

# Family questions transfer to Denver hospital

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ment or staff to properly care for Ginn on the way to Denver if she took a turn for the worse.

He said the Ginn family is focusing on the weather that night, but that wasn't the only reason hospital staff decided to wait for the Denver ambulance.

The hospital wants to be sure a patient's condition doesn't deteriorate before they reach the transfer facility, Jolly said. After assessing their options, he said, the doctors decided the best one was to keep Ginn at the hospital here, close to a blood supply and emergency treatment.

The Denver ambulance that came, Jolly said, is basically an "emergency room on wheels," able to provide life-saving services the Goodland crew isn't equipped to give. He said the Denver unit was rated as a Level 5 ambulance, which is the same designation as an air ambulance and far above Goodland's basic life support level ambulance.

Jolly noted the hospital here is working to develop advanced life support services by buying new equipment and training volunteers. An Eagle Med air ambulance will be stationed in Goodland starting April 15.

Dr. Younger said he explained to Ginn and her husband Joe why they were using the Denver ambulance, but they must not have understood.

"I told them that at the time," he said, "but evidently in the rush and excitement of the situation, they tend to forget."

Ginn made it safely to Denver, where doctors performed surgery on her nose to stop the bleeding.

After spending a couple of days at University Hospital, she came back to Goodland and was released after staying 24 hours in the hospital here, but her family is still upset over the transfer.

They wonder why an ambulance from Denver could have come here, but the Goodland ambulance couldn't go there. It was a waste of time to wait, they say, may have cost them double the money and put Connie's health in jeopardy. And above all, they say, they don't want it to happen to someone else.

The Ginns say the Goodland ambulance service is inconsistent, because an ambulance transported a patient to Hays the next day in similar bad weather.

So far, they have talked to Sherman County commissioner Kevin Rasure and a lawyer in Goodland. They say they may take legal action against the



Jeff Krall, director of Emergency Medical Services, made adjustments on the control panel in the new ambulance at Goodland Regional Medical Center.  
Photo by Skilar Boland/The Goodland Daily News

ambulance service if they don't get satisfactory answers.

Hospital administrators and Dr. Younger see the story differently.

They said the way the transfer was done was in the best interest of the patient. They tried to explain that to the Ginns at the time.

Jolly said hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, lawyers and ambulance volunteers have reviewed the transfer decision and have decided it was "entirely appropriate."

He said the hospital has sent a letter to the Ginns and Krall, the ambulance service director, has tried to call the family, but the couple won't talk to them.

Joe Ginn said their lawyer advised them not to talk to the hospital. He said he received a letter from the hospital that said there would be an explanation later, but that's not what he wants. He wants answers.

Joe said the way he understood it, the doctor ordered the ambulance here to take his wife to the hospital and the crew refused because of the weather.

"It just doesn't make sense to me," he said. "They were told to take the patient, the driver can't just say no. He shouldn't be able to overrule the doctor."

But Dr. Younger said he understood

the ambulance crew's reasoning.

"If they can't do it, they can't do it," he said. "We don't have all of the resources of a Denver hospital."

Jolly said it was the best option at the time and he doesn't think the doctor or the hospital made any mistakes. He does think communications could have been better between the doctor and patient.

Sometimes, Jolly said, patients will hear hospital staff talking and misconstrue what they are saying, or in all of the excitement might not understand what the doctor is telling them.

The Ginns, though, said no one understood the decision except the administrators and the doctors. They said the Denver ambulance drivers couldn't believe it.

Jolly said the Denver ambulance drivers may not have been told reasons for the transfer when they were dispatched.

Hospital workers always try to be professional, he said, but sometimes they may say things that can be taken the wrong way.

Phillip Ginn said he thinks the Goodland ambulance service knows they did something wrong and is trying to cover it up. He said they sent an ambulance out the next day to Hays in weather that was just as bad or even

worse.

"Why can they handle the trip to Hays, but not to Denver?" he asked. "It seems like the service you have right now is really, really inadequate."

Jolly said the trip was made in daylight, which made driving visibility better and the patient's condition was likely more stable.

He said the condition of two patients may seem the same on the surface, but there are underlying conditions that are different.

About the cost, Jolly said, it would have cost more for Ginn to have been flown out in the first place.

An Eagle Med representative in Wichita said it would have cost about \$8,000 to fly Ginn to Denver.

A representative of Rural/Metro Ambulance in Denver said the company would charge \$516 to send a Level 5 ambulance to Goodland plus \$7.54 a mile, for a total of about \$2,000. Jolly said Goodland would charge \$230 plus \$7 a mile, for a total of about \$1,550.

Basically, Jolly said, he thinks the Ginn's should be thanking the ambulance service instead of complaining at them.

For their part, the couple said they just want some answers and to make sure this doesn't happen again.

## Director hopes to upgrade to advanced life support

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said, as the advanced service will require paramedics or specially trained registered nurses to be on the ambulances.

And that requires finding paramedics that are willing to live in Goodland or training people already here.

"I would love some of our local high school students to be interested in the field," Krall said.

"If anyone is interested in the program or has questions, they are welcome to call me at the hospital."

In Kansas, he said, a person has to become an EMT basic and have an associate's degree before entering the paramedic program. The closest program is in Garden City, and it takes 1 1/2 years.

There is a lot of work involved in becoming a paramedic, he said, as the students will have to complete 600 hours of lectures, over 200 hours of clinical study, and an internship for field training.

They will have to spend 500 hours in a medical response ambulance, he said, and won't be paid for that time.

Paramedic training can be stressful, he said, as the teachers cram a lot of stuff down you. All of this is needed to prepare for a difficult field.

It's not always a happy ending, Krall said, as you don't save everyone. Some things are out of your hands, but you do have the reward of helping people and of saving many of them.

And it's not a high-paying job with easy hours. Paramedics work days, nights, and weekends, he said, in bad weather and good.

"You don't get rich as an EMT or paramedic," he said. "You do it because you love it."

Krall, who was a paramedic in Colorado Springs before moving here, said he and most paramedics thrive on accidents. They are a bad thing, he said, that he wouldn't wish it on anyone.

But that is how paramedics keep up their skills, he said, by responding to disasters.

"I like the action of the city," Krall said. "There are a lot of accidents — that's what we do." A paramedic would see as much action in one day in Denver, Krall said, as in a month in Goodland.

For paramedics seeking the thrill of the job, that may not be enough. And it

will raise the hospital's costs for keeping their skills up to date, he said, as the paramedics will need to go to larger towns like Denver every year to keep up their skills and education.

He believes the program can work in Goodland, Krall said, or he wouldn't have come here.

Krall said he came to Goodland, he said, to get Eagle Med established and to get advanced life support established. "I did research before I took the job here," he said.

"I talked to Eagle Med and felt it's a realistic goal."

Krall said he wants the service to have long-term success. That will require support from the community, the hospital and staff, he said.

The program already has the support of the hospital board and county commissioners, he said, as well as the doctors. The doctors know the potential of having paramedics, he said.

The advanced system is needed here, Krall said, because of the distance to city hospitals with advanced treatment.

With the basic life support ambulance service, he said, the emergency medical technicians do basic airway and bleeding management.

There are a couple of people on the staff that can intubate a victim, he said, and several who can start an IV and they carry an external defibrillator for heart attack victims.

With cardiac patients, he said, the technicians can give the patient oxygen and take his pulse. If the patient's heart stops, he said, they can use the defibrillator. And they take them to the hospital.

With advanced service, Krall said, the paramedics can give the patient cardiac medication to try to prevent the need for the defibrillator, and patients can be hooked up to a heart monitor.

The paramedics' evaluation skills are more advanced, Krall said, and they can do advanced airway procedures.

If they are unable to get a tube down the patient's throat (intubate), he said, they can make a surgical incision and hook him up that way. And paramedics can give patients pain medication, he said. With advanced life support, patients will get quicker and better treatment, Krall said.

Basically, they will be able to get most of the care in the ambulance that they would get in the emergency room of a hospital.

# Two methamphetamine labs shut down by police in St. Francis

By Karen Krien

Two methamphetamine labs within blocks of St. Francis High School were shut down Friday by KBI agents and St. Francis police officers after an eight-month investigation.

Raymond John DeAragon, 40, St. Francis, was arrested and charged with four counts including manufacturing of methamphetamine, unlawful possession of pseudoephedrine, posses-

sion of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

A KBI agent and Jason Ryan, St. Francis police chief, served a search warrant to DeAragon outside his home.

After taking a step into one of the trailers being used for methamphetamine labs, they immediately backed out because of the fumes coming from the building. KBI agents dressed in

protective clothing and then entered the trailer.

In the two trailers, at College and Second streets, they found labs set up for making methamphetamine and all of the materials, including 2 pounds of ephedrine which DeAragon had been manufactured using the cold remedy Sudafed and other chemicals.

There was an area where he was growing what appeared to be mari-

juana with "grow" lights and 20 pounds of the alleged drug was confiscated.

Officers also found 31 one-quart jars which they suspect of containing hashish, a marijuana derivative. There were numerous empty packages of Sudafed or generic brands of pseudoephedrine found in both trailers, officers said.

The KBI officers reported that the lab setup at this St. Francis residence was one of the largest they had seen. One of the agents said out of all of the labs they have closed down this year, it compared with the second and third largest.

Had the labs exploded, he said, the

blast could have destroyed a city block. The labs were within 1,000 feet of the high school and grade school, which is a serious felony.

The KBI took samples of items found in the lab and will send them on to its lab. On Saturday evening, members of a hazardous material team arrived to remove all chemicals and trash, leaving St. Francis about midnight.

The trailers were then sealed and signs posted on the doors. Officials with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment will test the structures to see if they can be safely cleaned up or if it will need to be destroyed.

Chief Ryan commended business owners and their employees for watching for and reporting when large quantities of over-the-counter drugs and other items used for making methamphetamine had been sold and who had purchased them.

"Had they not reported these sales, we would not have been able to obtain the search warrants," he said.

DeAragon was being held in the Sherman County Bastille without bond as of Monday.

Earlier in the month, officers seized another lab near the school, arresting four people from St. Francis, a Hays man and an Atwood man.

## Outage lasted most of the day

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sometimes these things are unpredictable."

Because dozens of settings need to be changed, he said, there may be outages off and on at various places all afternoon. E-mail service will be down for a couple of hours, and some customers may be without service until evening. The Internet staff expects to stay late, answering questions and helping people with their changeover.

The switch comes after an extended outage which kept customers off the Internet and blocked e-mail most of the day Monday. Mr. Betz said the change had been planned long before then, but the outage did point out problems with the old system.

The service has been provided by

### Outside help

It's not our fault! Internet service for **nwkansas.com** was out all day Monday. It was off because of a problem between our supplier, Carroll's Web of Salina, and their supplier, Verio. Service was not restored until about 10 p.m. Monday.

We at **nwkansas.com** had no control over this problem, and can only apologize. We are changing suppliers next week.

Carroll's Web of Salina, which last year bought out CJNetworks, owned by the Topeka-Capital Journal and its

parent, Morris Communications. Originally, the supplier was the Kansas Press Association, which sold its Internet operations to Morris.

The new supplier will be Southwestern Bell Internet, part of telecommunications giant SBC Corp., said Steve Haynes, president of Nor'West Newspapers, which **onwkansas.com**.

"Bell promises us a more reliable service," he said. "We know from experience with our leased lines that Bell responds pretty well to trouble calls."

Carroll's Web, owned mostly by an assortment of small Kansas telephone companies, restored service about 10 p.m. Monday. A spokesman said the entire Networks system had been shut off by their supplier. They thought at the time that the issue might be resolved by sometime Tuesday.

important that we speak to one another," said Lisa Taylor, agriculture department spokeswoman.

Jerry Wells, executive director of the crime institute, said the conference is expected to become an annual event as a means to share latest technologies and review immediate concerns.

"The threat is real and the incident of the foot-and-mouth scare just highlights that threat," Wells said.

Though the tests were negative, the rumor is blamed for a drop in commodity prices, costing producers an estimated \$50 million. It caused restaurant stocks to decline on Wall Street.

## Conference discusses bioterrorism

MANHATTAN (AP)—Agriculture industry representatives gathered Monday to discuss the vulnerability of the nation's food supply to bioterrorism and worried about the potential economic ruin it would bring.

"It would be a depression of the first order," said James Marsden, a Kansas State University professor of meat science.

Marsden told about 140 people at the Midwest Conference on Agricultural Bioterrorism that just one case of foot and mouth disease would cause irreparable harm to the nation's agriculture industry.

He added that agriculture accounts for 22 million jobs and 16.4 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

The two-day conference is an effort by the Koch Crime Institute, state Department of Agriculture and Kansas State to raise awareness about the real threat and vulnerabilities of the food supply.

The event was scheduled in response to Sept. 11 but comes two weeks after an unfounded rumor that cattle had tested positive for foot-and-mouth disease at the Holton Livestock Exchange.

"There are lots of players and it's



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