

## My Turn

### Plea for 'critical access' designation at Holy Cross

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In response to John Plummer's "My Turn" of last week, I, a registered nurse and member of the same Taos Health Studies Committee that John is on, readily admit that my bias is for the Critical Access proposal for Holy Cross Hospital.

For many years I worked in ICU in a large urban hospital. When it needed change, for example, more space for children, Michael Dell of Dell Computers stepped up, and now that city has Dell Children's Hospital. Taos does not have such an advantage and will ever be a small rural hospital. And with any hospital, money is the crux of the matter.

I suspect that you, like myself, if hospitalized would be grateful to be able to be discharged in four days or less, preferably home, but rehab or further care is also possible. Or, if like a family member of my own who had a more serious illness requiring specialties not available in Taos, transferred where one can be appropriately treated. This has always been the way of health care in Taos, and will not change. Simply put, Critical Access means more money for our hospital which has struggled mightily in the past. More money means better equipment, better pay for staff members, better outreach to the community, and most importantly, better care for anyone who must be hospitalized. And better care means that hospitalizations could result in shorter stays.

Doctors, nurses, administrators and ancillary staff have visited three critical access hospitals in Arizona, Kansas, and Wyoming. From reports in the committee I heard, my understanding is that the presentations about how this worked for these hospitals gave our visitors the impression that critical access was a worthwhile program for Holy Cross Hospital. Since our hospital's CEO has set up and worked with critical access himself, we can feel confident that is is not a proposal "out of the blue," but a tried and true game changer for Taos Holy Cross Hospital.

Yes, it is wise for both hospital administration and the hospital board to go slowly in considering Critical Access. When the decision is finally made, I believe it will be FOR Critical Access.

*Schutze, RN, is a resident of Taos.*