

PRIMARY CARE



**PRIMARY
CARE
PROVIDERS**

YOUR PARTNERS IN HEALTH

**The Clark
Fork Valley
Family Medi-
cine Network
provides
10 PCPs in
Sanders
County.**

The world of medicine can be complicated and confusing. It helps to have a primary care provider (PCP) by your side. ♦ These specialists treat the whole person—sometimes the whole family—for most health care needs. They become advocates for, and partners with, their patients.

“A primary care provider is somebody who understands their patients’ individual health care needs, so those patients get the personalized care plans and treatments necessary for them,” says Greg Hanson, MD, PCP at Thompson Falls Family Medicine.

QUALITY CARE PCPs deal with your physical, emotional and mental concerns. They diagnose and treat diseases, help you stay healthy, and know about up-to-

date treatments and technology.

They will send you to see other specialists if needed and will coordinate your care when you see other providers, such as a surgeon or a cardiologist.

Ultimately, PCPs can save their patients money, helping them to avoid trips to the emergency department or unnecessary tests. Already knowing a patient’s medical history prevents you from starting each medical appointment from ground zero, Dr. Hanson says. “When I have an established, long-term relationship with someone, I can get a sense of whether something is wrong very quickly.”

Finding the right fit between doctor and patient and working together over the long haul are keys to a successful partnership with your primary care provider.

See page 4 for Family Medicine Network PCPs, locations and contact information.

Get the most from a doctor’s appointment

Before your next doctor’s visit:

- Write down questions you want to ask, starting with the most important.
- List symptoms and problems; when they started; their triggers, duration and location; and how often they occur.
- List your medications, including dose and frequency. Include vitamins and non-prescription medications too.
- Set aside a notebook to carry with you.

In the doctor’s office:

- Bring your lists with you. Don’t be afraid to consult them.
- Keep questions to the point, and discuss your most important ones first.
- Answer all questions honestly, even if they’re personal or sensitive. Your doctor needs accurate information to help you.
- Listen carefully. Take notes to jog your memory later.
- Ask for a definition and explanation of anything you don’t understand.

As the appointment ends:

- Ask how to follow up if you need more information or have questions later.

Sources: American Medical Association; National Institute on Aging