

Community Report

Dr. Paul Schmitt to Retire After 40-Year Medical Career...

When he got ready to establish a family practice, Dr. Paul Schmitt knew exactly what he wanted: a career as a "country doctor" in a small town - and the chance to be part of a close-knit community in an area marked by natural beauty and easy access to outdoor recreation.

Forty years later, he can say that he accomplished exactly what he set out to do.

Raised by a dentist father and a mother who was a nurse, Schmitt grew up in a Detroit suburb. Fast forward to the University of Michigan. Schmitt, finished with his undergraduate studies there, was just beginning medical school when, in 1969, he met Cindy, a junior studying psychology. A rotating internship at Swedish Hospital brought the couple to Seattle.

After a three-year stint with the Indian Health Service in Shiprock, New Mexico, he and Cindy headed back to the Pacific Northwest to establish a small town practice through the National Health Service Corps.

He wanted a career as a "country doctor."

Schmitt signed on at the Cle Elum clinic, joining the late Dr. John Anderson who had arrived a year earlier. Schmitt also signed on with the Alpentel Ski Patrol, retiring from that role just a few years ago.

The community quickly embraced the Schmitts. "You feel part of the community right away. That's where small towns have it over cities when you're working in this field. The old timers rolled out the carpet," Schmitt says.

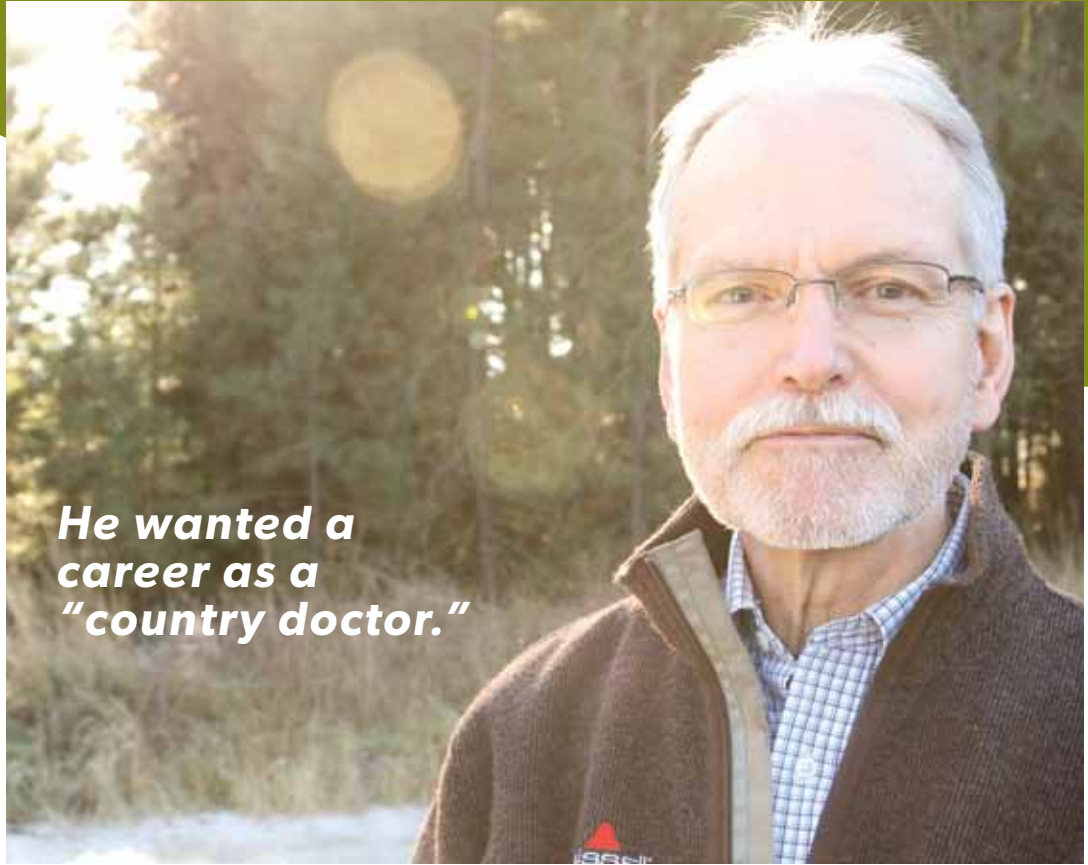
Much has changed since the first time Schmitt donned his stethoscope at the Cle Elum clinic. "Back then we were the emergency room docs," Schmitt says, recalling the early years. Ambulances routinely brought patients to the clinic at all hours of the day and night.

"We didn't have the access to technology that we have now," Schmitt says. "You couldn't just walk down the hall and talk to a specialist."

Today, an advanced life support ambulance service staffed by paramedics with advanced life support skills handles most emergencies and transports to hospitals. An Urgent Care clinic handles walk-ins well into the evening. "The emergency system is really good, in part because it integrates well with the emergency room at KVH Hospital," Schmitt says. "KVH Hospital does a good job of doing what they do and making high quality transfers when necessary."

Schmitt will retire later this year, but says he and Cindy have no plans to leave Roslyn.

"We're Roslyn people," he says, smiling. "We're not going anywhere."



Expansions to Local Care Options

Over the past few years, Kittitas Valley Healthcare has increased specialty medical care in Cle Elum.

ORTHOPEDICS

Consultations with an orthopedic specialist.

Availability: Every two weeks

Referral needed? Maybe

How to schedule: call KVH Orthopedics at (509) 933-8700

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Physical therapy, sports therapy, orthopedic therapy, balance and fall prevention.

Availability: Five days a week

Referral needed? Yes

How to schedule: call KVH Physical Therapy toll free at (844) 584-7868

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Pregnancy care and gynecology services.

Availability: Weekly

Referral needed? Maybe

How to schedule: call KVH Women's Health at (509) 933-8720

766 patients transported by ambulance

3022 urgent care visits

2016
by the
numbers



Upper Kittitas County Medic One employees (L-R): paramedics Mark Van Maren, Whit Hood-Lewis, Cole Gravel, and EMT Taylor Dawson

Accidental Injury Leads to Urgent Care Visit

He's a retired Yakima School District superintendent who went on to serve four years as an administrator at Heritage College followed by a stint as CEO of the American Red Cross in King and Kitsap Counties.

He's also a gifted artist whose work includes metal sculpture, wood carving and "wood-dyed" landscapes and portraits.

An active 72-year-old whose hobbies include riding his three-wheel Harley, Larry Petry is also no stranger to urgent care medical clinics.

"My wife says it seems like I have to hurt myself at least once a year," he says with a laugh.

Back in October 2016, his wife Nita was in Bellevue where the couple still owns a condo. Petry was in the garage of their Cle Elum home using a hand-held grinder to cut off a piece of steel sticking up from the floor.

Suddenly the tool bounced up, striking him just above his left wrist.

"The strangest thing is it didn't cut my sweatshirt," says Petry who tried unsuccessfully to use a butterfly bandage to close the wound. "It wouldn't hold," he says. "The gash was too deep and ragged."

Petry turned to KVH Urgent Care - Cle Elum. Operated by Kittitas Valley Healthcare with support from Kittitas County Public Hospital District No. 2, the clinic provides non-emergency medical care daily from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m.

"I've been in those kinds of places a lot," says Petry who believes it doesn't make sense – either time or money-wise – to go to the emergency room for a non-serious situation.

"I got into urgent care pretty fast," he says, calling what came next "a very good experience and far better than what you normally get in a medical facility like that. I found the staff unusually patient-centered. The whole place had a kind of calming effect – you could feel it."

The nurse who cleaned his wound "was very thorough but she also had a sense of humor," he says. So did the provider.

"She was really down-to-earth," he recalls, smiling at the memory of how she "gave me a little bit of a bad time for being so clumsy. She was really good, competent and knew exactly what she was doing."

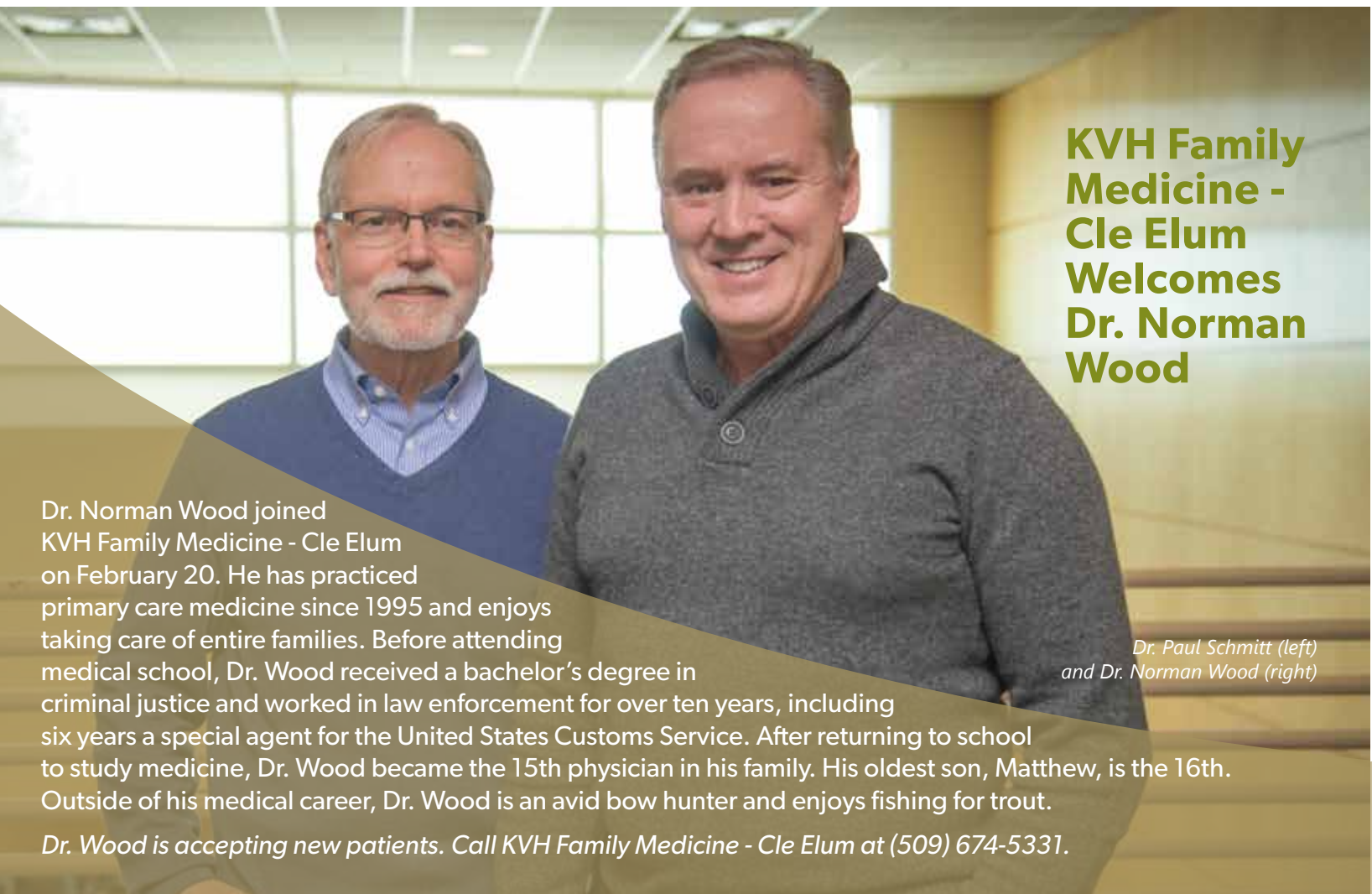
Six or eight stitches later, Petry was out the door – and fully impressed.

"It was a good experience all around," he says. "I was in and out of there fast and the whole thing went smooth. It's a great service for a small community to have."



KVH Urgent Care is now open from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. every day

Kittitas County Public Hospital District No. 2
505 Power St.
Cle Elum, WA 98922



KVH Family Medicine - Cle Elum Welcomes Dr. Norman Wood

Dr. Norman Wood joined KVH Family Medicine - Cle Elum on February 20. He has practiced primary care medicine since 1995 and enjoys taking care of entire families. Before attending medical school, Dr. Wood received a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and worked in law enforcement for over ten years, including six years a special agent for the United States Customs Service. After returning to school to study medicine, Dr. Wood became the 15th physician in his family. His oldest son, Matthew, is the 16th. Outside of his medical career, Dr. Wood is an avid bow hunter and enjoys fishing for trout.

Dr. Wood is accepting new patients. Call KVH Family Medicine - Cle Elum at (509) 674-5331.

*Dr. Paul Schmitt (left)
and Dr. Norman Wood (right)*