

# The Ely Times

## Families moving back home to receive treatment

MARCH 27, 2015 BY [GARRETT ESTRADA](#)

Gary Lutzinger came close to having to make a decision he never wanted to have to make, getting to see his wife everyday in the hospital or getting to live in beloved hometown of Ely. His wife of 32 years, Sharon Nicholes, had to receive dialysis treatment three times a week and was receiving care at a hospital in Salt Lake City. Lutzinger would make the 240 mile drive as often as he could visiting her in her hospital bed before having to turn around and go home.

Lutzinger's case is not an isolated one. Before the Sanderling Dialysis Center opened in June of 2014, Ely residents in need of dialysis treatment would often have to make long trips out of town to receive their life-prolonging care. Many patients celebrated the center's opening last year as a way to dramatically reduce the travel time to and from treatments, but not everyone could receive care.

Not until now.

The Sanderling Dialysis Center has begun to offer dialysis treatment to those patients that need long term care. In cooperation with the White Pine Care Center, patients can now return to the town they love, be close to family members and still receive the medical treatments they need.

For Lutzinger, it brought his wife closer to home.

"It has made a real difference," Nicholes said. "I would get so lonely being so far away from my husband. Now I get to see him everyday and have a chance to go home."

Sonny Frontera, the Clinic Coordinator at the dialysis center,

ordinator at the dialysis center, began the dialog close to two months ago when she said she realized there was an opportunity to expand the center's treatment to more possible patients in need. Frontera got in contact with the Executive Director of the White Pine Care Center Michelle Boardman, who agreed that there was a need.

"We have had to turn people away in the past because we couldn't offer them the treatment they required," Boardman said. "Since then, we've been able to bring three families back into town that had to move away because we can help them now."

The two buildings are in such near proximity to one another that the process of taking a patient from the Care Center to the Dialysis Center is as easy as putting them in a wheelchair and walking them over.

Frontera has been encouraged by the families that have been able to move back to Ely due to the collaboration between the two facilities and hopes that by getting the word out, more families that had to relocate can consider coming back.

"This place is home to some of these people and they shouldn't have to move away from their home," Frontera said.

Lutzinger agreed. He said he was grateful to be able to see his wife without the hundreds of miles of travelling.

"It was so hard. I wasn't going to be able to do it much longer. I don't think I would've stayed in Ely, which would have been a shame," he said.

For more information on the Sanderling Dialysis Center, contact Frontera at 615-522-4683. For information about the White Pine Care Center , call 775-289-8801.



**Pictured from left to right: Dialysis patient Sharon Nicholes, her longtime husband Gary Lutzinger, Sanderling Dialysis Center Clinic Coordinator Sonny Frontera and the Executive Director at the White Pine Care Center Michelle Boardman.  
(Garrett Estrada photo)**

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