

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Sara Smith, LPN, infection prevention

Prevent mosquito bites

Almost everyone has been bitten by a mosquito. Mosquitoes can spread pathogens (germs) through bites. A person who gets bitten by a mosquito and gets sick has a mosquito-borne disease, such as West Nile virus, dengue or malaria. Here is some information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about preventing mosquito bites this summer.

What is a mosquito?

Mosquitoes are common, flying insects that live in most parts of the world. More than 3,500 types of mosquitoes can be found worldwide.

Not all mosquitoes bite people or animals. When mosquitoes bite people, the most common reactions to the bite are itching and swelling.

Some mosquitoes can be vectors. A vector is an animal, insect, or tick that spreads pathogens (germs) to people and animals. The germs (viruses and parasites) that mosquitoes spread can make you sick.

Some mosquitoes bite but do not spread germs. These types of mosquitoes are called nuisance mosquitoes.

Key facts about mosquitoes

- Adult mosquitoes live indoors and outdoors.
- Mosquitoes can bite day and night.
- Adult mosquitoes live for about 2 to 4 weeks depending on the species, humidity, temperature and other factors. Female mosquitoes often live longer than male mosquitoes.
- Only female mosquitoes bite people and animals to get a blood meal. Female mosquitoes need a blood meal to produce eggs.
- Mosquitoes get infected with germs, such as viruses and parasites, when they bite infected people and animals.
- It takes just a few infected mosquitoes to start an outbreak in a community and put you and your family at risk of becoming sick.

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites

Use insect repellent! This means Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents with one of the active ingredients below. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

- DEET
- Picaridin (known as KBR 3023 and icaridin outside the U.S.)
- IR3535
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)
- Para-menthane-diol (PMD)
- 2-undecanone

A list of EPA-registered repellents can be found online: <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents>



Newsletter Spring 2022

Employee Healthbeat • 1-2

Recent Milestones • 2

Community Engagement • 3

In the Spotlight • 4

CEO Corner • 4

Other Celebrations • 5-9

In the News • 10-12

Meet New Faces • 13

Human Resources • 14-15; 17

Foundation Corner • 16

Tips for babies and children

- Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs.
- Cover strollers and baby carriers with mosquito netting.
- When using insect repellent on your child: (1) Always follow label instructions, (2) Do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or para-menthane-diol (PMD) on children under 3 years old, and (3) Do not apply insect repellent to a child's hands, eyes, mouth, cuts or irritated skin.
- Adults should spray insect repellent onto hands and then apply to a child's face.

Continued on p. 2

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Sara Smith, LPN, infection prevention

Prevent mosquito bites (from p. 1)

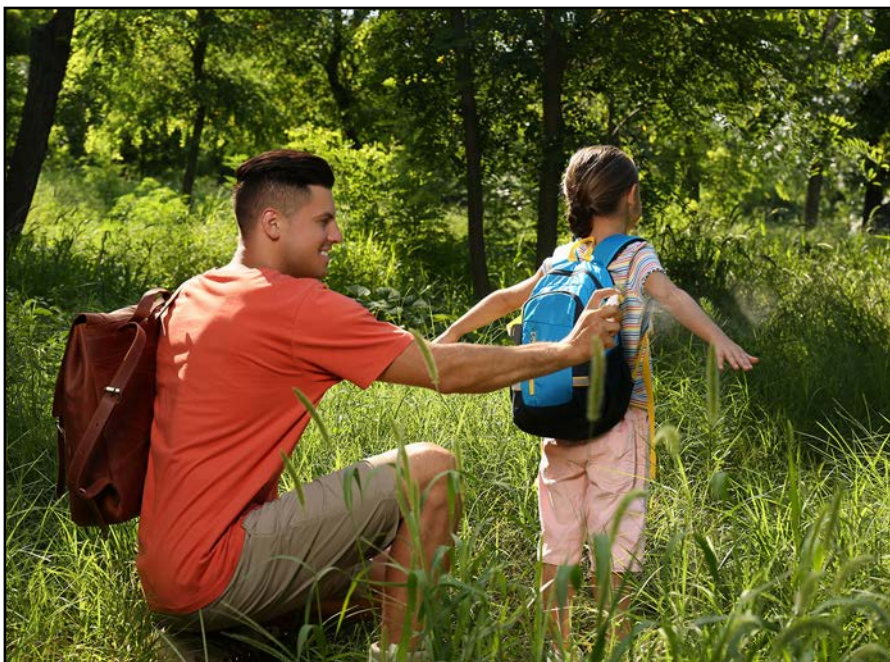
Tips for everyone

- Always follow the product label instructions.
- Reapply insect repellent as directed. This means do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing. If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.
- Natural insect repellents: We do not know the effectiveness of non-EPA registered insect repellents, including some natural repellents. To protect yourself against diseases spread by mosquitoes, CDC and EPA recommend using an EPA-registered insect repellent. Choosing an EPA-registered repellent ensures the EPA has evaluated the product for effectiveness.
- Clothing: Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Treat clothing and gear. Use 0.5% permethrin to treat clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks and tents) or buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Permethrin is an insecticide that kills or repels mosquitoes. Permethrin-treated clothing provides protection after multiple washings. Read product information to find out how long the protection will last. If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions. Finally, do not use permethrin products directly on skin.

Take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors

- Use screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outdoors.
- Use air conditioning, if available.
- Stop mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near water. Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots or trash containers. Check for water-holding containers both indoors and outdoors.

Information in this article was provided by the CDC. ●●●



Recent Employee Milestones

March 2022

Mary Boyce	30 years
Allison McChesney	12 years
Josie Logemann	6 years
Jay Alexander	3 years
Nancy Vap	3 years
Avery Aiken	1 year
Amber Nelson	1 year
Morgan Wagner	1 year

April 2022

Charla Sprigg	26 years
Dan Dole	24 years
Jennifer Schoenberger	23 years
Judy Wenzl	15 years
Julia Thompson	10 years
Megan Juenemann	8 years
Emily Swatzell	6 years
Tracy Ostmeier	2 years
Shannon Corwin	2 years
Megan Arehart	1 year
Shelby Fisher	1 year
Rickele Gilmore	1 year

May 2022

Cheryl Mann	41 years
Haley Jones	13 years
Marla Persinger	13 years
Charli Enfield	12 years
Jonna Inman	11 years
Sierra Wahlmeier	10 years
Melisa Fowler	5 years
Angie Alexander	3 years
Dani Brockmann	3 years
Spencer Shirk	3 years
Amy Wentz	3 years
Lauren Bird	1 year
Alan Schukman	1 year
Terry Uhrich	1 year

**Congratulations,
and thank you for
all that you do!**

Engage the Community

School sports physicals

Engaging the community is a priority at Norton County Hospital, and this includes offering a day of physicals for our students! Thanks to our providers and nursing staff for serving this important need in the community. ●●●



Norton Kids' Café - a great summer service!

Get ready for Norton Kids' Café, in its fifth year for 2022!

It is a program for children who would like to have free meals during the summer break from school. The program is hosted at the Norton First United Methodist Church from May 31 to August 8, 2022, and it is open to children 0-18 years of age. ANY child is welcome! The children do not have to live in Norton to participate.

The Norton First United Methodist Church is located at 805 W. Wilberforce. Pick up will be similar to the process the past two years, with weekly rations provided each Monday from (NEW TIME!) 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. (Note that May 31 and July 5 are

Tuesday pick-ups due to Monday holidays those weeks.) A drive-thru line will start at the north side of the church, with the meals being distributed on the south side; vehicles can then exit from the south side. Children who walk to the site will also be served. The Kansas Food Bank will once again provide to-go meals for the 2022 Kids' Café.

The Kids' Café Committee works to ensure that children leave with enough food to fill their bellies and fuel their energy for summer activities!

Please help us get the word out, and send your kids! Additionally, we need volunteers to serve in a variety of capacities, from unloading trucks, to organizing meal packs, to distributing meals on Mondays from approximately 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. If you or your organization would be interested in helping, or if you have questions, contact Karen Griffiths at 785-877-5143.

Any financial support also can help this program (to purchase additional snacks, supplies, etc.). Donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Live Well Norton and mail to:

Live Well Norton, Norton Co. Hospital, Attn: Katie Wagner, PO Box 250, Norton, KS 67654

We look forward to serving our children this summer!



In the Spotlight

OK Kids Day, June 4th, at Prairie Dog State Park!

We had games and activities for kids, prizes, car seat checks and so much more. This is always a great, free, family-friendly event!



CEO Corner

From the desk of Brian Kirk, Chief Executive Officer

Every single day we move closer to making Norton County Hospital and Clinic the best place to work, receive health care and practice medicine. There are many good and positive things happening here. As an organization, we are embarking on a plan to be Hardwiring Excellence that will help us achieve our mission and goals, to meet the evolving needs of our region and provide an exceptional staff and patient experience to empower health and wellness at any stage of life.

We are pleased to have the general surgeon capabilities for our hospital and community with Dr. Doak Doolittle. He brings a wealth of experience and outstanding patient care. With him on our team and the rest of our medical staff – Dr. Joshua Gaede; Dr. Miranda McKellar; Dr. Theresia Neill; Jonna Inman, APRN; Kristin Vogel, PA-C; Gino Salerno, PA-C; and Rebecca Kahrs, APRN – we have a fantastic group committed to our mission and vision.

Our great nursing team has eliminated agency nurses from our hospital. It was a large concerted effort and a huge accomplishment! Not only does this save money that we can reinvest into our current employees, but it is better medical care to be able to provide services from friends and neighbors as opposed to transient workers who come and go.

Our new digital radiology equipment is scheduled for delivery soon. The deinstallation of the old equipment, construction and implementation of the new equipment will last from now through July. A big “Thank You” to our County Commissioners for helping make this possible!

We are also rolling out new InterQual admission software for our Medical Staff. This software helps us manage our patient utilization as efficiently and effectively as possible and helps us stay in compliance with best practices and regulations.

We just received notice that Norton County Hospital’s marketing efforts that were led by Katie Allen Wagner, community relations director, received three Emerald Awards and one Certificate of Merit for 2022! Kudos, and thanks to Katie for all she does for NCH and the Foundation.

Let’s continue to contribute and collaborate to make Norton County Hospital the best we possibly can. ●●●

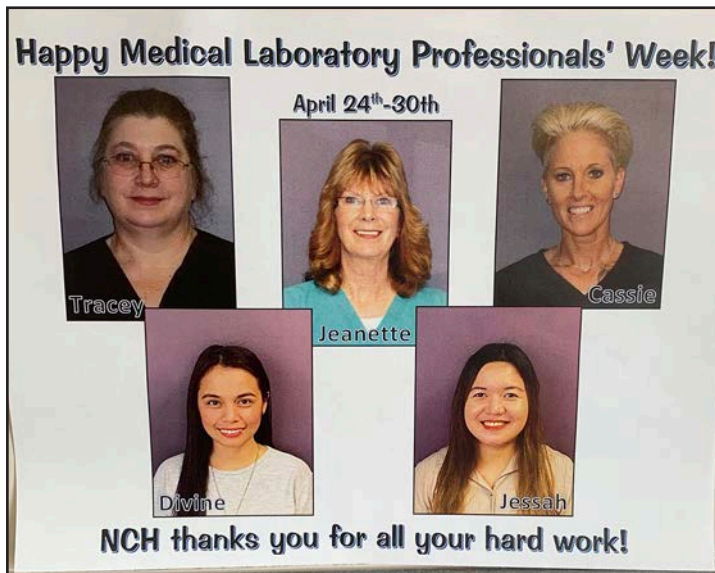


Other Celebrations

Recognition weeks

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

- Hospital Week - May 8-14
- Nurses Week - May 6-12
- Lab Week - April 24-30
- HIM Week - April 18-22
- OT Month - April
- National Doctors' Day - March 30th
- HR Week - March 14-18 ●●●



Norton County Hospital adds general surgeon to specialty clinics

Norton County Hospital announced a new specialty clinic starting March 2022. Doak Doolittle, MD, is a general surgeon seeing patients in Norton on a weekly basis, with the option to increase clinic and surgery hours as volumes dictate.

Dr. Doolittle is performing a variety of surgeries, including endoscopy procedures, in Norton for the convenience of patients. Dr. Doolittle is also available for many other general surgeries, including but not limited to laparoscopic surgery, appendix and gall bladder removal, wound care and debridement, hernia repair, hand surgery, amputation and trauma repairs. His added presence will enable the hospital to take care of more emergent surgical cases, which were formerly transferred to other hospitals.

“We are excited to have Dr. Doolittle joining our team to help meet the evolving health care needs of our region,” said Brian Kirk, Norton County Hospital CEO. “In essence, he is joining our team as a solo, independent practice general surgeon who is regularly available to help cover general surgical needs for our community. We are confident this new relationship will bring positive value to everyone involved.”

Welcome, Dr. Doolittle! Please ask your primary care provider if you may need a referral for specialty care. Appointments with Dr. Doolittle may be scheduled through Norton County Hospital's Specialty Clinic.



Other Celebrations

DAISY Award Program launches

Norton County Hospital now participates in the DAISY Award program!

You can say thank you by sharing your story of how a nurse made a difference you will never forget! Nominations are now being accepted, so please consider nominating one of our exceptional hospital or clinic nurses for this award!

Nomination information: <https://www.ntcohosp.com/services/other/acutenursing.html>



HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

Wear Blue Day - March 4, 2022 March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men and women. It is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Preventive screenings are recommended beginning at age 45. Thanks to Dr. Gaede for leading a “Walk with a Doc” and discussing the importance of these screenings.



Other Celebrations

New billboard displayed in downtown Norton

The new billboard ad features our medical providers. We are so proud of them and all that they do for the community!



Board members and CEO attend KHA training

Some of the NCH Board Trustees joined CEO Brian Kirk at the KHA Critical Issues Summit March 3-4 in Wichita. The Critical Issues Summit, hosted by the Kansas Hospital Association, brings together hospital leadership and trustees from across the state and promotes the importance of good governance practices. The event provides top-notch speakers, educational sessions and discussions on the most critical topics facing hospitals today.

**Pictured L to R are
Jean Ann Wilson, Randa
Vollertsen, Brian Kirk, Jenny
Braun and Jill Edgett.**



Other Celebrations

Stop the Bleed Month

May was National Stop the Bleed Month. This is an important training program for everyone! Knowing how to control bleeding from a serious injury before medical help arrives is crucial for survival in many cases. This is why Norton County Hospital offers free Stop the Bleed training opportunities! Here are some facts:

- NCH has offered Stop the Bleed since 2017
- 354 community members have been trained
- 18 different organizations have been trained
- 5 instructors are at NCH

To learn more or set up a Stop the Bleed training for your organization, contact our hospital at 785-877-3351, and ask for Julia Thompson, BSN, RN.



Time for Career Fairs

Norton County Hospital took part in several career fairs this spring to help recruit new team members. Thanks to Human Resources (Shannan Hempler and Mackenzie Blecha) for all of their efforts!



New PT bike!

Out with the old and in with the new! Norton County Hospital recently upgraded the exercise bike in the Rehabilitation department. No telling how many physical therapy patients the old bike helped - or the number of miles they spent riding it!

The hospital, with assistance from donations to the Norton Regional Health Foundation, made the purchase of this new bike possible.



Other Celebrations

Employees of the Month

Alasia Kenney: Congratulations to Alasia Kenney in the Specialty Clinic for being named the March 2022 NCH Employee of the Month! Her nomination summary: “Alasia is kind, caring and handles herself professionally. She always has a smile for her patients and is just a joy to work with.” *Pictured below, left*

Kellie Belleau: The April 2022 NCH Employee of the Month was Kellie Belleau! Her nomination read: “Thank you, Kellie, for stepping outside of your comfort zone and into the interim (Director of Nursing) role! We appreciate your courage and wish you the best of luck through your new adventure. Kellie deserves this nomination for keeping this hospital going through our season of change.” Congrats to Kellie! *Pictured below, center*

Jennifer Schoenberger: The May 2022 NCH Employee of the Month was Jennifer Schoenberger, RN! Jennifer manages Outpatient Clinic Services. Her nomination read: “Jennifer is friendly and helpful, even outside of her own duties and her own department. She is a versatile employee who always has a friendly smile for patients and co-workers. She is always willing to help any department no matter how busy she may be. She is a team player and is always so kind and patient to not only the patients, but to all the staff as well. She represents NCH well and is a great asset!”

Thanks, Jennifer, for all your hard work! *Pictured below, right*

Congratulations to these amazing employees!



New PFAC is underway

I'm super excited to get PFAC up and running again; we have a great group who are eager to make a difference! Staff members include: Valerie Marble, Allison McChesney, Mel DeWitt, Jennifer Schoenberger, Brian Kirk, Elsa Temmel, Chelsea Hageman and Brenda Dole. Community members include: Liberty Keiswetter, Staci Manning, Aaron Hale, Rita Speer, Ashley Glennemeier, Jennifer Miller, Gary Erlenbusch, Terry Smothers and Richard Miller. Our first meeting was May 24th, and the first item of business will be to aid in the creation of a new patient satisfaction survey and develop new, more efficient ways to disperse the surveys. If you have anything that you would like our council to address, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of our members!

Submitted by Valerie Marble, Radiology

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation

Celebrating ‘We Are Health Care’ National Hospital Week was May 8-14.

Hospitals in Kansas and across the U.S. celebrated National Hospital Week, May 8-14. This annual observance recognizes the men and women who, day in and day out, support the health and well-being of their communities through dedication and compassionate care. Celebrated since 1921, National Hospital Week emphasizes the valuable contributions hospitals make in our communities, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year.

Norton County Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital and Level IV trauma center, has the Norton Medical Clinic, and has its own 501(c)(3) foundation, the Norton Regional Health Foundation. The hospital currently staffs about 130 employees and has the following medical providers: Josh Gaede, MD; Miranda McKellar, MD; Theresia Neill, MD; Jonna Inman, APRN; Kristin Vogel, PA-C; Gino Salerno, PA-C; and Rebecca Kahrs, APRN. The hospital offers many levels of inpatient care, a wide range of outpatient services and several visiting physician specialty clinics.

The theme for National Hospital Week 2022 was “We Are Health Care.” This week is always an opportunity to thank all of the dedicated individuals – physicians, nurses, therapists, engineers, food service workers, volunteers, administrators and so many more – for their contributions. (View Hospital Week quotes and promotions on p. 11 & 12.) ●●●

Norton County Hospital recognized in statewide marketing competition

Kansas hospitals and health systems were recently recognized for excellence in public relations and marketing efforts by the Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators through its Emerald Awards competition. The 2022 Emerald Awards were presented at the Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators Spring Conference on May 6 in Hays.



Emerald Awards are given to Kansas hospitals and health systems that excel in internal communications, external communications, special events, advertising and other categories. Three marketing professionals from Georgia with extensive experience in health care marketing evaluated this year’s 74 entries for planning and research, implementation, cost effectiveness and results.

Norton County Hospital’s marketing efforts that were led by Katie Allen Wagner, community relations director, received three Emerald Awards and one Certificate of Merit for 2022. Specifics of each award are included below:

- Special Events category – Emerald Award – “Prescription to Cruise Event”
- Video category – Emerald Award – “Ask the Doc, COVID-19 Video Series”
- Media Relations/Crisis Communications category – Emerald Award – “Ask the Doc, COVID-19 Video Series”
- External Communications, Annual Report category – Certificate of Merit – “Norton Regional Health Foundation 2020 Annual Report”

The Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators is an allied organization of the Kansas Hospital Association, which contributed to this release and the release above. KHA is a voluntary nonprofit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 237 member facilities, of which 123 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA’s vision is “Optimal Health for Kansas.” ●●●

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation

Hospital Week celebrated at Norton County Hospital!

A special thanks to the Employee Committee for the hard work in organizing activities for our staff! Here are some featured quotes on why we enjoy representing health care. *More on p. 12.* ●●●

Mackenzie Blecha, Payroll/HR Assistant/Accounts Payable

"I love representing health care, because our hospital is the foundation of our community! Every day we are working to improve NCH in every aspect, for our employees and our patients."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Michael Smith, Environmental Services

"I love representing health care, because taking care of human life is the ultimate goal. Let's go out there and make a difference in our community."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Brenda Dole, Dietary

"I love representing health care, because every day is never the same. Every day is a day for caring for patients and staff and making them smile!"



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Jennifer Schoenberger, RN

"I love representing health care because of the patients. I became a nurse because I love helping people."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Miranda McKellar, MD

"I love health care, because it allows me to walk with people through all the different stages of their life and to support and help them in good times and bad."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Eva Harrington, Environmental Services

"I love representing health care, because I am helping heal and save people's lives."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Katie Wagner, Foundation Executive Director

"I love representing health care, because every person on the planet is affected by health. It is essential to us all. Plus, I love working with kind, compassionate people!"



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Kayla Broeckelman, Respiratory Therapist

"I love representing health care, because I love to make a difference in the lives of others."



We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

Nancy Vap, Patient Financial Counselor

"I love representing health care because the financial aspect of health care is a jungle, and I like helping our patients navigate the jungle safely and successfully."

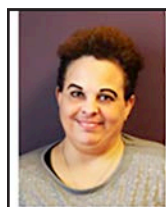


We Are Health Care!
Hospital Week 2022

*Happy
Hospital
Week 2022!*

Meet the Team!

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



Nikki Antrim

EVS Tech – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on February 18, 2022.

Nikki grew up in the Silver Spring and Takoma Park area of Maryland.



Jeff Hager

Engineering – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on March 7, 2022.

Where did you grow up – Norton 1965-83/NCHS Class of '83; Hays, KS 83-84; Dallas, TX 84-2020; Norton 20-22 - I'm still growing up!

Education or Job Training – Civil Engineer, Advertising, Home Depot Corp., Vendor, Construction, Custom Closets

Tell us about your family – My parents, brothers and sister are in Norton area. My wife Kathy and I have 3 kids, Erica, Dillon and Nick, and 2 grandkids, Carson and Christopher.

What are your hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work – I try to merge my work and hobbies when possible, so building, woodworking and DIY is how I spend much of my free time. We are opening a picture framing shop in our building in the near future and plan to travel more. So far, I have been to 49 U.S. States and 1 U.S. territory - Alaska is next!

Why did you choose to seek employment at Norton County Hospital or what brought you to the Norton area – I'm looking forward to contributing to the team!



Lacey Ninemire, RRT

Respiratory Therapy/Cardiopulmonary – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on March 7, 2022.

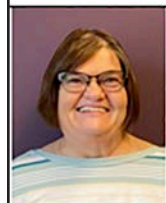
Where did you grow up – Lenora, KS

Education or Job Training – 7 years – RT; BA from Washburn University; Masters of Healthcare Admin - Capella University; AAS – NWKTC – Respiratory Therapy

Tell us about your family – 2 brothers, 3 nieces and 1 nephew. Grew up on family farm & ranch.

What are your hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work – reading, watching KU basketball and working cattle

Why did you choose to seek employment at Norton County Hospital or what brought you to the Norton area – to be closer to family



Laura Mahood

Dietary – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on March 14, 2022.

Where did you grow up – Hays, KS

Education or Job Training – worked at St. Anthony Hospital in the kitchen (1976-1987), B&K Prescription Shop in Salina, KS for 20 years, Eisenhower Elementary kitchen in Norton for 2 years.

Tell us about your family – My mother Barb Baltzell is 91 years old and lives at the Andbe Home. Daughter Mandy Schumacher is Kindergarten Teacher at Eisenhower. Son Jeffery Pfeifer lives in Victoria. Brother Ron Baltzell lives in Salina. I have 3 granddaughters – Nataley (18), Lauryn (17), Shelby (8) – and 3 grandsons – Brantley (9), Gavin (7), Braxton (almost 2).

What are your hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work – jigsaw puzzles, crocheting, reading, going to activities for my grandchildren.

Why did you choose to seek employment at Norton County Hospital or what brought you to the Norton area – My husband passed away 4 years ago, and I decided to be closer to my daughter and grandchildren. My granddaughter Lauryn is also employed in the kitchen – that is how I heard about it.



Halee Malleck

Certified Surgical Scrub Tech – PRN

Joined the NCH Team on March 29, 2022.

Halee grew up in Holbrook, Nebraska. She received her Psychology degree from Fort Hays State University and attained her Certified Surgical Technician from Hutchinson Community College.

Halee's husband has his own construction business, and they have two red-headed daughters, 2 years old and 7 months old. They enjoy watching a lot of sports, love camping in their new camper and being outside with the girls.



Kitt Callaway, RN

Nursing RN – PRN

Joined the NCH Team on March 30, 2022.

Where did you grow up – Phillipsburg, KS

Education or Job Training – BSN from FHSU, Certified Lactation Counselor

Tell us about your family – I am married with two little girls, ages 2 and 4. We also have 3 dogs and 1 cat.

What are your hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work – I enjoy going to the lake, fishing and camping.

Why did you choose to seek employment at Norton County Hospital or what brought you to the Norton area – Realized I have several certifications to help local hospitals that are seeking assistance with staffing.



Rebecca Kahrs, APRN

Emergency Department – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on April 1, 2022.

Kahrs is an experienced nurse practitioner in family medicine, urgent care, inpatient care, emergency medicine and wound care. She received a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology from Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska. She then received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Nebraska Methodist College and a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Most recently, she has provided care at a critical access hospital in Nebraska.

Kahrs said she is passionate about providing well-rounded patient care and personalizing care based on what is best for the patient and his or her family. She lives on a ranch near Republican City, Nebraska, with her husband and daughters, Violet and Monroe. Her family raises cattle and horses. She and her family also enjoy their dogs and alpacas.



Michael Smith

EVS Tech – Full Time

Joined the NCH Team on April 18, 2022.

Michael grew up in Norton, Kansas. He graduated from Norton Community High School in 1991. His mom and dad were also born and raised in Norton. He enjoys going fishing with his family in the summer.

When asked why he wanted to work at NCH – "My boss, Steven Cox, is selling all his pigs. I enjoyed taking care of the animals, so I thought it was my turn to take care of people in my community. Plus, my Aunt Pat worked here, so I wanted to carry on her legacy."

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

How to be happier at work

COVID-19 has changed our day-to-day life, as well as the outlook for people and businesses. It's not just our physical health that's at risk. Our mental health has also taken a hit, with the economic uncertainty, sporadic lockdowns and shift to remote working. As a result, employees around the world are feeling unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety, according to bodies such as the World Health Organization and the Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health.

If the rising cost of living, career demands and the constant striving for work-life balance meant a high level of stress for many of us pre-COVID, the challenges are greater now. No wonder that businesses and organizations are doubling down on efforts to prioritize employee well-being. Things like routine "check-ins," mentoring programs and company-sponsored mindfulness training are increasingly becoming the norm.

But are there actions we can take at an individual level to protect our wellbeing? What can we personally do to boost our own resilience, manage stress, safeguard our feelings of purpose and positivity, and bring our "best selves" to work in spite of the uncertainty? Plenty, say London Business School (LBS) faculty. And a good place to start is learning the skill of happiness.

The happiness skill

Research tells us that when people feel happier, they are more resilient, more productive and nicer to be around. We are simply more successful when we are happy. Feeling happy might seem like a tall order, especially when we are under pressure, but there are in fact a number of concrete measures – shifts in attitude – that we can enact to become happier, says Selin Kesebir, LBS's Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior.

"Happiness is a skill that can be learned like speaking Spanish or playing guitar. It is a skill of the mind - a capacity to shape the way that we see, process, and interpret our reality and the things around us. It can be developed like any other competence."

The quality of our happiness, says Kesebir, is contingent on the health of our relationship to reality, ourselves and other people. And understanding that happiness comes from within.

"Too often we make the mistake of equating happiness with external factors: the fulfillment of certain desires like wealth, love, certain rules; indulgent pleasure; or other people's approbation," she says.

"The problem with seeking validation from those around you is that you move away from your inner compass and you start measuring your own value in how other people see you – how smart, attractive or successful they think you are. And that can lead to an inner sense of worthlessness, as well as resentment or even jealousy of others you perceive to be better than you."

Similarly, looking for happiness through pleasure or the fulfillment of desires can automatically set us up for failure in our pursuit of happiness.

"Life is full of change, of ups and down, surprises and things that we can't control. Equating happiness with pleasure is erroneous because pleasure is fleeting – once you get used to a certain 'high,' you will simply be on the lookout for the next one, constantly on the move – but never arriving – on the so-called 'hedonic treadmill.'"

The same is true for accomplishing or acquiring the things you desire: the job, the marriage, the dream home. These are things we want for ourselves that might not even be good for us, or at least not good for us forever," says Kesebir. "There are often more tears shed over answered prayers than unanswered."

A better approach is to think about happiness as something that emerges when we become comfortable with reality, whatever it looks like. The happiness skill, she says, is about achieving a certain acceptance of yourself, of other people and of the reality you inhabit. So how is it done? *Continued on p. 15.*



Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

How to be happier at work (from p. 14)

Kesebir suggests five guidelines to feeling comfortable with reality.

1. Know that life is difficult and suffering is to be expected.

Technological progress and improving conditions of life have encouraged us to think that life is easy and we are entitled to a comfortable life. In fact, as the pandemic has shown us, life is inherently uncertain while loss and suffering are certain. Suffering is often concealed – we don't always know about others' suffering or share ours with others – but it is always there, big or little. Letting go of expectations about an easy and perfect life and accepting the inevitability of change and loss can mitigate frustration when things go wrong.

2. Expect to have negative experiences and emotions and accept them.

If suffering is to be expected, we need to expect to sometimes feel negative emotions. Being happy doesn't mean feeling good all the time. Happy people have their own share of negative emotions. Getting comfortable with sometimes being uncomfortable is key to happiness.

3. Stop arguing with reality.

If something is a fact, fighting or resisting is simply a waste of our time and energy. As the pandemic has shown us, railing against things over which we have no control won't change anything—it's futile. Far better to accept facts and move on.

4. Adopt a positive outlook.

Our attention is like a spotlight – its beam illuminates whatever we focus on and that becomes our reality. This means that we can choose not to focus on the negative at the expense of the positive. The point is not being delusional or rejecting uncomfortable facts. We need to be fully in touch with reality for sustainable happiness. It's rather realizing that reality is larger than what our attention is presenting us, and under uncertainty, the same event can be interpreted through different lenses, some more positive than others.

5. Don't buy into everything that pops into your head.

All too often our inner voice will tell us that we're not good enough, smart enough or successful enough. But fusing with thoughts and feelings that pop up – taking them for facts – is the opposite of true awareness.

Happier people are those who can look at their own thoughts from a distance; who can hear and observe their emotions and inner voice without being carried away by what is going on their heads. They instead question the validity of those voices and aim at a more truthful and constructive inner voice.

Excerpt from SHRM newsletter, By Aine Doris; content courtesy of the London Business School Review. ●●●

12 intentional actions to choose happiness today

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." —Abraham Lincoln

Is happiness a choice? Yes! Many happy people realize happiness is a choice and it's up to them to intentionally choose it every single day.

Happy people are not held hostage by their circumstances and they do not seek happiness in people or possessions. They understand that when we stop chasing the world's definition of happiness, we begin to see the decision to experience happiness has been right in front of us all along. Research in the field of positive psychology continues to reinforce this understanding.

But simply knowing that happiness is a choice is not enough. Fully experiencing it still requires a conscious decision to choose happiness each day. How then might each of us begin to experience this joy? *Continued on p. 17.*



Foundation Corner

From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation

NRHF Annual Report online

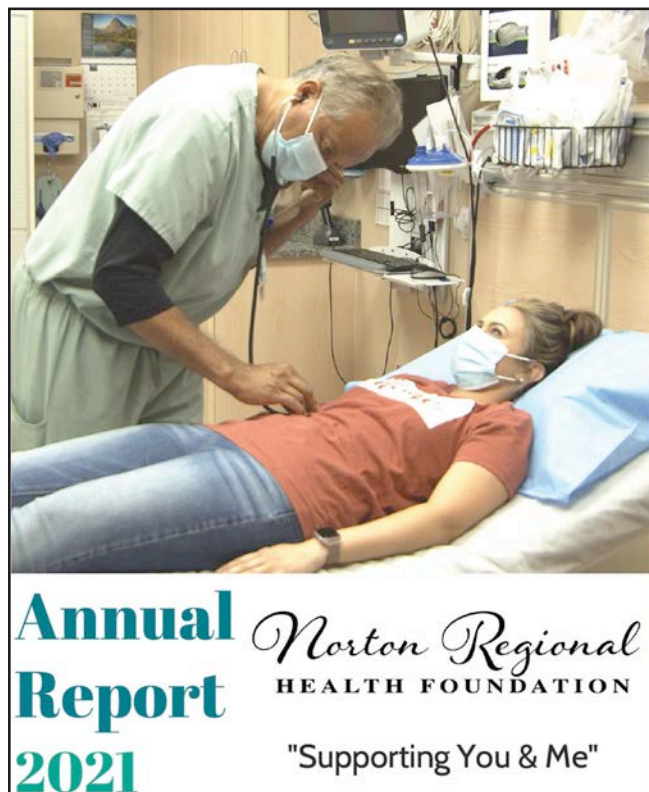
Check out the 2021 Norton Regional Health Foundation's Annual Report on the Foundation tab of the NCH website or on The Beat. The report showcases projects that were funded in 2021. We are happy to report that the new patient beds project has also been funded! The Foundation was able to purchase a new OB bed and five new inpatient beds with new mattresses. Thank you to all who contributed to this project. ●●●

Walk with a Doc postponed

Walk with a Doc is postponed until at least September 2022. This is due to lack of turnout to the events from community members. More ideas for community engagement AND increasing physical activity opportunities among staff are being discussed by the NCH Wellness Committee and through work with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant program. We will keep you informed as ideas come to fruition. ●●●

June 22, 2022 - Norton County Match Day

Mark your calendars! Norton County Match Day is June 22, 2022, and the Norton Regional Health Foundation is participating again this year. This will be an opportunity to raise funds for the purchase of a new portable ultrasound for outpatient services and glidescope to help with patient airways in the ER and OR. You can donate in person on June 22 at the Heaton Building, downtown Norton, or online at <https://www.nortonccf.org/nrhf>. We are trying to raise \$12,000, as \$12,000 has already been raised! Your donations will be matched by the Norton County Community Foundation. ●●●



Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

12 intentional actions to choose happiness today (from p. 15)

How to choose happiness today

Embrace one new action item, practice all of them, or simply use them as inspiration to discover your own. Here are 12 ways to choose happiness today:

1. Count your blessings. Happy people choose to focus on the positive aspects of life rather than the negative. They set their minds on specific reasons to be grateful. They express it when possible. And they quickly discover there is always, always, something to be grateful for.

2. Carry a smile. A smile is a wonderful beautifier. But more than that, studies indicate that making an emotion-filled face carries influence over the feelings processed by the brain. Our facial expression can influence our brain in just the same way our brains influence our face. In other words, you can actually program yourself to experience happiness by choosing to smile. Not to mention, all the pretty smiles you'll receive in return for flashing yours is also guaranteed to increase your happiness level.

3. Speak daily affirmation into your life. Affirmations are positive thoughts accompanied with affirmative beliefs and personal statements of truth. They are recited in the first person, present tense ("I am..."). Affirmations used daily can release stress, build confidence and improve outlook. For maximum effectiveness, affirmations should be chosen carefully, be based in truth and address current needs.

4. Wake up on your terms. Most of us have alarm clocks programmed because of the expectations of others: a workplace, a school or a waking child. That's probably not going to change. But that doesn't mean we have to lose control over our mornings in the process. Wake up just a little bit early and establish an empowering, meaningful, morning routine. Start each day on your terms. The next 23 hours will thank you for it.

5. Hold back a complaint. The next time you want to lash out in verbal complaint towards a person, a situation or yourself, don't. Instead, humbly keep it to yourself. You'll likely diffuse an unhealthy, unhappy environment. But more than that, you'll experience joy by choosing peace in a difficult situation.

6. Practice one life-improving discipline. There is happiness and fulfillment to be found in personal growth. To know that you have intentionally devoted time and energy to personal improvement is one of the most satisfying feelings you'll ever experience. Embrace and practice at least one act of self-discipline each day. This could be exercise, budgeting or guided-learning...whatever your life needs today to continue growing. Find it. Practice it. Celebrate it.



7. Use your strengths. Each of us have natural talents, strengths and abilities. And when we use them effectively, we feel alive and comfortable in our skin. They help us find joy in our being and happiness in our design. So embrace your strengths and choose to operate within your giftedness each day. If you need to find this outlet outside your employment, by all means, find this outlet.

8. Accomplish one important task. Because happy people choose happiness, they take control over their lives. They don't make decisions based on a need to pursue joy. Instead, they operate out of the satisfaction they have already chosen. They realize there are demands on their time, helpful pursuits to accomplish and important contributions to make to the world around them.

Choose one important task that you can accomplish each day. And find joy in your contribution.

9. Eat a healthy meal/snack. We are spiritual, emotional and mental beings. We are also physical bodies. Our lives cannot be wholly separated into its parts. As a result, one aspect always influences the others. For example, our physical bodies will always have impact over our spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, caring for our physical wellbeing can have significant benefit for our emotional standing. One simple action to choose happiness today is to eat healthy foods. Your physical body will thank you... and so will your emotional wellbeing.

10. Treat others well. Everyone wants to be treated kindly. But more than that, deep down, we also want to treat others with the same respect that we would like given to us. Treat everyone you meet with kindness, patience and grace. The Golden Rule is a powerful standard. It benefits the receiver but also brings growing satisfaction in yourself as you seek to treat others as you would like to be treated.

11. Meditate. Find time alone in solitude. As our world increases in speed and noise, the ability to withdraw becomes even more essential. Studies confirm the importance and life-giving benefits of meditation. So take time to make time. And use meditation to search inward, connect spiritually and improve your happiness today.

12. Search for benefit in your pain. This life can be difficult. Nobody escapes without pain. At some point—in some way—we all encounter it. When you do, remind yourself again that the trials may be difficult, but they will pass. And search deep to find meaning in the pain. Choose to look for the benefits that can be found in your trial. At the very least, perseverance is being built. And most likely, an ability to comfort others in their pain is also being developed.

Go today. Choose joy and be happy. That will make two of us.

By Joshua Becker, becomingminimalist.com ●●●