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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Voice Your Opinions about Healthcare in Carbon County Health Survey**

**(March 29, 2022)** Community members in Carbon County and surrounding areas may soon be receiving a survey in their mailbox. This survey will be sent to a random sample of homes and will help Beartooth Billing Clinic identify health services needed in the community. This information will be used for strategic planning, grant applications, new programs, and by community groups interested in addressing health issues.

This project, administered by the Montana Office of Rural Health and funded in part through the Montana Health Research and Education Foundation (MHREF) Flex Grant, will assist the hospital in an analysis of local community needs, use of local healthcare services and overall community health. This process was developed to maintain quality healthcare to serve the continuing and future needs of the community.

The community health assessment process promotes healthcare as a local affair. Citizens of rural counties can take responsibility for the health of their community by completing the survey they receive in their mailbox. Most communities face complex issues in addressing the health and wellness of their citizens, but fortunately, Carbon County can engage in effective problem-solving, which is the most important factor in the survival of rural health services.

An accompanying goal of this process is to keep healthcare dollars within the local community. While the vast majority of healthcare can be provided locally, rural citizens often drive to large medical centers for care, spending money on healthcare and non-health care purchases that could be spent locally. It is estimated that within a typical rural community, millions of dollars of revenue is lost in this way. This revenue could be retained in the local community with stronger community- healthcare provider linkages.

Beartooth Billings Clinic's services include a primary care clinic, specialty services, urgent care, 24/7 emergency department, hospital, imaging, lab, home health, hospice, and multidisciplinary therapies (physical, occupational, speech, behavioral health).

"It is important for the future of Beartooth Billings Clinic to understand the needs of our communities to successfully plan for growth and expansion of healthcare services. Having the voice of those we serve will guide decision-making, resource-investment, and strategy planning," said Abby Lotz, Chief Executive Officer, Beartooth Billings Clinic.

"We are pleased to be able to bring some of the best community health resources to Carbon County. The goal of this initiative is to assist forward-thinking rural hospitals and communities in aligning their resources,

to address their present and future needs in the best way possible,” said Natalie Claiborne, Assistant Director, Montana Office of Rural Health.

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