Dr. Patricia Coyman remembers talking with her father years ago about being a small-town doctor—one where she joked about getting paid in chickens and pie.

That dream has become a reality as she has joined the medical staff at Melissa Memorial Hospital and Family Practice of Holyoke.

“It’s a rural clinic, it has a small town, and I get to be the doc I want to be,” Coyman said during her fifth day on the job Friday, Nov. 30. “I hope I don’t get paid in just chickens and pie,” she said with a laugh.

She has purchased a home with husband Stan and said she is here to stay. “I’m excited about it,” Coyman said of her newest opportunity. “I think it’ll be a lot of fun. I’m very happy to be here.”

“I’m tickled,” MMH administrator John Ayoub said of Coyman joining the staff in Holyoke. “This is something that we’ve pursued for a while. We’ve been visiting with Dr. Coyman on and off since July. I think she’s going to find a home here. She really seems like she fits in very nicely.”

Coyman began working in Holyoke Monday, Nov. 26 and said Friday, Nov. 30 she was enjoying her time so far.

Coyman was born in Canada but moved to Germany shortly after. She grew up in Germany and at age 6 moved to the United States to a small town called Bellevue, Wash.—a town outside of Seattle where she stayed until finishing high school.

Coyman received her undergraduate degree in medical microbiology with a minor in chemistry

from California State University at Long Beach, Calif. She then went on to pharmacy school at the University of Southern California.

Deciding she really wanted to be a doctor, she performed research at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., where she worked in the nephrology (kidney) department. “It’s a beautiful place there,” she noted.

Coyman was accepted into medical school at the University of Health Sciences in Kansas City, Mo. After she finished, she couldn’t make up her mind on her next step. She debated becoming a psychiatrist or a pathologist. Instead, she began a residency program in internal medicine in Michigan. She then decided she wanted a practice where she could do a little of everything, so she switched to family medicine at Michigan State University.

At some point she told herself she was going to have to stop going to school, but wanted to be a geriatrician as well, so she performed a geriatric fellowship at Saint Joseph Hospital in Phoenix, Ariz.

Following her time at Saint Joseph Hospital, it was time to go to work. She didn’t quite know what she wanted to do, but it was some of her mentors and preceptors that suggested she open her own practice. “How do you do that?” she asked herself. “I don’t know how to do that.”

Despite the concern, she went ahead and opened her own practice with the help of one of her mentors who lent her the money interest-free. She spent five years working at her practice in Phoenix.

Following the passing of her father, she knew he would want her to do whatever she really wanted to. She told her husband to pick three places anywhere in the United States that they would want to move to, and she also picked three places.

They both decided that Colorado was their next step. They moved to Parker, and Coyman began working for Senior Care Colorado in Aurora, where she spent five years.

She was given a heads-up that the owners were going to be selling the company, so she applied to Plains Medical Center as a regular doctor. She in turn was offered the medical directorship. She gladly accepted and worked there for two years while idly looking around for a rural place to move to.

She met Ayoub through Colorado Rural Providers, a company that matches providers with rural health care facilities. She visited Holyoke and instantly fell in love.

“He’s the nicest guy in the world,” Coyman said of Ayoub. “It’s important to have an executive team that’s supportive and that we’re all on the same page with.”

One of her reasons for moving to Colorado in the first place was because she wanted to rescue animals.

Coyman and her husband Stan Reda have purchased a home in the country large enough to house their many animals.

They have six quarter horses, four miniature horses, eight dogs, three cats, two goats, three donkeys, two llamas and numerous chickens. She has built up quite the group. “It’s a lot of work,” she mentioned. “But it’s worth it.”

Reda is a hospice nurse and will be working for Plains Hospice in Wray.

In her free time, Coyman enjoys keeping up on her medical knowledge and growing vegetables. She hopes to construct a small greenhouse where she will grow tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries and more. Of course, she uses a lot of her free time taking care of her adopted and rescued animals.

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