its core, the revamped Daily Safety Briefing (DSB) is built around improving situational awareness. Each morning, leaders from across the system gain a shared understanding of census, staffing, recent safety events, such as falls and sharps-related injuries, and any other issues impacting our ability to deliver safe, high-quality, patient-centered care.

The time is also used to promote real-time problem solving across departments. Issues that once required multiple escalations and days of follow-up are now surfaced, discussed and sometimes even resolved before the meeting concludes.

The new format promotes concepts within the organization's leadership framework, serving as a catalyst for building relationships and reducing the siloed nature in which departments tend to operate. A survey of the structure showed that leaders feel more connected to the system and more informed about the challenges impacting our collective ability to care for patients. The presence of senior leadership signals an organizational commitment to safety, expedites any required approvals and reinforces accountability.

The improved DSB structure has already made a significant impact on patient care.

- Sharps-related probabilities of injury have decreased from 14.9% to 12.4%
- Average days between sharps-related injuries have increased from 3.91 to 4.23
- Rate of falls per 1,000 patient days has decreased 6.8%, from 1.91 to 1.78



Chief Nursing Officer Tyff Laurano leads DSB

FMC'S BARIATRIC PROGRAM ATTAINS RE-ACCREDITATION

The Bariatric team at FMC has achieved re-accreditation for its program, meaning it continues to operate at the highest standards of comprehensive care.

This distinguished honor recognizes the expertise of Program Director Robert Berger, MD, and his team in providing comprehensive metabolic and bariatric surgical care. Surgical care focuses on weight loss and the treatment of obesity-related diseases, like diabetes, sleep apnea and others. The care team offers individualized support, education and a multidisciplinary approach to help patients achieve lasting, healthier lifestyles.

In addition, research shows accredited centers experience fewer complications and better outcomes than those of non-accredited facilities.

The renewed designation of FMC as a Comprehensive Center comes after an intensive review in December 2025 by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), in partnership with the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS).

Re-accreditation affirms that FMC upholds rigorous standards of patient safety, quality outcomes and continuous improvement. MBSAQIP requires accredited centers to "demonstrate an uncompromising commitment to quality that has earned the confidence, respect, and trust of patients making a lifetime commitment to healthier living."

We are proud of this team's dedication to our community, ensuring every patient receives the support and clinical excellence they deserve.



The FMC Bariatric team:

*Back row: Chelsea Heart, Sarah Sohail, MD, John Martin, PhD, Judy Andronowitz, Abby Callado
Front row: Sydney Poehls, PA-C, Theresa Buckingham, Robert Berger, MD, Colleen Lingley, RD, Julie Polzin, NP, Rebecca Rocha, MA, Rebecca Baca, RN, Andrew Aldridge, MD*

SAFETY BEGINS IN STERILE PROCESSING

Every successful surgery begins long before a patient enters the operating room.

At NAH, the Sterile Processing Department (SPD) is one of the foundational teams responsible for ensuring safe, high-quality surgical care. Every single instrument used in surgery, from routine surgical tools to highly specialized orthopedic and cardiovascular equipment, must be meticulously decontaminated, inspected, assembled, sterilized and documented before it ever reaches a patient. This team's commitment to precision, consistency and quality helps ensure every procedure begins with the highest standards of safety.

Sterile processing is a highly specialized profession requiring technical expertise, critical thinking and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Team members master nationally recognized standards for decontamination, inspection, assembly, sterilization, storage and quality assurance. Every instrument and tray undergoes multiple quality checks and is fully traceable throughout the reprocessing cycle. This ensures physicians, nurses and procedural teams have the right tools, prepared according to rigorous standards, exactly when they are needed.



Meet part of the FMC SPD team.

Top row left to right: Rylan Whitlock, CRCST, Nyle Becenti, CRCST, Lane Black, Demetrius Carrasco, CRCST, Josemiguel Villanueva, Rachel Hernandez, CRCST

Bottom row left to right: Brogan Rodarmel, William Jim, CRCST, LeAnne Peterson, CRCST/CHL, Ana Viana, CRCST, Daisy Shontz, Makani De Moulin, CRCST

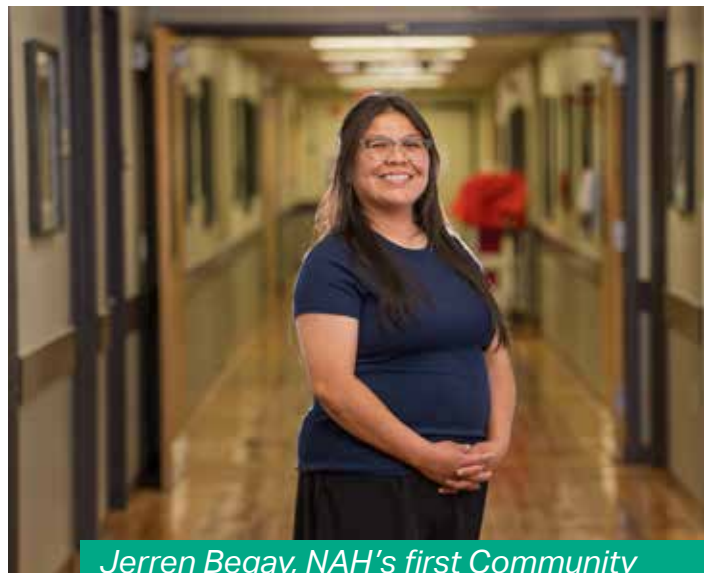
Last year alone, the SPD team processed 133,112 surgical instruments and medical devices, supporting 13,242 surgeries and procedures across the organization. Their work is a critical part of a comprehensive surgical quality program that includes surgeons, perioperative teams, infection prevention specialists and many others who share responsibility for delivering safe care. Together, those efforts contributed to an 8% reduction in surgical site infections across NAH during the past year, an achievement that reflects the organization's relentless focus on quality, patient safety and continuous improvement.

Patients may never meet the dedicated professionals working in Sterile Processing, but every patient undergoing surgery benefits from their expertise and commitment. Their work exemplifies a simple but powerful truth: patient safety begins long before surgery, and quality is built into every instrument, every process and every procedure.

SPECIALIZED CARE, TAILORED TO NORTHERN ARIZONANS

In 2025, NAH was awarded a generous grant, sponsored jointly by the American Cancer Society and Pfizer Inc., funding a new program aimed at tailoring care to Native American communities. The grant, secured with assistance from NAH's Office of Philanthropy and Office of Research and Grants, funded a new two-year project focused on reducing barriers to cancer care for Native American patients and families.

The Connected Care project, led by Matthew Greer, MD, was developed in collaboration with Northern Arizona University's Center for Community Health and Engaged Research. The program, designed to support patients who often travel long distances for radiation treatment, improves access to specialized care coordination, transportation, housing resources and culturally responsive support services.



Jerren Begay, NAH's first Community Health Worker

As part of the project, NAH added a new Community Health Worker (CHW) to coordinate care for these patients receiving radiation therapy. Jerren Begay, a Patient Care Technician in NAH Radiation Oncology and a member of the Navajo Nation, earned her CHW certification through the Arizona Department of Health Services. Begay helps connect patients with community resources and support systems that improve access to cancer treatment. Her certification training included learning to navigate community services and resources, and building partnerships with other CHWs and social workers across Arizona, including those working within the Navajo, Hopi and Hualapai tribes.

The creation of the Connected Care program and the addition of a dedicated CHW create a clear and trusted point of contact between NAH and the many diverse communities of northern Arizona. Having specialized services and care tailored to each patient's needs strengthens NAH's ability to address social determinants of health while improving continuity of cancer care.



SUPPORTED COLLEAGUES: Employee Wellness



Colleagues Kathryn Nelson and Maraka Oltrogge and special guest Melissa Dohse demonstrate how to prepare a quick, healthy meal as part of NAH's Wellness Kitchen series

At NAH, we believe exceptional patient care begins with caring for our colleagues. Our Employee Health and Wellness teams are dedicated to fostering a workplace where every colleague feels valued, supported and empowered – because when our colleagues are at their best, so is the care they provide.

Our programs and resources are designed to meet employees where they are, taking a whole-person approach to health. From mental health support and stress management services like Health Coaching sessions, to financial well-being programs and physical and dietary health courses like Wellness Kitchen, we cover all dimensions of wellness. Our three National Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coaches (NBC-HWC) work one-on-one with colleagues to provide encouragement, accountability, and support in reaching goals that strengthen both their personal well-being and professional performance.

We are proud recipients of the Arizona Department of Health Services' Healthy Arizona Worksite Gold Award in 2025 and 2026, reflecting our commitment to building a culture where wellness is not just a benefit; it's a foundation for the quality and safety our patients depend on.

A genuine culture of caring is at the heart of everything we do. This culture shows up in peer support programs, leadership engagement and community-building events across our organization. When colleagues feel seen and supported, that compassion and commitment to excellence naturally extends to every patient, family member and community member they encounter.



SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY: Lifesavers in action



Lifesaver committee honors Lifesaver recipients. Pictured above: Susan Goldberg, RN, Eugene "Rich" Charlebois, DO, Katie Sutter, Shannon Aurelius, PA, Risha Sloan, MA, Pasquale Bernardi, MD, and Susan Huerta

NAH continues to build on its culture of safety by encouraging "Good Catch/Near Miss" reporting. These reports present opportunities for system process changes that help prevent future potential harm.

When a colleague reports a safety event, the Quality and Safety team reviews the report and may decide to award a Lifesaver recognition to celebrate those who have gone above and beyond to prevent harm from occurring and demonstrated an exceptional commitment to patient and colleague safety.

This year, the Quality and Safety teams awarded 17 Lifesaver recognitions to exceptional colleagues and teams, including:

Lorri Jo Dollbaum, RN, for assisting a burn victim at a community event. Dollbaum was at a Williams car show when a car engine exploded, badly injuring the owner. She immediately took charge, directing bystanders to call 911 and providing first aid until paramedics arrived. Dollbaum helped law enforcement obtain family member information, and she even called ahead to the OR charge nurse on shift to let them know this trauma patient was coming by helicopter and to have a room ready.

Amy Brooks, the NAH Security and PBX teams, and NAH greeters for their thorough and successful response to an organizational threat. After an individual issued threats of physical harm to NAH and its staff, these team members developed plans to keep buildings secure and address the threat. Once the individual was apprehended, Head of NAH Security Casey Rucker and Lead Clinical Risk Manager Amy Brooks dedicated considerable time and effort working with the prosecution to convict the individual. Their thoughtful, strategic decision-making enabled our colleagues to continue delivering outstanding patient care while this situation was managed in coordination with law enforcement.

Katie Sutter, Shannon Aurelius, PA, and Risha Sloan, MA, from NAH's Woodlands Urgent Care for rapidly assessing and proactively responding to a patient experiencing anaphylaxis. A patient came into the urgent care suffering from an allergic reaction and, as he was checking in, Sutter recognized his panic from the next room. She immediately jumped into action, alerting Aurelius and Sloan. The three worked together to check the patient's vitals, provide medication and call for an ambulance. Because of their expert response, the patient received quick, life-saving treatment.

READY TO RESPOND:

Prepared for any emergency

To operate our system of hospitals and clinics, we need to be prepared for anything to happen, anytime and at any site. To ensure we're always ready when and where our community needs us most, this year we embarked on a clinic-based emergency management review and updated procedures and tools to strengthen emergency responses at every NAH location, regardless of site specialty or intended level of care.

In the past year, we leveraged insights from our safety incident reports to conduct a rigorous, evidence-based review of best practices to modernize our Emergency Response Policy for clinics located outside of our hospitals. We included provider feedback, which resulted in refreshed emergency medication inventories to ensure we're prepared for the unexpected at every clinic.

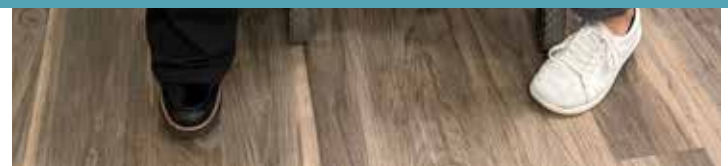
In addition to organization-wide response updates, individual teams were able to factor in local response times, hospital proximity and specific patient needs to develop supplementary emergency protocols in their own unique context.

In November 2025, we continued to bolster our emergency response capabilities by distributing Stop the Bleed kits to every NAH clinic site. Each kit contains tourniquets, hemostatic gauze, and emergency bandages to put life-saving tools directly into the hands of our colleagues. Certified instructors from NAH Medical Group and Trauma Services conducted comprehensive, hands-on training to ensure our teams are ready to provide critical care using Stop the Bleed materials in those vital minutes before emergency medical care arrives.

We know our preparedness is our patients' peace of mind. By investing in the right tools and training, we are actively building a safer community – this is our culture of care, realized.



Colleagues Carra Henscheid, RN, and Farren Castelein, RN, distribute emergency response Stop the Bleed kits to NAH outpatient clinics



MAKING AN IMPACT:

Proactive measures prevent hospital visits

NAH provides numerous programs dedicated to educating and empowering the public to practice injury prevention.

Stop the Bleed

In 2025, our Stop the Bleed program conducted 18 classes, educating more than 314 community members on life-saving bleeding control techniques. We also partnered with the Northern Arizona Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council to provide instructor training and equipment to regional EMS agencies, enabling them to teach classes in their own communities.

In 2026, we have kept pace with additional community classes, five newly certified instructors for the White Mountain Ambulance Service and continued expansion across the region. In addition to trainings, our Stop the Bleed program has supplied the community with physical injury prevention kits. NAH donated Public Access Bleeding Control stations to all six Tuba City Unified School District schools, and put bleeding control stations in each NAH outpatient clinic.



Instructor Philip Le Sueur leads a Verde Valley community Stop the Bleed class

Fall prevention

NAH is committed to keeping our community on its feet. In partnership with the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG), the City of Flagstaff, Yavapai County Health Department, and the VVMC trauma program manager, we offer the CDC-recommended Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention classes. Thanks to the City of Flagstaff's generous use of the Joe Montoya Senior Center, these classes are free to the community and so popular that wait lists are now forming. Across our partner sites with NACOG, FMC and VVMC, seven Tai Chi classes are offered each week.

Harm reduction

Both FMC and VVMC have installed harm reduction vending machines outside of their Emergency Department doors, free for public use. The Coconino and Yavapai County Health Departments keep the machines stocked with a variety of life-saving items, including naloxone, a medication that can reverse the harmful effects of opioid overdose.

Since its inception in 2024, the FMC machine has dispensed over 1,600 naloxone items to prevent opioid overdoses and 800 fentanyl test kits. Since September 2025, the VVMC machine has dispensed over 800 naloxone items and 300 fentanyl test strip boxes, as well as over 60 injury prevention items such as STI safety kits, sunscreen and cooling towels.

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD

NAH is dedicated to improving quality and safety in all levels of healthcare by participating in research and developing and presenting best practices on both local and world stages.

During FY2026, NAH colleagues made a global impact through:

20 posters displayed at medical conferences

including Oncology Nursing Society's annual Congress.

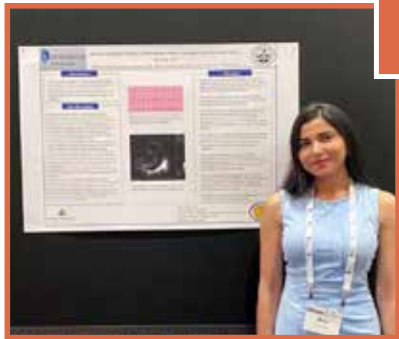
Laura Fox, RN, was the first nurse from the Cancer Centers of NAH to present at this national conference with her topic Implementing Distress Screening and Management for Breast Cancer Patients to Improve Quality of Care.



11 articles featured in medical journals

including the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

Ritu Yadav, MBBS, authored "Heart's Hidden Signal: A Rare Case of Alternating Bundle Branch Block and Atrioventricular Block," which was published in this prestigious journal. The journal boasts a long history of publishing cutting-edge, peer-reviewed research articles covering all aspects of cardiovascular disease.



15 presentations to fellow healthcare experts

across 12 cities in five countries, nations and territories, including France, Puerto Rico and the Navajo Nation.

Omar Wani, MD, presented at the 4th Global Congress on Cardiology in Singapore, reporting on a real-world data analysis comparing ways to predict cardiovascular events that originated from a sponsored, three-year clinical trial at NAH.



Email Paula.McAllister@NAHealth.com for a full list of FY2026 research publications and presentations.



Perioperative Services celebrates Perioperative Nurses Week with a fashion show, modeling outfits made from scrap blue wrap and expired and unused supplies.

Colleagues enjoy fun giveaways and other celebrations during Quality and Safety Week.



Colleagues share and discuss safety improvement ideas with NAH's CEO during Dave's Safety Lunches.





Northern Arizona Healthcare

Thank You



QUALITY AND SAFETY WEEK

NORTHERN ARIZONA HEALTHCARE