



THE FROG

*A dedication to O.C. Newman's sprightly bronco
(so named for his wild leaps).*



March, 2026

Standing Watch: Honoring Those Who Serve

Before I was a hospital CEO, a husband, or a father, I was a United States Navy Sailor.

One of the greatest honors of my service was spending my final year providing antiterrorism force protection at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, supporting the Commander of United States Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Undersecretary of the Navy, B. J. Penn. It was a time defined by long hours, intense heat, uncertainty, and the deep bonds that form among those who stand watch together.

Recently, it has been difficult watching missiles and drones strike the very grounds where lifelong friendships were formed. Those of us who served there understand the reality that the threat was never theoretical. To put it into perspective, it can take as little as five to seven minutes for a ballistic missile to travel from Iran to the confines of that base.

For a moment, I would like to step away from healthcare and recognize the men and women currently standing watch around the world.

Today, thousands of American service members operate quietly and relentlessly to protect our nation. Some serve deep beneath the ocean aboard nuclear submarines. Others stand watch on naval vessels operating in contested waters. Their lives depend on the skill, discipline, and trust of the shipmates beside them. These silent professionals work seven days a week with little rest. A few hours of interrupted sleep may separate one watch from the next mission. At any moment, they understand that danger could come in the form of a missile, a torpedo, or an attack on their ship or base.

And yet they serve without hesitation.

One example is the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), which is approaching nearly 300 days deployed at sea, one of the longest deployments since the Vietnam era. No one quits. No one walks away. These service members accept extraordinary responsibility and risk while quietly carrying out their mission.

They do not seek recognition or sympathy. They simply serve.

When these brave men and women return home, it is important that we welcome them with gratitude. Stand and offer them your seat. Pick up their tab. Shake their hand. Most importantly, introduce our young people to the meaning of service and sacrifice.

Some will return to joyful reunions. Others may return to difficult circumstances, broken relationships or quiet homes waiting for them. For many, the transition back to everyday life can be harder than the mission itself.

So when you see a service member, take a moment.

Embrace them.

Support them.

Simply thank them.

To our service members serving across the globe: we stand with you. Carry out your mission with strength and courage as we patiently await your safe return home.

Tom Vasko

Chief Executive Officer

Newman Memorial Hospital



Dr. Timothy Vavricka Brings World-Class Surgical Care Home to Northwest Oklahoma

We're excited to welcome Dr. Timothy Vavricka, MD, General Surgeon, to our healthcare team. An Oklahoma native and Ada High School graduate, Dr. Vavricka earned his bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the University of Oklahoma, where he was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy upon acceptance to medical school. He completed his General Surgery residency at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and went on to serve as a Navy Surgeon, including two combat deployments to the Middle East aboard the USS Enterprise, service as Ship's Surgeon, and clinical leadership at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, the busiest medical center in the U.S. Navy. He also served as an Assistant Professor of Surgery, helping train future Navy surgeons before returning home to Oklahoma to care for rural communities. Dr. Vavricka brings world class surgical experience and offers a full scope of general surgery services, now scheduling consultations for patients and referring providers in Woodward and Shattuck. Surgical services include hernia repair open and laparoscopic for inguinal groin, umbilical bellybutton, ventral, incisional, spigelian abdominal wall, and epigastric upper abdomen hernias, as well as laparoscopic abdominal surgery including gallbladder removal cholecystectomy with cholangiogram when needed, appendix removal appendectomy, and diagnostic or exploratory laparoscopy. To schedule a consultation or make a referral, please contact Woodward Specialty Clinic at 580 256 1236 or Shattuck Rural Health Clinic at 580 938 5400.

A Journey of Healing and Heart at Newman Memorial Hospital

For decades, Cheryl Lucas has shaped young minds as a beloved third-grade teacher in Woodward. Recently, she found herself needing care of her own. After spending the past couple of months in the Swing Bed Program at Newman Memorial Hospital, Cheryl is heading home stronger and filled with gratitude. The Swing Bed Program helps patients transition from hospital to home with goal-focused, skilled care. Designed for those who no longer need acute hospital services but still require rehabilitation, the program offers personalized therapy, dedicated nursing care, and 24-hour physician oversight. Services include physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapy, all supported by a multidisciplinary team focused on each patient's unique needs. Cheryl embraced every step of her recovery.

"My time here has meant more than I can put into words," she shared. "The nurses treated me like family. They were patient, gentle, and always took time to listen. I felt cared for every single day." She formed meaningful bonds with her care team, including Activities Coordinator Jenny Hix, who kept her engaged with puzzles, games, and activities that lifted her spirits. "Jenny kept me moving and thinking," Cheryl said with a smile. "It reminded me of being back in my classroom. She made such a difference in my recovery." Staff quickly learned Cheryl's favorite color was green. On her final day, the nursing team surprised her by wearing green in her honor—a simple gesture reflecting the deep connections formed during her stay.

Newman Memorial Hospital's mission is to advance rural medicine by expanding access to high-quality care with a strong focus on safety, value, and clinical excellence. The Swing Bed Program embodies that mission by serving as a bridge between hospital and home. Medicare and most insurance plans typically cover post-acute rehabilitation under Skilled Nursing Facility benefits. Patients generally qualify after a three-night inpatient hospital stay within a 30-day period. As CEO Tom Vasko shares, true healing goes beyond procedures and medications—it is shaped by trust, environment, and a community working together. At Newman Memorial Hospital, care is designed to be transformational. As Cheryl returns home, she carries not only renewed strength and independence, but heartfelt appreciation for the team who walked beside her every step of the way.

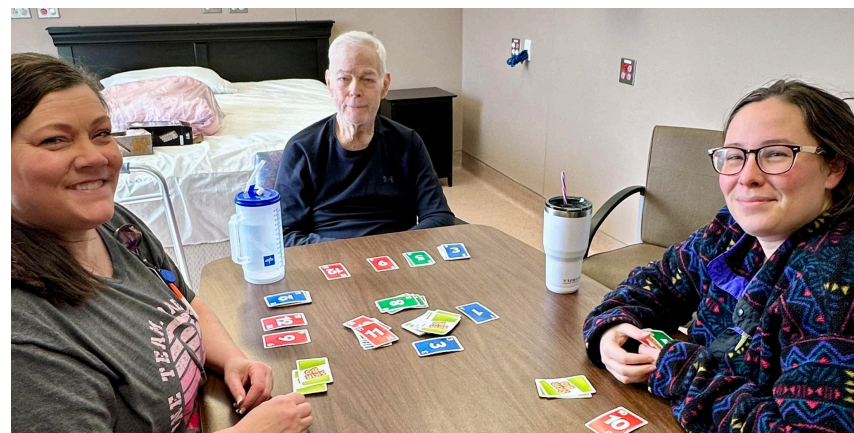


Newman- Where Work is Fun!

Jessica Jones, APRN, and Nurse Becky Hahn brought the fun with their perfectly coordinated *Wicked* Themed green scrubs, and we could not love it more. Jessica is shining bright with Glinda level sparkle, while Becky is channeling bold Elphaba confidence and heart. Together they prove that when teamwork, compassion, and a little personality come together, it creates something truly special. At Newman, our teams do not just show up in style, they show up for our patients with excellence, dedication, and a whole lot of heart. Days like this remind us that caring for our community can be both meaningful and fun.



Nurses are the Heart of Healthcare!



Our nurses are the heart of what Newman stands for, bringing compassion, strength, and excellence to every patient interaction. They are the steady hands and caring voices that comfort families, advocate for patients, and uphold the highest standards of care in our community. At Newman Memorial Hospital, nursing is more than a profession, it is a calling rooted in teamwork, respect, and a shared commitment to making a difference every single day. If you are an RN, LPN, or CNA looking for a place where your skills are valued, your voice is heard, and your impact truly matters, we would love to welcome you to our team. Join a workplace where you are supported, appreciated, and empowered to grow. Apply today at newmanmemorialhospital.org/careers.



Partnering for Healthier Hearts



Newman Memorial Hospital was proud to welcome Jennifer Stelter, Client Relationship Manager; Joanne Gallery, Senior Project Manager with Mayo Clinic; and Andy Fosmire, Consultant, for the launch of our Advanced Cardiac Remote Patient Monitoring Holter Monitors. This innovative technology allows us to provide enhanced cardiac monitoring and improved patient care right here at home, giving patients access to advanced diagnostics without leaving their community.

"We are grateful for this partnership and the shared vision behind it, alongside Mayo Clinic's Bold. Forward. Unbound. approach to the future of healthcare," said Tom Vasko, CEO. "At Newman Memorial Hospital, our mission has always been simple but ambitious: keep high quality care local while ensuring our patients benefit from world class clinical insight. This collaboration reflects what rural healthcare needs right now: trusted partners, thoughtful application of technology, and a relentless focus on continuity of care. By pairing near real time, actionable data with a forward looking, unbound approach to care delivery, we are equipping our providers with tools that support earlier intervention, stronger coordination, and better outcomes, all while allowing patients to remain close to home and the support systems that matter most. We are excited about what we can build together and deeply value the shared commitment to service, trust, and patient centered innovation. This is how sustainable rural healthcare moves forward."