



ER is OK with Chris Seyler, PA-C

There was never any question that medicine was going to be Chris Seyler's calling. A brief stint as a waitress at a bus stop in the middle of nowhere confirmed it.

"That was right after high school in Juntura, Oregon," she laughs. "It made me very motivated to get to school."

Earning her LPN degree from Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon in 1973, Chris struck out to Lame Deer, Montana as a nurse for the Indian Health Clinic. "I was looking for adventure more than anything," she admits. "And in the five years I was there, I certainly found it! I was the only person at the grocery store who didn't speak Cheyenne. I stuck out like a sore thumb!"

After Lame Deer, Chris transferred to Inchelium. In both places, she found herself working with young, progressive doctors. "They chose working on the Reservation over going to Viet Nam. They really knew their stuff and they taught me a lot. I was always being pushed to do more." Including going back to school to become a Physician's Assistant.

"They kept telling me to quit wasting my time as a nurse and go back to school so I could see my own patients in a clinical setting."

Chris attended the U of W to earn her PA-C. "I wanted to broaden the scope of what I could do. I love family practice — babies to old folks and everything in between, but I'm still a trauma junkie who loves the ER," says Chris, who has been an EMT for over 30 years.

After becoming a Physician's Assistant, Chris moved to Grand Coulee and worked for Coulee Community Hospital and the local clinic. Not long after her arrival, CCH lost their physicians and Chris was the area's sole medical practitioner for 15 months.

"I was by myself seeing patients in clinical practice five days each week and taking ER call four nights a week." It was a crazy time, but she loved it because she loves medicine.

"My husband (whom she met in Inchelium) is talking about retirement and I'm like, "Not me. No way. I love work," she laughs.

Here at Lincoln, Chris is a "physician extender". "My role is to free up docs so they don't have to come to the ER for everything and they can expand their clinical practice."

So far, it's been fun and she truly enjoys the staff and patients. "Medicine is so gratifying. You help people feel better. It's great."

