



# THE FROG

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



## April, 2026

### Northwest Communities,

As we move into April, I find myself reflecting on both where we have been and, more importantly, where we are going as a health system and as a community.

This past month, we had the privilege of welcoming members of the Newman family back to our hospital—a moment that carried deep meaning for all of us. Their visit was a powerful reminder that Newman Memorial Hospital is more than a place of care; it is a legacy built on service, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the people of Northwest Oklahoma. Hearing their reflections and seeing their pride in what this organization has become was both humbling and energizing.

That legacy continues forward today as we expand access to specialized care close to home. I am proud to share that Dr. Brian Gillis, a colorectal surgeon with deep roots in Arnett, Oklahoma, has joined our medical team. Dr. Gillis brings decades of experience in colon health and surgical care, and his return to this community reflects exactly what we strive to build—healthcare that is not only high quality, but deeply connected to the people it serves.

At the same time, our growth continues to reflect the trust placed in us by this region. Over the past three years, Newman has experienced significant expansion—growing more than six fold since 2023—not as an end in itself, but as a result of keeping care local, expanding services, and meeting the needs of our patients. That growth has allowed us to reinvest directly into our communities.

Today, Newman Memorial Hospital stands as one of the largest employers in Ellis County, growing from 58 employees to nearly 200 dedicated team members. Each of those individuals represents not just a job, but a commitment to serving neighbors, families, and future generations.

Our responsibility extends beyond our walls. We are proud to support the next generation of this region—from our ongoing partnerships with FFA, including an \$18,000 investment this year, to our commitment to education through healthcare workforce development. Each year, Newman funds three nursing scholarships for High Plains Technology Center students, totaling \$11,060, ensuring that those who want to serve their communities in healthcare have a pathway to do so.

In 2025 alone, Newman provided more than \$62,913 in charity care—standing as the largest nonprofit contributor in our region and reinforcing our role as a cornerstone of economic stability and access to care across Ellis and surrounding counties.

Despite operating in one of the lowest population density regions in Oklahoma, Newman has emerged as one of the top-performing critical access hospitals in the state—measured not only by size and geographic reach, but by quality, access, and outcomes. More importantly, we are doing so while staying true to who we are.

This success does not belong to any one individual. It belongs to our physicians, providers, nurses, and staff. It belongs to our board, our community leaders, and our local banking and business partners. And above all, it belongs to the communities who trust us with their care.

Newman's performance today is the strongest it has been in more than 50 years. And yet, what defines us is not where we stand—but how we continue forward.

***We will remain focused.***

***We will remain local.***

***And we will continue building something that lasts for generations.***

Thank you for being part of that mission.

**Tom Vasko BSN, MBA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Newman Memorial**

## A Family Returns to Honor the Legacy Behind Newman Memorial Hospital

On Friday, March 13, 2026, Newman Memorial Hospital welcomed back members of the Newman family including Priscilla Plumb, Steve Plumb, Mark McLane, Colleen McLane, and Michael Newman McLane for a meaningful visit to honor their family's lasting legacy. As descendants of Dr. M. Haskell Newman, whose leadership and dedication helped shape healthcare in Ellis County, the family reflected on cherished memories and the hospital's growth over the years. Hospital leadership joined in sharing their continued commitment to patient centered care, a heart to serve, and a dedication to carrying forward the strong foundation established by leaders like Dr. Newman. The visit also honored the life of Jo Ann "Jody" Newman McLane, whose faith, service, and love for others embodied the same values that continue to define the hospital today, making the day a powerful reminder of legacy, community, and the enduring mission of care.



# Newman Memorial Hospital is proud to welcome Board-Certified Proctologist, Dr. Brian Gillis, D.O. to our medical team.

Newman Memorial Hospital is proud to welcome Dr. Brian Gillis, D.O. back to Northwest Oklahoma, where his journey in medicine first began. A graduate of Arnett High School and the High Plains Technology Center, Dr. Gillis first trained at Newman Memorial Hospital, gaining hands on experience that sparked his passion for medicine. Despite a distinguished national career, his ties to the area remain strong with family in Woodward and his son currently attending high school locally. Dr. Gillis brings more than two decades of experience as a physician and surgeon, specializing in anorectal pathology and pelvic floor disorders, and is board certified through both the American Osteopathic Board of Proctology and Family Physicians. He has served in numerous leadership roles, including Chief of Surgery, medical board member, and Past President of a national specialty college, and has lectured at leading institutions such as Harvard and the Mayo Clinic. Now returning to the community that helped shape him, Dr. Gillis will begin seeing patients in Woodward and Shattuck in April. For more information, call 580 256 1236 in Woodward or 580 938 5400 in Shattuck.



## German Celebration! Deutsche Feier!

In March, Newman celebrated German culture by coming together to prepare a traditional German meal. Team members from all departments gathered in the kitchen to learn how to make bierocks, streusel, and more. With festive decor and delicious food, the event was a great success. Even members of the community joined in the fun!



## Newman Memorial Hospital recognized by Joint Commission for commitment to excellence in rural healthcare

### Compliance Embedded in Culture Leads to Recognition



Newman Memorial Hospital is recognized in the Joint Commission's Environment of Care News for its strong commitment to excellence in rural healthcare, driven by a culture of collaboration and proactive maintenance. Under the leadership of CEO, Tom Vasko, the organization has successfully expanded services with new clinics while maintaining high compliance standards through consistent daily practices. By embedding Joint Commission standards into everyday operations, Newman ensures patient safety, operational efficiency, and continuous improvement, demonstrating how a small rural hospital can thrive through innovation, teamwork, and dedication to its community.

**“By integrating Joint Commission standards into our daily practices, we ensure that compliance is not episodic but embedded into our culture.”**

- Shane Clem  
NMH Facilities Director



Shane Clem, Facilities Director

A special acknowledgment to Shane Clem, our Facilities Director, whose leadership and relentless focus on proactive maintenance and safety helped drive this recognition. His philosophy says it best:

**“Compliance is not episodic - it's embedded into our culture.”**  
-Shane Clem, Facilities Director

At Newman, we've built a system where Joint Commission standards aren't something we prepare for; they're how we operate every day.

*While others prepare for surveys, we operate ready.*

*While others react, we prevent.*

*While others see limitations in rural healthcare, we see opportunity.*

From expanding clinics across Northwest Oklahoma to maintaining enterprise-wide accreditation, our team continues to prove what's possible in rural healthcare.

**This recognition belongs to every team member who shows up each day committed to excellence and to the communities we serve.**

To read the full article visit [newmanmemorialhospital.org/april-joint-commission-article2026/](http://newmanmemorialhospital.org/april-joint-commission-article2026/)

## Strength Through the Flames

Chris was involved in a horrific accident on February 17 during the fire flare-ups that spread across Northwest Oklahoma. Following a vehicle rollover, he suffered severe second-degree burns on various parts of his body. Chris spent the initial phase of his recovery in a burn unit in Oklahoma City before being transferred to Newman Memorial Hospital to continue the remainder of his healing journey.

We are incredibly thankful for the firefighters who fought to keep our homes and communities safe that day, just like Chris. **We also thank Chris and his family for trusting us with his care.**

**“I was so thankful to be back in Northwest Oklahoma with my people. This hospital went above and beyond to make me feel at home with top-tier care.”**  
- Chris Campbell

