

Dr. Andras Eder joins SCHD team

By Robert Galbreath
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PINEDALE – Dr. Andras Eder’s non-traditional path to medical school prepared him for a career in health care.

During college, Dr. Eder majored in Latin and Ancient Greek and supported his studies by working at a morgue.

Upon graduation, Dr. Eder worked in the oil and gas industry in Louisiana before enlisting in the U.S. Navy, where he served for more than a decade as a Hospital Corpsman.

Deployed multiple times to Iraq, Dr. Eder also found himself stationed at the foot of Mount Fuji in Japan before joining a team searching for remains of American pilots shot down over Laos and missing in action for more than 40 years.

“I got a lot of road out of my 12 years in the Navy,” said Dr. Eder. “Lots of training in the middle of nowhere. I grew up in the Navy. It took me from being directionless and provided training and responsibility.”

Dr. Eder completed his service and enrolled in medical school. When he graduated, he began a residency at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Peoria.

Completing the requirements to become a board-certified physician in family medicine, Dr. Eder was hired as a new provider for the Sublette County Hospital District (SCHD) in July.

Between assisting with autopsies in a morgue, serving his country in war-torn Iraq and searching the mountains of Southeast Asia for missing servicemen, Dr. Eder witnessed plenty of human experiences. Despite this fact, Dr. Eder suspects Sublette County will contain at least a few new adventures.

“Life is full of surprises,” he said. “You think you’ve seen it all, but then you’ll see something different. I think that’s great – seeing the same thing over and over again would get boring.”

Dr. Eder is “getting my feet wet” at the Pinedale Clinic and will eventually see patients at both the Pinedale and Marbleton-Big Piney clinics. While new to the community, Dr. Eder is already enjoying small-town hospitality.

“I’ve had people stop and say hello – ‘Oh! You did my daughter’s sports physical,’” he said. “It kind of hit home that practicing family medicine in a small town is what I want to do. It just feels right.”

Becoming a doctor

Dr. Eder spent his early years in eastern Europe.

“My mom was a nurse in Hungary, and I remember going to the hospital with her,” he said. “Some of my very first experiences were handing out bowls of food in the wards.”

The family immigrated to the United States. Even though Dr. Eder’s parents smuggled out all their paperwork, his mother’s nursing qualifications did not meet requirements in America. She spent the remainder of her



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Andras Eder, a board-certified physician in family medicine, joined the Sublette County Hospital District’s team of providers in July.

career working as a nurse’s assistant or “private aide.”

Dr. Eder majored in Latin and Ancient Greek in college and landed a job as an assistant at a morgue.

“I just walked in one day and asked, ‘Hey, do you guys have any openings?’” Dr. Eder remarked. “They hired me on the spot. I was 19 or 20. On your very first day, they toss you into an autopsy. There is no time for you to just ease into it. People don’t usually come back for the second day.”

Dr. Eder remained at the morgue, at times witnessing the worst that “animals, nature and human beings can do to human beings.”

The education Dr. Eder received at the morgue was both interesting and eye opening.

“I remember I wanted to get a motorcycle so badly around that time,” he said. “Once I worked at the morgue for six months, I was like, ‘no way’ to the motorcycle.”

During his stint working aboard a boat shuttling between the offshore oil and gas fields in Louisiana, Dr. Eder met veterans and learned about life in the military. Inspired, he

decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy and became a Hospital Corpsman.

Naval corpsmen are a rough equivalent to medics in the U.S. Army.

“‘Corpsman’ is a traditional name – something that started earlier in naval terminology and kind of stuck,” Dr. Eder explained. “We’re not crawling around corpses, it’s just a corps of people.”

Corpsmen perform a variety of medical jobs, ranging from x-ray technicians to preventative health, Dr. Eder added.

Dr. Eder received combat training and primarily served as a corpsman alongside units of U.S. Marines. He then enrolled in the Navy’s Independent Corpsman Day School, where he trained for a year to become a mid-level practitioner similar to a physician assistant.

“I learned I really enjoy taking care of people,” he said. “In the Navy, and I was with the Marines a lot – you live with your unit, take care of them and work alongside them – it’s a small community.”

Dr. Eder carried out a variety of medical

tasks: helping sailors or marines quit smoking, repairing fractures or lacerations, treating illnesses and administering shots.

In Japan, Dr. Eder served as a Naval Corpsman for two years on a U.S. military base where Americans and their Japanese allies fired live ammunition right into a volcano. It was while working beneath Mount Fuji that Dr. Eder “solidified” his decision to go to medical school.

“Providers would come over to our units and say, ‘You really know your stuff here. Why don’t you just go to medical school?’ I guess, surreptitiously, medicine kind of snuck up on me as a career.”

Family medicine – lifelong relationships

Doctors specializing in family medicine are sometimes referred to as “generalists” and care for patients of all ages, Dr. Eder explained.

“My training included delivering babies, caring for pregnant women, doing postpartum newborn care, well-child visits, pediatrics, adult medicine, geriatrics, minor procedures, emergency department work and hospice care,” Dr. Eder said. “Family medicine encompasses the entire lifespan of an individual.”

Family medicine provides the opportunity to build lasting relationships with patients and provide a continuum of care for people before, during and after hospital visits. Practicing in a rural community with a hospital can allow for an “unbroken” cycle of care, said Dr. Eder, rather than simply handing a patient off to specialists in a big-city hospital.

“It is less anxiety provoking because the patient knows me,” said Dr. Eder. “I don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

Communication is a crucial aspect to family medicine and Dr. Eder looks forward to getting to know his patients.

“I like sitting down with people,” he said. “I don’t like when patients are unconscious, as in managing their anesthesia or doing a surgery. I like listening to people.”

Dr. Eder described his role as becoming an advisor for patients in a collaborative environment.

“People pay me to be their health advisor,” he said. “It’s not for me to lay down the law and rule with an iron fist. We’ll make a plan together, we’ll discuss the plan and maybe change it depending on what’s going on.”

When not practicing medicine, Dr. Eder enjoys gardening and cooking with his wife. He owns several dogs and likes to read philosophy and mythology. He can be found listening to live music at shows hosted by the Pinedale Fine Arts Council.

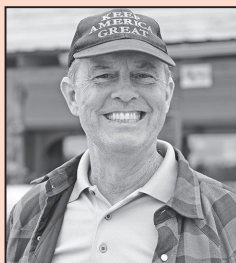
Dr. Eder and his wife grew a wide variety of berries and fruits in their gardens in Illinois and San Diego. When told Sublette County’s brief growing season may not be conducive to raising apple trees, Dr. Eder was still willing to give it a try.

“Maybe that’s a challenge...”

Street Talk

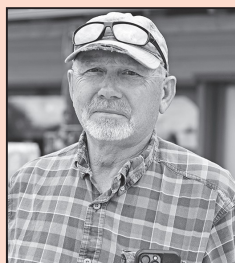
By Terry Allen

Do you see your world as black and white?



I have 11 kids and two of them are married to black guys. I’ve been told I’m racist as shit.

Michael Wetter, Florida



I’m pretty open-minded about most things. I do have some strong opinions, but I also listen to others with strong opinions.

Larry Alexander, Pinedale



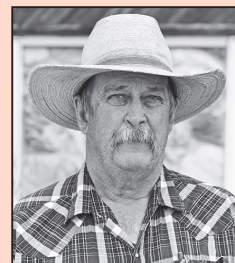
What is everyone else saying? I see a lot of gray areas.

Lorraine Neville, Pinedale



All I ever talk about is rainbows!

Eddy Fixter, Cora



No, the world is not black and white. There are endless dimensions to the world.

Tim Tolton, Big Piney