

# Get to Know Dr. Elise Sullivan

Dr. Elise Sullivan, raised in Colorado, joins the staff at The Memorial Hospital Medical Clinic as a Family Medicine physician, with extra training and skills in obstetrics and women's health. Her love for medicine and dedication to patients and their families will serve our community well.



**Did you always want to be a doctor?** There are no other doctors in my family, but I always loved science growing up. In high school, I developed an inner ear disorder. I would suddenly fall down from the imbalance and not be able to get up for a minute. It got worse my freshman year in college and I had to drop out. At the time, my mom was a single mom working three jobs and we didn't have health insurance. It took a while to figure out what was wrong and I saw many doctors and really came to understand the world of medicine. Some of the doctors were good at listening and others would shut me out. I finally got the treatment I needed, and I am fine now. It was a profound experience that made me determined to become a doctor.

**As a Family Physician, you have special training and experience in delivering babies and women's health. Can you talk about that?** Having a child is a momentous experience in a woman's life, and I am honored to be a part of that. I not only get to deliver, I also get to follow up and care for that child. That makes all the 2 a.m. births worth it! That's what I love about being a Family Medicine physician—I get to take care of the entire family, from young to old. Delivering babies is a somewhat parallel experience to helping someone die in hospice. Both are intense experiences that I find incredibly rewarding, as well as all the in between.

**You won a Doctor of the Year Award at your last practice in California. How did that come about?** As a doctor, it's important to have optimism for your patients, even when they don't have it for themselves. That's really what happened with the award. The patient who nominated me was in a rough spot. She was going through a divorce and had several complex medical problems with no health insurance. The first 10 visits, she came in and just sobbed. I told her we'd get her better. We got her insured and treated her depression and medical problems to help her get back on her feet.

**How did you become fluent in Spanish?** As a student, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Mexico twice and once in Ecuador. In my last position, I had the privilege of taking care of many Latino families and really enjoyed that. I'm able to do full visits in Spanish. Just don't ask me the names of foods—for some reason I have trouble with that!

**Can you tell us a bit about your family?** I am married to Jeff and we have a son, Mason. Jeff just started working at Moffat County High School in the special education department. Mason is five, and is in kindergarten. He's a big fan of Star Wars and likes to color, paint and draw. He's also really into animals and knows more animal facts than I do.

**Why are you looking forward to working at TMH?** We really wanted to get back to Colorado. I grew up in Pine, Colorado and Jeff grew up in Glenwood Springs and still has family there. We love hiking, skiing, and camping, and in California it was so crowded you could never get out into the woods alone. We really like Craig and the people we've met here. We're renting now, but actively looking to purchase. The Memorial Hospital is really welcoming, and I can't wait to start seeing patients on October 7!

