

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Judy Wenzl, BSN, RN, infection prevention

Vaping: What you need to know

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), state and local health departments, and other clinical and public health partners are investigating a multistate outbreak of e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI).

What is new & what we know

CDC has identified vitamin E acetate as a chemical of concern among people with EVALI. Recent CDC laboratory testing of bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) fluid samples (fluid samples collected from the lungs) from 29 patients with EVALI submitted to CDC from 10 states found vitamin E acetate in all of the samples. Vitamin E acetate is used as an additive, most notably as a thickening agent in tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) containing e-cigarette, or vaping, products.

Vitamin E is a vitamin found in many foods, including vegetable oils, cereals, meat, fruits, and vegetables. It is also available as a dietary supplement and in many cosmetic products, such as skin creams.

Vitamin E acetate usually does not cause harm when ingested as a vitamin supplement or applied to the skin. However, previous research suggests when vitamin E acetate is inhaled, it may interfere with normal lung functioning.

As of Nov. 20, 2019, 2,290 cases of EVALI have been reported to CDC from 49 states (all except Alaska), the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands).

Forty-seven deaths have been confirmed in 25 states and the District of Columbia.

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, latest outbreak information will be reported on Dec. 5, 2019. Case counts and deaths reported will include data collected between Nov. 17th and Nov. 30th and only hospitalized EVALI cases. CDC continues to work closely with FDA, states, public health partners, and clinicians on this investigation.

Key facts about vaping & vitamin E acetate

Electronic cigarettes—or e-cigarettes—are also called vapes, e-hookahs, vape pens, tank systems, mods and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

Using an e-cigarette product is commonly called vaping. E-cigarettes work by heating a liquid to produce an aerosol that users inhale into their lungs. The liquid can contain: nicotine, THC and cannabinoid (CBD) oils, and other substances and additives. THC is the psychoactive mind-altering compound of marijuana that produces the “high.”



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What is a JUUL?

JUUL is a brand of e-cigarette that is shaped like a USB flash drive. Like other e-cigarettes, JUUL is a battery-powered device that heats a nicotine-containing liquid to produce an aerosol that is inhaled.

All JUUL e-cigarettes have a high level of nicotine. According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.

JUUL is one of a few e-cigarettes that use nicotine salts, which allow particularly high levels of nicotine to be inhaled more easily and with less irritation than the free-base nicotine that has traditionally been used in tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

News outlets and social media sites report widespread use of JUUL by students in schools, including classrooms and bathrooms. Approximately two-thirds of JUUL users ages 15 to 24 do not know that JUUL always contains nicotine. (Continued on p. 2)

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Vaping: What you need to know (From p. 1)

Although JUUL is currently the top-selling e-cigarette brand in the United States, other companies sell e-cigarettes that look like USB flash drives. Examples include the MarkTen Elite, a nicotine delivery device, and the PAX Era, a marijuana delivery device that looks like JUUL.

Additional information about USB-shaped e-cigarettes and actions that parents, educators and health care providers can take to protect kids is available on the [CDC's website](#).



Health risks of marijuana (THC)

Marijuana, which can also be called weed, pot, dope or cannabis, is the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant.

Marijuana contains mind-altering (e.g., psychoactive) compounds such as THC, as well as other active compounds such as CBD, that are not mind-altering.

Marijuana use has been associated with a wide range of health effects, particularly with prolonged frequent use. These effects range from short-term problems with attention, memory and learning, to longer-term problems such as psychosis, anxiety, suicidal ideation and attempts, depression and substance use disorder. It is not known whether these are causal relationships or simply associations.

The best way to avoid potentially harmful effects is to not use marijuana.

Marijuana use, including through use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products can impact your health. Regardless of the substance used, e-cigarette, or vaping, products should never be used by youth.

Marijuana use can harm the developing adolescent brain and impact attention, learning and memory. Starting to use marijuana at a younger age leads to higher risks of more problematic use later in life.

Youth marijuana use has also been associated with antisocial and oppositional behaviors, nicotine use, poor school performance, use of other illicit substances

and the development of substance use disorders, and impairments in social relationships. It is important for parents to communicate with their child about the risks of nicotine, THC or other substance use.

It is unknown if there are different health risks of using different forms of marijuana, such as smoking, vaping, and edibles, or whether transitioning from one form to another might reduce harm. Talk with your health care provider about other available treatment options for the conditions.

Some states have legalized the use of THC-containing vaping products for nonmedical and/or medical purposes. State regulations vary with regard to product pre-approval processes, ingredient requirements and/or limitations, packaging and labeling, and testing requirements and methods. States typically conduct various levels of testing of products, including testing for potency, contaminants, metals, pesticides and/or pathogens.

Both THC-containing and nicotine-containing e-cigarette, or vaping, products purchased legally within states might also contain harmful substances. It is difficult to know what is in these products, and full ingredient lists are typically not available.

CDC recommendations

CDC recommends that people do not use THC-containing e-cigarette, or vaping, products. CDC also recommends that people should not:

- Buy any type of e-cigarette, or vaping, products, particularly those containing THC from informal sources like friends, or family, or in-person or online dealers.
- Modify or add any substances to e-cigarette, or vaping, products that are not intended by the manufacturer, including products purchased through retail establishments.

While it appears that vitamin E acetate is associated with EVALI, evidence is not yet sufficient to rule out contribution of other chemicals of concern to EVALI.

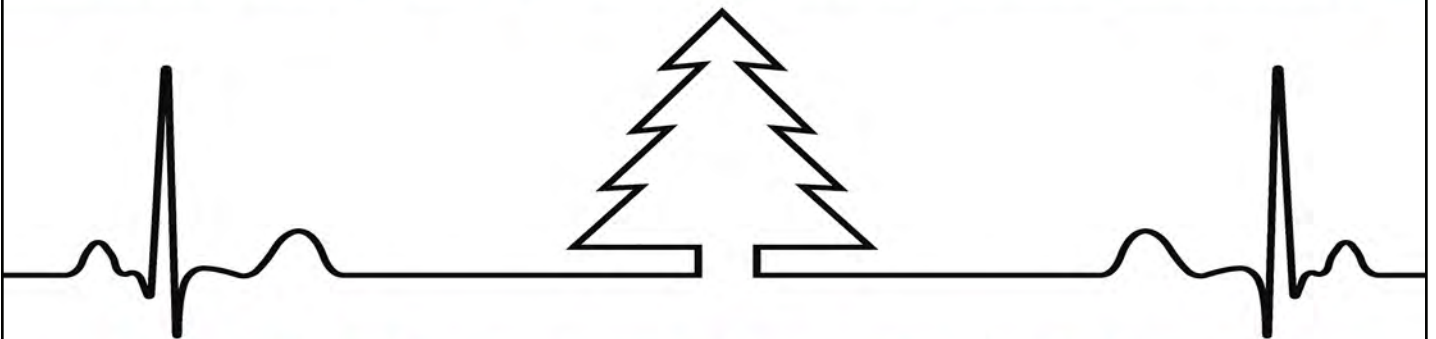
- Many different substances and product sources are still under investigation, and it may be that there is more than one cause of this outbreak.
- The only way to assure that you are not at risk while the investigation continues is to consider refraining from use of all e-cigarette, or vaping, products.

Adults using e-cigarettes to quit smoking should not go back to smoking; they should weigh all risks and benefits and consider utilizing FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies. (Continued on p. 4)



Jingle into Health
NCH Holiday Open House

Dec. 10th, 4:30-7 p.m., Medical Clinic Entrance



- **Health demonstrations and information**
- **Showcase of hospital and clinic departments**
- **Treats with Santa and Mrs. Claus**
- **Prizes!**
- **Family-friendly and open to all
(all ages welcome!)**

This is a come-and-go event. Please park in the Norton Medical Clinic lot and come in through the clinic entrance. Our staff hopes to see you then!
Questions? Call Katie Allen at the hospital at 785-877-3351.

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Vaping: What you need to know (From p. 2)

Adults who continue to use an e-cigarette, or vaping, product, should carefully monitor themselves for symptoms and see a health care provider immediately if they develop symptoms like those reported in this outbreak:

- cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain
- nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or diarrhea
- fever, chills, or weight loss

Some patients have reported that their symptoms developed over a few days, while others have reported that their symptoms developed over several weeks. And, a lung infection does not appear to be causing the symptoms.

Irrespective of the ongoing investigation:

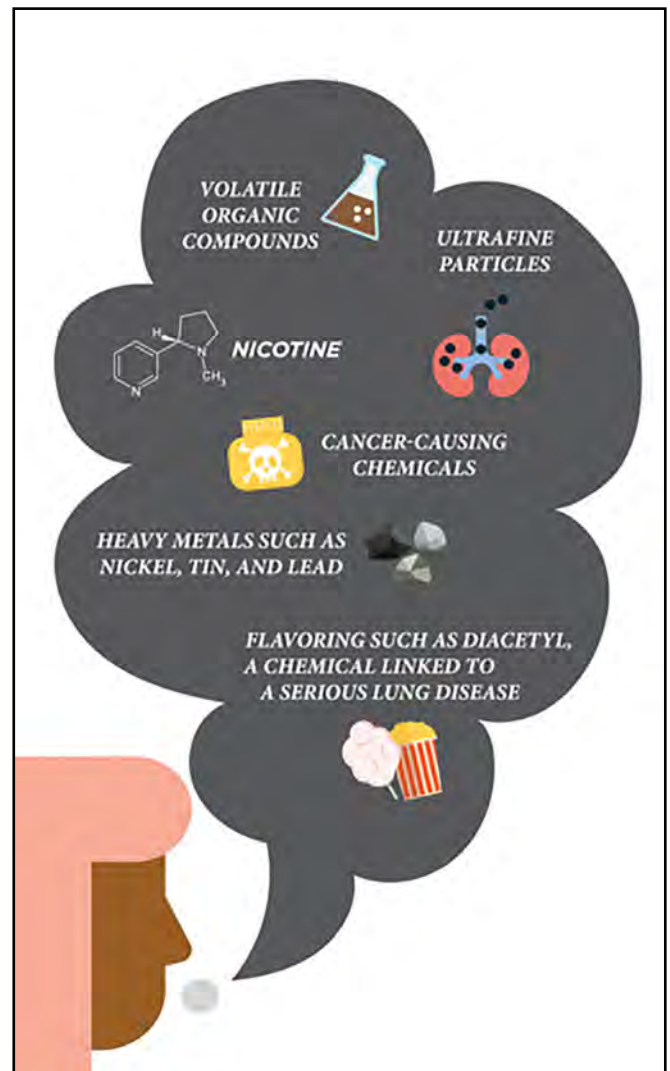
- E-cigarette, or vaping, products should never be used by youths, young adults or women who are pregnant.
- Adults who do not currently use tobacco products should not start using e-cigarette, or vaping, products. There is no safe tobacco product. All tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, carry a risk.
- THC use has been associated with a wide range of health effects, particularly with prolonged frequent use. The best way to avoid potentially harmful effects is to not use THC-containing e-cigarette, or vaping, products. Persons with marijuana use disorder should seek evidence-based treatment by a health care provider.

People who have significant impairment or distress from ongoing problematic use of THC-containing e-cigarette, or vaping, products should seek evidence-based behavioral treatment and recovery services for cannabis use disorder.

Health care provider resources

Patients may have asked you about e-cigarettes. You may have questions yourself. The following CDC link provides the latest information and science about e-cigarettes and can help you start conversations about this topic with patients of all ages: <https://bit.ly/2DiEG2L>

Information in this article and photos on this page provided by the CDC. ●●●



In the Spotlight

Introducing Stratus Interpreting Service

Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic are pleased to have Stratus interpreting service available on demand in the medical clinic, outpatient/specialty clinic and Emergency department.

Patients are already using it! It allows for translation in many different languages. Not only does this provide a better patient experience by removing language barriers, but it also allows for better peace of mind for the patient, particularly if that patient does not have a family member or friend available to translate. It also allows our staff to get the information we need to provide better care.

The Stratus service is used on iPads, as shown in the photo (at right). ●●●



In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital welcomes Dr. Reimer on temporary assignment

Dr. Dan Reimer is the most recent doctor to join Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic on temporary assignment. He started working in Norton periodically in late October to provide additional coverage throughout the facility.

Dr. Reimer grew up on the island Eleuthera, where his parents served at a Christian high school for Bahamian students for 26 years. After spending a year at Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska, Dr. Reimer lived a summer in Ecuador with two physicians to experience serving abroad in a medical capacity.

After observing surgeries in a mission hospital on the edge of the Amazon Jungle and watching how serving people through the practice of medicine can be such a great way to be integrally involved in a community, Dr. Reimer began pursuing his path toward medicine. Doors opened for him to work as an inpatient pharmacy tech, where he did molecular biology research for two years; he then attended medical school at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

Following a year of internal medicine residency, Dr. Reimer transferred to the three-year Via Christi Family Medicine residency in Wichita, given the program's emphasis on full-spectrum training including operative obstetrics. He spent a year studying tropical medicine and serving in Africa for five months, where he learned to care for patients in an extremely resource poor setting.

Dr. Reimer returned to Kansas after that mission, and for the past four years he has been serving as a hospitalist at Via Christi and Newton Medical Center in Wichita. He has also served part time at several Emergency departments across Kansas, most recently in Leoti.

Dr. Reimer said he is looking forward to being part of the team at Norton County Hospital, where he will work one to two weeks per month at least through the summer of 2020. His goal is to take excellent care of patients and become a part of the community.

In his free time, Dr. Reimer enjoys volunteer short-term mission trips, good conversation, hearing peoples' stories, leading a Bible study with international students and intermittently going back "home" to the Bahamas. He said he would be happy to exchange stories of the Bahamas for home-cooked meals.

Norton County Hospital asks the public to please welcome Dr. Reimer during his temporary assignment. The hospital will continue to keep the area citizens informed of physicians temporarily working at its facility. ●●●

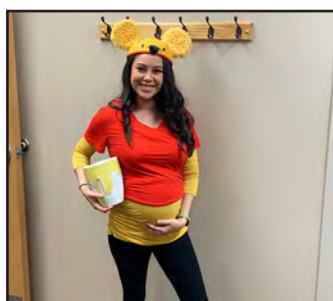


Other Celebrations

Happy Halloween!

Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic staff are always in the Halloween spirit!

Photos are included below.

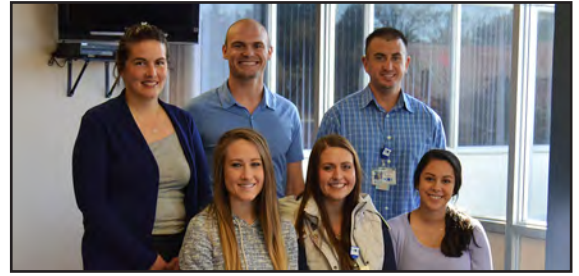


Other Celebrations

Recognition weeks

Norton County Hospital recognized many employees (some are pictured below and at right) for their hard work and dedication during their respective national celebration weeks, some of which included:

- National Healthcare Environmental Services & Housekeeping Week
- National Rehabilitation Awareness Week & Physical Therapy Month
- National Surgical Technologists Week
- National Healthcare Food Service Week
- National Healthcare Supply Chain Week
- Emergency Nurses Week
- National Healthcare Facilities & Engineering Week
- Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month & National Radiologic Technology Week
- National Respiratory Care Week
- National Healthcare Quality Week
- Perioperative Nurses Week
- National Nurse Practitioner Week ●●●



Wellness Committee completes tobacco-free policy

Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic are excited to announce that as of Jan. 1, 2020, an updated tobacco-free policy will become effective.

Why does NCH support a tobacco-free policy? Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States; it leads to 480,000 deaths each year. Our hospital's greatest asset is our employees, and we are committed to creating a healthy environment for every member of our team. Updating our tobacco-free policy is another step toward supporting the health of our worksite for staff, patients and visitors.

I use tobacco. Do I have to quit tobacco to keep working here? No. The tobacco-free policy applies to the worksite.

I use tobacco and am interested in stopping. Are there any resources available that could help me quit tobacco? Yes! NCH is proud to offer a number of resources to support you in becoming tobacco-free. Reach out to Shannan Hempler for more information about how to take advantage of the available resources at no charge to you.

Where can I get a copy of the tobacco-free policy? A copy of the policy can also be found on The Beat by clicking "HR" then "Human Resources P & P." In the middle of the "Human Resources P & P" page, you will find the NCH Employee Handbook and the updated Tobacco-Free Policy.

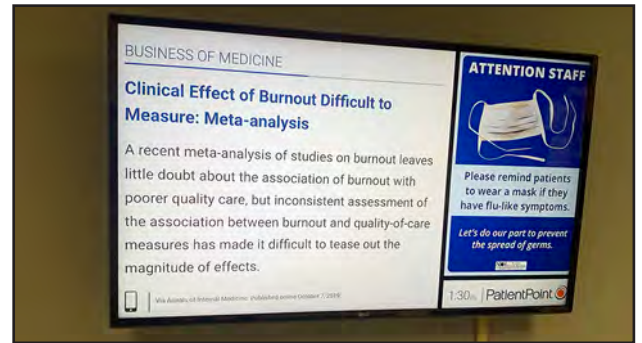
Who can I contact with questions? Please contact Lana Jones with the NCH Wellness Committee or Gina Frack, CEO.

Other Celebrations

PatientPoint additions

We are using technology to more effectively reach our staff and patients with health-related information. About a year-and-a-half ago, we implemented Health Info TVs into our facility. These TVs in some of our waiting areas show customized content (such as hospital events and information about our services), as well as local weather and other seasonal health information.

Then, in the last three months, our hospital has implemented an additional service, provided by PatientPoint. With this service, we added TV screens in breakrooms (to provide current health news and customized information for staff) and oversized iPad/tablet-like screens in a few clinic patient rooms (to allow providers to show patients more about their diagnoses, view organs of the human body, etc., and send patients more info about their health via text or email). If you want to learn more about these new services, contact Katie Allen or the IT department.



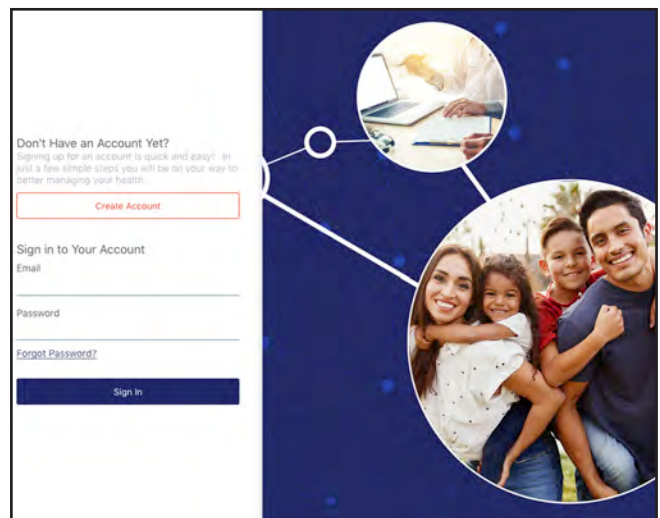
Soup Cookoff

We had a great turnout for the Employee Committee Soup and Dessert Cookoff fundraiser! We had seven soups and four desserts entered. Staff participated by sampling and voting on their favorite. The winner for the favorite soup was Brenda Dole with Cowboy Soup. The winner for the favorite dessert was Eva Harrington with Easy Pumpkin Roll cake.



New Patient Portal

NCH switched to a new Patient Portal platform called Get Real Health. The Get Real Health Patient Portal replaced the Patient Portal previously used. See the photo below for the new Portal look.



Wear Pink! October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and our Radiology team did a great job leading us in raising awareness about the importance of mammography!



Other Celebrations

Employees of the Month

Ty Bruton: Ty was the September 2019 NCH Employee of the Month. His nominations read:

"Ty is just a pleasant person to be around; he's always got a smile, or a joke to tell and is upbeat. He and his entire department have gone above and beyond with the chiller going down this last month to keep staff and patients as comfortable as possible and working quickly to get the issue resolved."

"Ty always has a smile and positive attitude. He is willing to help without complaint. He has worked at NCH for many years and is a truly dedicated employee who deserves recognition." *Pictured below, left*

Heather Saville: Heather was the October 2019 NCH Employee of the Month. Her nominations read:

"Heather is a great asset to NCH. She is always willing to lend a helping hand. She does a great job in Specialty Clinic keeping everything organized."

"Heather is always quick to respond and has great ideas for marketing our services. It is refreshing to have someone so proactive and wanting to do more for our facility."

"Heather is always very helpful, positive and happy to help! Great addition to NCH."

"Heather is a wonderful asset force in the hospital. I always find her professional, pleasant and positive!" *Pictured below, center*

Allison McChesney: Allison was the November 2019 NCH Employee of the Month. Her nomination read:

"Allison is a dedicated employee who always goes above and beyond for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. She ordered gifts for patients and even recorded a commercial to talk about the importance of mammography. Those are just a couple examples of the many things she does to help patients understand and feel comfortable with mammography at NCH. I believe she deserves to be recognized, as her efforts do not go unnoticed!" *Pictured below, right*

Congratulations to these outstanding employees!



Daily Huddle!

You are welcome to participate in Daily Huddle at any time! Daily Huddle is an opportunity for departments to get together and discuss topics such as patient volumes, who is here and who is absent, issues that may affect workload or patient care, events, the new vision/mission/values statements and how staff have modeled those, debunking rumors, educational opportunities and MORE! This is a great opportunity to share what you're working on with others and get to know other departments in our facility. Daily Huddle started as a way to improve communication and work flow in September 2019. You can also read the meeting minutes on the home page of The Beat (right-hand corner of the page).

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton Regional Health Foundation assists with Respiratory Therapy upgrade

In the summer of 2019, the Norton Regional Health Foundation assisted in the purchase of a new Trilogy BiPAP/CPAP ventilation system for the Norton County Hospital Respiratory Therapy department. The total cost of the machine was nearly \$12,000, and it was funded by both the hospital and the foundation each contributing half of the cost.

Kayla Broeckelman, cardiopulmonary/respiratory therapy director at Norton County Hospital, said the main objective in getting the new machine was to improve patient safety and quality of care. Patients who come to Norton County Hospital with varying degrees of respiratory distress would benefit from this new machine. It can provide noninvasive breathing assistance or invasive ventilation assistance for those patients who need to be intubated.



"I am very grateful to the hospital and foundation for helping to make the purchase of the Trilogy possible," Broeckelman said. "This new machine is very versatile, which makes it the perfect piece of equipment to meet the needs of rural health care."

The foundation has made numerous equipment purchases in the past two years to benefit patients and staff at Norton County Hospital. For example, in early 2018, the foundation purchased a new fetal heart monitor for more than \$22,000 that allowed better mobility for laboring mothers. In early 2019, the Foundation purchased a new set of surgical instruments for nearly \$11,000 to reduce turnaround time between surgical procedures, as well as a new 800 MHz radio and decontamination supplies for just more than \$3,000 to be used in disaster situations. These items were purchased based on an internal application process in which the department supervisors formally requested funds from the foundation.

"I applaud Kayla for identifying ways to improve patient care at Norton County Hospital, and this new machine is already being used to help save lives," said Katie Allen, Norton Regional Health Foundation executive director. "The foundation is committed to helping the hospital, and we appreciate all of our donors for allowing us to continue funding necessary projects such as this new machine."

The Norton Regional Health Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to support the enhancement of quality health care for the residents of Norton County and surrounding counties. It was established in 2016, and since then it has worked to fund hospital equipment, developed a scholarship program for nursing students, and collaborated with Live Well Norton to complete community health projects such as the Armory Drive Trail and Norton Kids' Café. The foundation is currently raising funds to support the purchase of a new CT scanner for the hospital. Allen said the foundation is grateful to donors for their generous, tax-deductible contributions. These contributions allow for healthier local communities. For more information about the Norton Regional Health Foundation, visit the Foundation tab of the hospital's website. ●●●

Norton Regional Health Foundation: Scholarships awarded to nursing students

The Norton Regional Health Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to support the enhancement of quality health care for the residents of Norton County and surrounding counties, has awarded scholarships to students pursuing degrees in the nursing field. The Foundation presented the scholarship awards to the following recipients to help financially support their education for the Fall 2019 semester:

Matt Rushton, Norton, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Warren and Jean White Nursing Scholarship Fund; Matt is in the practical nursing program at Colby Community College, Norton campus. He currently works as an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician for Norton County EMS.

Alyssa DeBoer, Prairie View, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the George Jones Nursing Scholarship Fund; Alyssa is working on her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Fort Hays State University. She served as an intern at Norton County Hospital through the Next-Generation program in the summer of 2019.



Amber Graber, Norton, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the George Jones Nursing Scholarship Fund; Amber is taking college courses at Colby Community College to become an RN. She is currently employed with Norton County Hospital. ●●●

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital recognizes community support for recruitment

Norton County Hospital extends its gratitude to three community partners that helped financially support physician recruitment efforts. Partners included the Norton County Community Foundation, Norton City/County Economic Development and the Norton Regional Health Foundation, with each entity contributing \$15,000 to the hospital for a total of \$45,000 to offset recruitment expenses incurred. These gifts, which were presented to the hospital in the fall of 2019, show a strong overall community commitment to the hospital and its sustainability for the future.

Norton County Hospital CEO Gina Frack said that recruitment efforts are always ongoing as the hospital works to meet the health care needs of Norton County communities and the surrounding region. These efforts are necessary, but they are costly in time and financial resources. A few examples of recruitment expenses have included recruiter fees, physician onsite visits, legal fees, staff travel to career fairs and recruiting events, and the use of locum – or temporary – provider coverage (still ongoing) while awaiting the arrival of more permanent physicians.

The result of these efforts over the past 18 months is extremely positive; the hospital was able to announce in August that three family practice and obstetrics physicians have signed contracts and will begin employment at Norton County Hospital on Sept. 1, 2020. These new physicians – Dr. Josh Gaede, Dr. Miranda McKellar and Dr. Theresia Neill – will join the hospital's current providers that include Dr. Glenda Maurer, Kristin Vogel and Jonna Inman.

"It is with great appreciation that we accept the generous donation made by each of these entities toward the recruitment efforts of Norton County Hospital," Frack said. "As we brought potential physician recruits into the community, we always spoke of community support for them. This act of financial giving from diverse entities toward the recruitment process validated what we expressed to potential candidates in words."

Frack added that as the hospital moves forward, it will have numerous needs yet to address. Specifically, when the three new physicians begin working in 2020, the plan is to add more advanced practice providers to the medical team to help with Emergency department coverage. Securing great staff in all departments, not just providers, is essential for the hospital to achieve its mission of empowering health and wellness.

"We are also already looking at our equipment needs to support new services and/or procedures by these three new physicians, as well as updating some current equipment," Frack said. "Blending the needs of our current providers and the new physicians is important. Facility updates are also necessary for regulatory compliance, safety for both patients and staff, and to allow NCH to expand services."

The Norton County Community Foundation was established in 1994 for the purpose of supporting local charitable activities in Norton County through endowments made to the foundation. Its mission states that it is "dedicated to serving today for tomorrow, to make our community a better place in which to live."

"Norton County Community Foundation is always happy to be a community partner, and this grant for physician recruitment at the Norton County Hospital is critical to our county's success," said Tara Vance, NCCF executive director. "There has been a Physician Recruitment Fund at NCCF since 1994; supporting our medical community was of utmost important to our founders, and it continues to be valuable to our board of directors and donors. We are proud to have been part of this collaborative effort, which will positively impact our community for years to come."

Norton City/County Economic Development is a countywide partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic strength of the county, primarily focusing on the areas of workforce and entrepreneurial development, recruitment, retention, training to support local businesses and improving the quality of life for all of Norton County.









"Health care is one of a few very basic economic development components that are critical to providing a base of community vitality and sustainability in a rural setting," said Mike Posson, Norton City/County Economic Development executive director. "I'm thankful to be working for a board and side-by-side with numerous community partners who share this vision of combining our limited resources to make a greater impact; the end-result of these relationships and shared visions will be a stronger health care community for Norton County."

The Norton Regional Health Foundation is a nonprofit organization that started in 2016 and accepts gifts for the benefit of local community health and health care projects. The foundation is housed within Norton County Hospital and its mission is "to support the enhancement of quality health care for the residents of Norton County and surrounding counties."

"The Norton Regional Health Foundation is a fairly new nonprofit and has been pleased to help the hospital with many equipment purchases, scholarships for nursing students and now these crucial recruitment efforts," said Katie Allen, NRHF executive director. "Earlier in 2019, our foundation provided another \$16,700 in in-kind and direct support for physician recruitment, so with this additional gift, our foundation contributed \$31,700 this year alone for recruitment. This shows a strong commitment of the board members and donors in ensuring these efforts continue to be successful. We are also thankful to partner with other organizations to collectively build a stronger Norton County." ●●●

Meet the Team!

Norton County Hospital is excited to announce our new employees. Please say hello, and welcome them to our team!

 <p><u>Karina DeLeon</u> Nursing/Surgery – CNA – Part Time Joined NCH Team October 3, 2019 Please welcome Karina.</p>	 <p><u>Amary McCollum</u> Patient Access Representative – Full Time Joined NCH Team November 11, 2019 Please welcome Amary.</p>
 <p><u>Brooke Crawford</u> Certified Physical Therapist Assistant – Full Time Joined NCH Team September 6, 2019 Brooke grew up in Kit Carson, Colorado. She received her Bachelor of Science in Sports & Exercise Therapy at Fort Hays and her PTA degree at Colby Community College. Her mom and dad are both school teachers and coach girls' basketball. Her brother is getting his bachelor's degree at Fort Hays. Brooke enjoys most sports such as basketball and volleyball and also likes to golf. She enjoys being outdoors when it is nice and spending good quality time with friends and family. When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I enjoy living in small towns and have lived in Kansas for five years for school. I also received a scholarship that encouraged me to live in northwest Kansas for a year so I jumped at the opportunity to apply at NCH when I saw the opening."</p>	 <p><u>Melinda "MJ" Ward</u> Surgery – LPN Scrub – Part Time Joined NCH Team November 12, 2019 Please welcome MJ.</p>
 <p><u>Whitney Winder</u> Nursing – RN – PRN Joined NCH Team September 19, 2019 Whitney worked for NCH as a PRN CNA back in 2014. She returns to NCH as an RN. Welcome back, Whitney.</p>	 <p><u>Mitch Pugh</u> Engineering – Full Time Joined NCH Team October 28, 2019 Mitch grew up in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. He received his Business Management associate's degree from Northeast Community College and his Bachelors of Science in Social Science from UNK. He and his wife, Austine, have a 2-year-old son, Jacen, and one on the way in April! Mitch enjoys fishing, boating and football! When asked why he chose to seek employment at NCH: "We moved to the Norton area to be closer to family and to raise our children."</p>
 <p><u>Christen Skrdlant</u> Laboratory Office Assistant – Full Time Joined NCH Lab Team October 14, 2019 Christen worked for NCH for about 7½ years previously in the business office. She returned to NCH full time in the Lab. Welcome back, Christen.</p>	
 <p><u>Dennie Griffin</u> Outpatient & Specialty Clinic – RN – Full Time Joined NCH Team Full Time September 4, 2019 Dennie returned to NCH PRN in May of 2019 and worked for us for about one year in 2012. Welcome back, Dennie.</p>	

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

Blood drive info

The next blood drive at Norton County Hospital is scheduled for Jan. 22, 2020. The journey of a pint of life-saving blood begins with you!

Thank you to those who give at our blood drives. Your support and generosity helps to ensure blood needs are met locally. And, once that is done, assists the Red Cross in ensuring blood is available when and where it is needed the most – the ongoing fulfillment of our mission depends on you!

The blood drive held in October is now on its way to helping hospital patients at the below hospitals You should be proud!

While there may have been other hospitals that benefited from your efforts, the following hospitals received the majority of blood products collected from your drive.

VIA CHRISTI HOSPITAL PITTSBURG INC
 VIA CHRISTI HOSPITAL-EAST HARRY
 NEOSHO MEMORIAL REG MED CTR
 GREAT BEND REGIONAL HOSPITAL
 MCPHERSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL ●●●

Employee Anniversary Milestones!

September		October	
Angie Annon	13	Kristin Vogel	12
Sara Smith	12	Travis Nykamp	5
Alan Brown	5	Gina Frack	4
Aaron Kuehn	5	Carolyn Long	4
		Abby Bainter	2
		Sarah Mohr	2
November		Todd Boller	1
Eva Harrington	21	Kayla Broeckelman	1
Shawnee Branek	18		
Tracey Hartzog	7		
Rita Conrad	5		
Natasha Schmidt	2		

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

2020 open enrollment meetings

NCH will stay with BCBS in the new year, and there are changes and additions to our plans. You need to come listen to the information from HUB. All of the other supplemental insurance we offer is staying the same in the new year.

Open Enrollment Meetings for insurance are scheduled December 5th and 6th. We are asking that all staff make plans to attend one of the meetings to learn more about the benefits that NCH offers to employees. All full-time and part-time employees must make arrangements to come in and complete the 2020 benefit and pre-tax paperwork or waiver if they are not planning to participate in 2020.



Ascentis HR & Payroll and NOVAtime will soon become a reality

The build of these three new systems is progressing rapidly as we get closer to our Go-Live. So far, we are still on track to bring the NOVAtime timekeeping system up in mid-December in order to use Ascentis for the first paycheck in 2020. The HR system now has all of the employees who worked in 2019 loaded. We have also built all of the 2019 benefits, the family members who are currently covered in the benefits NCH offers, and all of the insurances and benefits have been enrolled on each of the employee records.

Our Ascentis project managers are now pulling information into the payroll system from HR, and then we'll finalize all of the information needed in a payroll processing.

NOVAtime project staff are currently reviewing all of our timekeeping rules, and set up and configuration is underway.

Once we are live with these areas, we will continue to build more capabilities in HR including performance evaluations, online application for career opportunities, areas to track NCH property in the possession of employees, license and certification tracking, online enrollment of benefits that employees will use during next year's open enrollment, online attendance and schedule access. ●●●

MASA Emergent Transportation Program: Employee benefit solves air ambulance concerns—NCH provides the MASA MTS membership program to solve concerns raised with NPR story

In September, National Public Radio featured a story, "Air Ambulances Woo Rural Consumers with Memberships that May Leave Them Hanging," regarding air ambulance services in rural Kansas. The story featured the life-saving benefits that air ambulance companies provide every day. The story centered on Fort Scott, where the hospital closed last year, and how the air ambulance service has become an important part of the health delivery system in that city.

The article also brought to light the complexities of air ambulance company subscription programs. Since these membership programs are only applicable when you fly on a helicopter owned by the ambulance service offering the subscription, consumers who believed they were covered for air ambulance usage have found out that this is not always the case.

Fortunately, we are offering a membership program through MASA MTS that provides the solution to this issue. Since MASA does not own any domestic air ambulances, federal law allows them to cover the cost of services on ALL air ambulance providers. Plus, their plan can offer coverage for emergent ground ambulance services. This means that your employees will have peace of mind for any and all emergency transportation services in the United States and Canada. If this is a benefit that you would find important, please contact HR to get enrolled.

The NPR story can be found at: <https://n.pr/33qwbNR>

MASA testimony by Melody DeWitt

"We were offered MASA insurance last year. I had signed up for the family plan. My husband had a stroke in August. He had to be sent via ambulance to Hays Medical Center. At that time, he had no health insurance coverage. I had spoke with our MASA representative, Lynn Areson, about the process of submitting a claim. She told me once I received the bill, to fax it to them. I received the bill from Norton County EMS and faxed to MASA. The full bill amount was paid to Norton County EMS by MASA in about a week! I would highly encourage all employees to sign up for this benefit. They paid for my husband's ground ambulance to our local EMS without hesitation. This is a great benefit at NCH at a low cost!" ●●●

Engage the Community

Car Seat Check Lane

Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic offered the sixth annual Car Seat Check Lane on Saturday, Sept. 21st, at the employee parking lot.

Staff who are certified child passenger safety technicians performed the checks. Joining the technicians were Norton County EMS, as well as Norton Fire Department, Norton Police Department and Norton County Sheriff's Office officials, who visited with the children and allowed them to see the emergency vehicles.

Sept. 15-21 was Child Passenger Safety Week, and Sept. 21st was National Seat Check Saturday. According to Traffic Safety Marketing, one child under the age of 13 in a passenger vehicle was involved



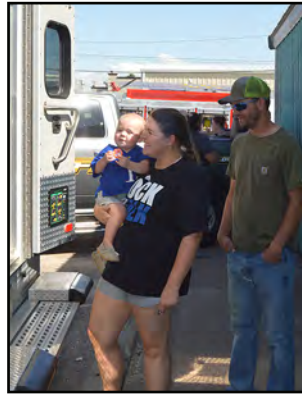
in a crash every 32 seconds in 2017. Many times, injuries and deaths can be prevented by proper

use of car seats, boosters and seat belts.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, data shows that:

- In 2016, restraint use saved the lives of 328 children ages 4 years and younger.
- Car seat use reduces the risk for injury in crashes by 71–82 percent for children when compared with seat belt use alone.
- Booster seat use reduces the risk for serious injury by 45 percent for children ages 4 to 8 years when compared with seat belt use alone.

Each fall, Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic choose to recognize the importance of car seats, and ensure they are safe and secure to protect children. Providing safety information and car seat instructions to parents and caregivers – such as



grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and babysitters – is important in saving young lives.

Another feature of the event was the giveaways. Prizes awarded included a hanging lamp from Thistle valued at \$125 (grand prize), \$30 gift certificate from Designs by Haley – Haley Schoenberger, 30-oz. skinny cup from Juenbugs – Megan Juenemann, gift bundle from Dirt Road Designs and Tantastic Notes – Staci and Tana Breiner, and a 30-minute massage from Charla Sprigg, Back in Balance Massage. Thanks to those prize sponsors!

Those interested in getting a car seat checked can call the Norton County Hospital at 785-877-3351 or Norton Medical Clinic at 785-877-3305 and ask to schedule an appointment with one of the certified child passenger safety technicians, who now include Klare Bliss, Angie Annon, Haley Hamel and Dan Dole. ●●●

Medicare and Health Insurance Marketplace events

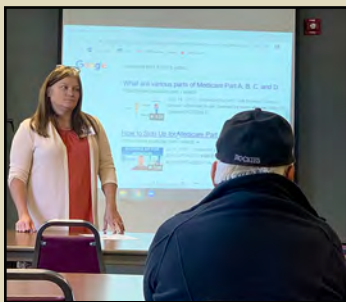
Norton County Hospital welcomed Medicare patients and others interested to attend a free informational session “Welcome to Medicare” about Medicare basics, supplement plans and open enrollment. The session was Wednesday, Oct. 16th.

This informational session was intended to help Medicare patients and answer their questions; open enrollment for Part D is Oct. 15th through Dec. 7th for a Jan. 1, 2020 coverage effective date.

Melody DeWitt from Norton County Hospital is SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) certified. Medicare patients have also signed up for individual appointments to enroll in Part D. We are happy to offer this service, and patients can call Melody at 785-877-3351.

For those who have questions about the Health Insurance Marketplace, Peggy Ritter, a health insurance certified navigator from Hoxie Medical Clinic, will be presenting Tuesday, Dec. 3rd from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the Norton County Hospital board room, where participants can expect to hear about the current choices available, differences among plan options and how to enroll. She will help enroll people in health insurance coverage on-site earlier in the day by appointment. For insurance coverage to begin Jan. 1, 2020, patients need to enroll in the marketplace by Dec. 15, 2019.

If you are wanting to enroll on-site, plan to bring a personal laptop if you have one. If you are interested in setting up an appointment with Peggy Ritter, contact her at 785-677-4172.



NCH to host Stop the Bleed on Dec. 3rd



NCH is hosting Stop the Bleed on Tuesday, Dec. 3rd, 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the hospital's conference room. Julia Thompson, BSN, RN, will lead a

Stop the Bleed course, where participants can expect to learn the basics of bleeding control. To sign up, contact Julia at 785-877-3351. The photo shows Julia with two of the 13 Stop the Bleed kits, awarded to NCH by the Kansas Trauma Program, Northwest Kansas Regional Trauma Council, which also supplied three additional tourniquets to benefit the community. ●●●

Engage the Community



Stuffed animal drive

As an added feature to our Jingle into Health - NCH Holiday Open House (see details on p. 3), our Nursing department will be hosting a stuffed animal drive! The nurses are collecting new stuffed animals to give to children who visit the Emergency department. There will be a collection box at the nursing booth during our open house. Thank you in advance to those who donate!

Again, for infection prevention compliance, the stuffed animals must be in new condition. ●●●

Salvation Army bell ringers needed

Some of our staff and their families have already signed up to ring the bell for the Salvation Army at two locations in Norton, every Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Will you consider helping? It's neat to see the community coming together for a great cause! Visit this link to sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040c4ca5ac2caaff2-norton> ●●●

Community meeting Oct. 2nd

NCH invited the public to a community meeting on Wednesday, Oct 2nd. The meeting was hosted in the basement of Prairie Land Electric. Gina Frack, CEO, continued the dialogue about the hospital's current strategic plan. She also covered the new vision, mission and values for the hospital.

The event was the second meeting in planned regular community-wide meetings being hosted by the hospital to educate on the current status of local health care provided at the hospital and its clinic, Norton Medical Clinic, as well as allow administration and board members to answer questions posed by the public.



Treats for Troops & healthy snacks

The Norton Regional Health Foundation houses funds for Live Well Norton, to benefit community health projects. Two projects occurred this fall. One was Treats for Troops; about 27 pounds of leftover Halloween candy was sent to our military! The second event involved Live Well Norton and Foundation board member Karen Griffiths, who handed out HEALTHY Halloween treats at a local trunk-or-treat. These snacks also helped promote the summer meal program, Kids' Cafe.



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all!