



What is a Critical Access Hospital?

Definition – A small, generally rural facility that provides outpatient and inpatient hospital services. In 2011 there were 1327 Critical Access Hospitals in the United States, 38 in Washington, and two (2) in King County (Enumclaw and Snoqualmie Valley). These hospitals are designated by the state and certified by Medicare.

The Critical Access Hospital Program was created in 1997 by the federal government as a safety net device to assure Medicare beneficiaries access to health care services in rural areas. It was designed to allow more flexible staffing options relative to community need, simplify billing methods and create incentives to develop local integrated health delivery systems, including acute, primary, emergency, and long-term care. No more than 25 beds are allowed in use at any one time. Most of the 25 beds can be used to provide acute or sub-acute care dependent on patient need.

What is a Swing Bed Program?

“Swing” refers to the fact that a bed in a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) can be used for acute care or sub-acute care, based on patient need. This kind of care is designed for patients who are discharging from a hospital but need temporary nursing and/or rehabilitation care that cannot be provided at home or in a typical skilled nursing facility. This program is a unique medical sub-acute rehabilitation program for patients who have spent at least 3+ consecutive midnights in any acute care hospital as an inpatient (not observation status). Rehabilitation services include physical, occupational, speech, and recreational therapies. Snoqualmie Valley Hospital (SVH) has the only active Swing Bed program in King County. This program specializes in nursing care and recovery of strength and function, so that patients can return to their home or residential living facility. SVH’s Swing Bed Program includes animal assisted therapy and community reintegration, along with complex wound care management, IV infusion, blood administration, parenteral nutrition (TPN), tracheostomy care, patient controlled analgesia (pain control), and geriatric specialized care. The goal of the Swing Bed Program is to return patients to the level of functioning they had prior to hospitalization or to help them adapt to their modified level of physical condition. All of the large hospitals on the Eastside, Harborview, and other regional facilities have referred into this program many times to promote faster and more complete recovery for their patients, to decrease the overall cost of healthcare, and to enhance integrated health delivery systems for all concerned.

**SNOQUALMIE VALLEY
HOSPITAL DISTRICT**