

NEWS/OUTDOORS

SCH from page 6: Hospital once again in the Top 100

tal, SCH qualifies to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Established in 1992 by Congress, the program requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide outpatient medications at significantly reduced prices, thus helping rural hospitals such as Wishek stretch scarce federal resources.

“For rural hospitals like ours, 340B is extremely important,” said CEO Lukas Fischer. Small hospitals often operate on very narrow financial margins while still being expected to provide a broad range of services to their communities. The program helps offset some of those financial pressures and allows hospitals to continue offering services locally that otherwise might be difficult to maintain. In 2025, the 340B program provided a profit of just under \$500,000 for South Central Health.

For the fourth consecutive year, and 7th year overall, SCH was named in the top 100 Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) nationally, and earned a top 20 recognition in April. Fischer said there are approximately 1,400 CAH’s in the

United States, which places the Wishek facility in the top 1 ½ percent of rural hospitals.

Fischer praised the dedication and commitment to quality care by the entire staff for the honor, noting that the criteria used in determining the designation are things the staff does on a daily basis.

Other highlights from the annual report included the addition of expanded MRI services which began in late spring of 2026, and construction of a new clinic building in Kulm, which is expected to open this fall.

The former Napoleon Clinic building was sold at the end of 2025. Patient care was moved to the Wentz Living Center.

A home in Wishek was purchased to house visiting staff, and the hospital parking lot was blacktopped last fall.

Election of board members was conducted as well. Board president Lila Raile was re-elected, and Jeanine Vetter and Isabella Dosan were elected to fill seats vacated by Don Hochhalter and Marla Berntson.



by Doug Leier

Every year about this time, questions start rolling in about the North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s lottery system. Hunters wonder how bonus points work, whether they need to apply in the same unit each year, and how the drawing happens.

The short answer is that the system rewards persistence while still keeping the drawing random.

Let’s use deer as the example, though the same process applies to turkey licenses and other weighted lottery tag drawings.

If you apply for a license but fail to draw your first choice, you receive a bonus point. Those points accumulate over time and improve your odds in future drawings. The good news for hunters who like to mix things up is that you do not have to apply for the same unit or even the same type of deer license each year to keep building points.

As long as you apply in the first drawing at least once every two years, your bonus points remain intact. Each bonus point increases the number of chances your name goes into the drawing. For the first three points, the math is pretty simple. You are entered two times the number of bonus points you have. For example, if you

How The Lottery Works

have two bonus points, you receive four additional chances in the drawing compared to someone who drew their first choice the previous year.

If both hunters apply for the same license, the hunter with two bonus points would have five chances in the drawing while the other hunter has one. Keep in mind throughout this entire explanation, there is never a "guaranteed" draw level. Odds continue to improve after each unsuccessful drawing. But there is no automatic trigger.

Once you reach four or more bonus points, the advantage grows much faster. At that point, the system cubes the number of bonus points to determine additional chances in the drawing.

So, a hunter with four points gets 64 additional chances, five points equals 125 chances, and the numbers keep growing from there. Again, not a guarantee but your odds are improving.

Even with those extra entries, every drawing remains random. More bonus points simply mean better odds.

There are a couple other important details hunters should know.

Bonus points are only earned in years you apply and do not draw your first choice. If you skip applying for a year, you don’t earn a point. However, you will keep your accumulated points as long as you apply at least once every other year in the first drawing.

When you finally draw your first license choice, those bonus points are gone and you start the process over again.

The lottery itself is actually made up of four separate drawings, based on the choices listed on the application.

First, Game and Fish conducts a drawing for your first unit and first deer choice. After those licenses are issued, the department moves to the first unit and second deer choice. The process continues with the second unit and first deer choice, followed by the second unit and second deer choice.

It may sound complicated at first glance, but the goal is

simple: give every hunter a fair shot, while improving the odds for those who keep applying year after year.

2025 Lottery Stats

Deer

- 74,445 – Number of people — not including 11,820 gratis applicants — who applied for deer gun lottery licenses, down from 75,874 in 2024.
- 31.9 – Percent of successful applicants, excluding gratis and nonresidents, for deer gun and muzzleloader licenses.
- 22 – Maximum number of bonus points for any applicant (nonresident mule deer buck applicants).
- 15,694 – Applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 13.85 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 54.02 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points who applied for a muzzleloader buck license.

The number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters:

- 2016 – 49,000 deer gun licenses.
- 2017 – 54,500 deer gun licenses.
- 2018 – 55,150 deer gun licenses.
- 2019 – 65,500 deer gun licenses.
- 2020 – 69,050 deer gun licenses.
- 2021 – 72,200 deer gun licenses.
- 2022 – 64,200 deer gun licenses.
- 2023 – 53,400 deer gun licenses.
- 2024 – 50,100 deer gun licenses.
- 2025 – 42,300 deer gun licenses.

Drawing a buck license in 2025 was not easy. Randy Meissner, Game and Fish Department licensing manager, said after 11,598 resident gratis licenses and 423 nonresident licenses were subtracted from the overall license allocation, just 16,125 buck licenses were available for the 60,958 hunters who applied for them as their first choice in the lottery.

Learn more about the lottery here and here - <https://gf.nd.gov/magazine/2026/feb/2025-deer-drawing>

Understanding the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit

How You Benefit From This Important Medicare Benefit

A Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) is a preventive visit with your provider and a great opportunity to focus on issues or concerns that may be overlooked in a routine physical exam.

During the visit, your healthcare team will help you develop a long-term, preventive care plan to guide your health.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

If you have Medicare Part B coverage and have not had a Medicare Annual Wellness Visit or a Welcome to Medicare Visit in the past 12 months, you may be eligible. If you are unsure, please contact your insurance provider to verify eligibility.

IS THE MEDICARE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT THE SAME AS A YEARLY PHYSICAL?

No. During a yearly physical, your provider is focused on chronic illnesses and performing routine lab work. The Medicare Annual Wellness Visit **focuses on your overall health and wellbeing.** Together with your provider, you will create a personalized, preventive health plan that addresses things like lifestyle changes, goals and preferences. Plus, your provider can assess and address any issues before they become urgent.

WHAT DOES THE MEDICARE AWV COST?

Patients pay nothing out-of-pocket for this visit. During your visit, **if you require further tests or screenings** other than those outlined in the appointment overview, a co-payment or deductible expense may occur.

APPOINTMENT OVERVIEW, WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Review your medical and family history
- Review your current medications
- Review your list of current care providers
- Screen for memory and behavioral changes
- Measurement of blood pressure, height and weight
- Review of movement ability and risk of falls
- Advance Care Planning

With this information, your provider will develop a written preventive health and screening plan.

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