North Valley Hospital is an independent, non-profit hospital that has been serving the needs of the Flathead Valley for 110 years providing care from birth onward.

Catherine Todd, Senior Director of Business Development, explained the scope of services available at this award-winning medical facility. "North Valley Hospital is a critical access hospital with core services of emergency care, inpatient medicine, minimally invasive surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics, geriatrics, and behavioral health. It offers 24/7 digital imaging and a laboratory certified by the College of American Pathologists." What makes North Valley Hospital different is its philosophy — "A different kind of hospital. A different kind of care," Todd explained that "North Valley Hospital is a member of Planetree International, a non-profit organization that provides tools and best practices to help hospitals deliver the best patient-centered care possible!"

She dispelled the misconception that Planetree "owns" North Valley Hospital. “This is not correct; North Valley Hospital is a member of the Planetree organization and they do not provide any management services to North Valley Hospital.”

The hospital follows Planetree’s 10 key components “to focus on caring for a patient’s mind, body and spirit in a healing environment.” For more information on Planetree, Todd recommends visiting the website: www.planetree.org.

The Planetree philosophy is a factor in North Valley Hospital’s professional recognition for patient-centered care. This hospital is one of 20 hospitals nationwide that were recognized last year with consistently high standards of patient care across multiple services lines by Avatar International, an industry leader in healthcare quality improvement services. The hospital is also one of 350 hospitals nationwide to be recognized by WomenCertified® for exceptional care in obstetrics in 2013 and 2014. WomenCertified also awarded North Valley Hospital as one of America’s Best Hospitals for Patient Experience overall in 2013.

At North Valley Hospital’s award-winning Birth Center, the hospital delivered almost 500 babies from all over the Flathead Valley this past year. Todd felt certain it’s because “of our outstanding physician, midwife, and nursing care in a facility that provides a comfortable and home-like experience along with options for labor and delivery comfort like birthing tubs, acupuncture and water births.”

The hospital offers minimally invasive surgeries to patients using the latest technology. Todd noted, “We offer robotic assisted, minimally-invasive surgeries for general surgery, ENT, gynecology and urology using the da Vinci® robot which we acquired in Jan.”

North Valley Hospital recognizes that the baby boomers have special needs, too. In 2013, North Valley Hospital launched North Valley Geriatric Specialty Services. Todd explained how it works. “The program is led by a board-certified geriatrician who works with a multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive evaluations and care plans for older adults who are experiencing complex or multiple health issues.”

In addition, North Valley Hospital added Palliative Care to its services in 2014. “It is specialized medical care for people of all ages with serious illnesses focusing on providing patients with relief from symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness — whatever the diagnosis,” according to Todd. “While there may not be curative treatments available, palliative care can provide many options to improve quality of life.”

She explained that “patients can receive care or referrals through clinics, hospitals, home care providers or nursing homes.” Dr. Linda Hitchcock, Medical Director for Geriatric Specialty Services and Palliative Care, is board-certified in Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, Palliative Care and Hospice Care. To learn more, visit www.nvgeriatrics.org. North Valley Hospital also treats patients with behavioral health issues. Todd noted that “North Valley Hospital entered the behavioral health specialty with the launch of North Valley Embrace Health in 2011 to provide structured outpatient mental health services for adults age 55 and older.” Visit www.nvalbertailhealth.org for more information.

In 2014, North Valley Behavioral Health was launched providing behavioral health services (psychiatry) for children, adolescents, and adults. Dr. J. Douglas Muir is the medical director for the program, in addition to North Valley Embrace Health, and is one of only a handful of board-certified psychiatrists in Montana with a certificate in child psychiatry. Visit www.nvalbertailhealth.org.

When you need care, North Valley Hospital is there. It’s open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Todd noted the wide spread accessibility of this special care. North Valley Hospital has “outreach clinics in Whitefish, Columbia Falls, Kalispell and Eureka, in addition to seasonal urgent care clinics at Whitefish Mountain Resort and West Glacier.”

For more information about the hospital, visit www.nvhosp.org. If you have specific questions, email the hospital at info@nvhosp.org or call the Community Relations department at 406-883-3631.