

# Family gains an ally along difficult life journey

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—Molly Morris—

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Molly Morris is a community health worker at Coulee Medical Center.

Molly Morris never imagined herself as a health worker. She started her career in banking, helping homebuyers with mortgages.

"I was always good at explaining complicated things plainly to people," she says. "I think that's one of the reasons I starting working in health care. What's more complicated than health care?"

As a Community Health Worker at Coulee Medical Center, Molly has spent years helping to get at the root of what affects the health of her patients--like the environments where

people live, transportation, finances and family.

Janet walked into Coulee Medical Center with her two daughters, both in high school. Her oldest, Sarah, needed a physical to sign up for fall sports, but Janet didn't know about the \$25 cost. Their family didn't have the money.

The front desk referred Janet to Molly's office. Molly learned Janet and her daughters had been living out of a truck since Janet lost her job.

"We will be going on a journey together," Molly told Janet once she had a

full picture of the family's situation. "We're going to fill out some paperwork, I'm going to ask you some questions, and I'll explain to you how we're going to get Sarah her physical. And we're going to get the three of you into housing by the end of the week. Okay?"

"This is why I became a Community Health Worker," Molly says, tearing up as she remembers Janet's story. "I'm so happy Janet's family is doing well, but there are people like them who walk into a waiting room, get a clipboard with information they don't understand, and rather than ask for help they may not

get, they walk out."

Molly believes it's important to understand the issues and factors that really affect the health of people.

"I think Healthier Washington is about having a dialogue," Molly said. "People in my profession have to do better when speaking with patients, but health care providers also have to do a better job talking to each other about a patient's health. This work is just starting, but to have the pieces in place is encouraging us to work toward needed collaboration."

## Healthier Washington Linkages:

Healthier Washington supports multi-sector engagement exemplified in the story shared by Coulee Medical Center; empowering local communities to come together to address health. By using a collaborative regional approach, providers who are working to address an individual's physical and mental health are being connected to resources.



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