

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Jamey Keen, RN, employee health

Healthy Heart

When you think of February, what first comes to mind? Valentine's Day! Oh yes, the day of flowers, chocolate and celebration of love! Valentine's Day dates back to the 5th century.

Fun facts about Valentine's Day according to History.com include:

1. 141 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged annually.
2. Valentine's Day is celebrated in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Denmark, Italy and Japan.
3. Over 50 percent of all Valentine's Day cards are purchased in the six days prior to the observance.
4. The per capita consumption of candy by Americans in 2005 was 25.7 pounds.

Do you need a reason to eat chocolate?

Have you heard that dark chocolate has health benefits? It's true! According to the Mayo Clinic, cocoa, the ingredient in chocolate, reduces risk factors for heart disease. Flavanols in the cocoa beans have antioxidant effects that reduce cell damage implicated in heart disease, help lower blood pressure and improve vascular function. Some research has linked chocolate consumption to reduced risks of diabetes, stroke and heart attack. Dark chocolate is a good source of magnesium and copper.

Milk chocolate has not been shown to have the health benefits that dark chocolate has. The recommended serving of dark chocolate is 1.5 to 3 ounces. As a reminder, even dark chocolate has calories, and this should be taken into consideration when consuming it.



Fact or Fiction: Is wine good for the heart?

Prakash Deedwania, chief of the Cardiology Division and professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine explains:

Drinking a glass of wine is good for the heart in the sense that the main mechanisms by which alcohol protects the heart is increasing good cholesterol. The grape skin

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February is American Heart Month

According to the American Heart Association, heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths is caused by heart disease. Heart disease is preventable through making healthy choices and managing health conditions.

provides flavonoids and other antioxidant substances that protect the heart and vessels from damaging effects of free oxygen radicals produced by the body.

A glass of wine can also help individuals relax. In general, alcohol does not seem to have an adverse effect, unless an excessive amount is used - and it increases calories, among other things.

The recommended serving per day of wine for women is 4 ounces and for men, 4-8 ounces. Red wine is recommended.

Alternatively, you can get the same flavonoids produced by red wine by eating grapes and drinking grape juices. Exercise and relaxation techniques can take the place of alcohol's relaxing effects. ●●●

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Jamey Keen, RN, employee health

Facts about stress

According to the National Institute of Mental Health:

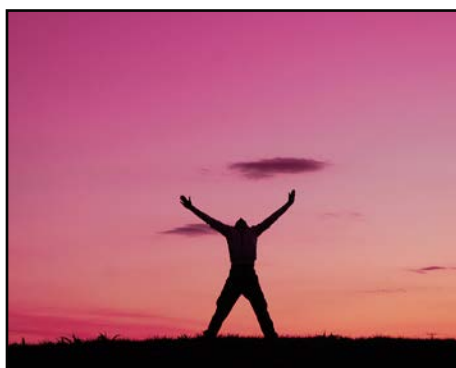
1. Stress affects everyone; you are not alone.
2. Not all stress is bad. Stress can provide motivation and in some situations, can be life-saving in dangerous situations.
3. Long-term stress can harm your health. Chronic stress can suppress immune, digestive, sleep and reproductive systems.
4. People may feel stress in different ways.
5. There are ways to manage stress:
 - Recognize the signs - difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol or other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed and having low energy.
 - Talk to your health care provider.
 - Get 30 minutes of exercise per day.
 - Use relaxation techniques.
 - Set goals and priorities.
 - Stay connected with people who can provide emotional and other support.
6. If you're overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.



Relaxation techniques you can perform anywhere

Types of relaxation techniques that can be used anywhere and reduce stress according to the University of Maryland Medical Center include:

1. Autogenic training - Uses both visual imagery and body awareness to move a person into a deep state of relaxation.
2. Breathing - Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Take a slow, deep breath, sucking in as much air as you can. As you are doing this, your belly should push against your hand. Hold your breath, and then slowly exhale.
3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation - Slowly tense and then release each muscle group individually, starting with the muscles in the toes and finishing with those in the head.
4. Meditation - Repeat a mantra, a single word phrase to yourself, or focus your attention on your thoughts and sensations.
5. Guided Imagery - Listen to a trained therapist or a guided imagery CD to move into a state of deep relaxation. Once relaxed, the images



that come up in your mind can help you uncover important realizations about your emotional, spiritual and physical health.

Music soothes the soul

When considering the impact that music has on our lives, one song reminds us how to let go. That song is "Drift Away". As the Doobie Brothers belt out the lyrics, "...Oh, give me the beat, boys, and free my soul I want to get lost in your rock-'n'-roll and drift

away. Give me the beat, boys, and free my soul I want to get lost in your rock-'n'-roll and drift away," the role music plays in our lives comes to mind.

It is not just loud noise that you turned up and almost rocked your parents out of the house to the old familiar phrase, "Turn down the music!" The benefits of music are numerous.

On a personal note, I can remember playing Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Brahms and Hayden in my firstborn son's room when he was born. I was told then that the music effects on the developing brain were humongous! Is it a coincidence then that he grew up to be an audio engineer and music producer? Is that what playing these classical composers' songs did for my eldest child?



Maybe it was the constant music playing in the house? Maybe it was singing to him, while using a brush for a microphone? One will never know.

Did you know that there are Music Therapy Professionals?

Musictherapy.org defines music therapy as the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship with a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy interventions can be designed to:

- Promote wellness
- Manage stress
- Alleviate pain
- Express feelings
- Enhance memory
- Improve communication
- Promote physical rehabilitation

So, play that funky music! ●●●

In the Spotlight

Soles4Souls

Have gently used shoes you'd like to move out of your closet? The Norton County Hospital Rehabilitation department, which includes physical, occupational and speech therapies, has launched a drive to collect shoes to help the poor. All kinds of gently used and new shoes can be dropped off from now until March 9 at the hospital's Rehabilitation department, located on the lowest level.

The shoes collected will be delivered to Soles4Souls, a not-for-profit global social enterprise committed to fighting poverty through the collection and distribution of shoes and clothing. Since 2006, the organization has distributed more than 30 million pairs of shoes in 127 countries.

For more information, please contact 785-874-2222. ●●●



Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Jamey Keen, RN, employee health

Go fish!

"Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, and he can feed himself for life." ~ Anne Isabella Ritchie

Heart healthy benefits of eating fish according to Harvard University:

1. Omega-3 - protects the heart against the development of cardiac rhythm disturbances
2. Omega-3 - lowers blood pressure and heart rate, improves blood vessel function, and at higher doses, lowers triglycerides
3. Omega-3 - eases inflammation

Omega-3 is a really big deal! The American Heart Association recommends eating fish twice per week. Eating fish once or twice a week may also reduce the risk of stroke, depression, Alzheimer's disease and other chronic conditions.

What about mercury in the fish we eat?

There is limited and conflicting evidence for effects of mercury in adults who consume fish. The easiest way to avoid concern about contaminants is to eat a variety of fish and other seafood.

HOWEVER... High intake of mercury appears to hamper a baby's brain development. Pregnant women should avoid seafood altogether. In addition, women who are or may become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children:

- Don't eat shark, swordfish, tilefish or king mackerel.
- Eat 12 ounces of a variety of fish in a week.
- Check advisories of local lakes, rivers and streams.

What if you don't like fish?



Omega-3s in the form of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) can be found in flax seeds, walnuts and a few vegetable oils. ALA is not converted to the marine omega-3s found in fish, so the evidence does not support eating ALA as a replacement for fish consumption. However, a higher intake of ALA may still have heart-healthy benefits.

On a personal note, one of my twins absolutely loves salmon. I was putting together a grocery list the other day and he asks, "Mom, when you pick up the salmon, can you make sure it is fresh, because fresh is better?" To which my reply was, "If only we lived closer to the ocean." Much of the fish found in Midwest stores is frozen. According to epicurious, 85 percent of the seafood we eat is imported.

Nutritionally, nothing is lost when the fish has been frozen, but my son will tell you that the taste is better if you can get it fresh caught from the coast.

Ask my good ol' country boy father though and he will tell you (in my deepest, roughest farmer voice that I can possibly imitate him in)... "Fish! We don't buy fish in these parts. I raised you kids on the farm, with farm fresh meat, poultry, cream, butter and eggs. We don't eat fish in these parts!" Don't get me wrong, I have the deepest respect for that man! It is a different story when he goes fishing though, because then there are starving kids out there somewhere who would give anything to eat trout. ●●●

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton Regional Health Foundation forms Board of Directors, announces mission

The Norton Regional Health Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that focuses on the importance of rural health and health care, has officially formed its Board of Directors. The Foundation's mission is "to support the enhancement of quality health care for the residents of Norton County and the surrounding counties by securing gifts and contributions for the support of the mission of Norton County Hospital."

The Foundation, developed in late 2016, specifically looks to fund ways to meet the health care needs of regional communities and support projects of the Norton County Hospital and its clinics – Norton Medical Clinic and Logan Clinic, which will enable more opportunities for health care services locally, as well as economic stability and potential growth, said the Foundation's executive director Katie Allen.

"The health care industry is changing, and now more than ever it's important for hospitals to find different avenues for financial support," Allen said. "I see this Foundation as one of the ways Norton County Hospital can continue to add services and provide the best care possible for patients in the region. By supporting the hospital, we as a Foundation are supporting our family, friends and neighbors so they don't have to travel long distances to receive quality health care. Likewise, we are supporting our local economy by keeping these services close to home."

A January 2017 report by the Kansas Hospital Association titled "The Importance of the Health Care Sector to the Kansas Economy" stated that quality-of-life factors, such as health care services, play a dramatic role in business and industry location decisions. A strong health care system can help attract and maintain business and industry growth, attract and retain retirees, and create local jobs.

Therefore, health care entities including hospitals directly and indirectly support the local economy in terms of job opportunities, income distribution and retail sales. Further, the report said if a community wants to maintain accessible and affordable health care, it must work together – health care administrators working alongside government, business and civic leaders to find solutions to challenges unique to a specific area.

"I grew up in a rural area myself, in a town not quite the size of Norton," Allen said. "Having family members who work in health care, I could see some of the rural health challenges – whether it's recruiting and maintaining a qualified medical and support staff, or providing services so patients have the ability and confidence to visit the local clinic or hospital if needed. Norton County Hospital is trying hard to be a progressive rural hospital and face these and other challenges head on to benefit patients. I look forward to seeing how the Foundation and those who support it will be able to help."

Allen added that she expects the Norton Regional Health Foundation to not only support projects within the walls of the hospital and clinics, but she hopes to build the Foundation so that it can also support health-related projects within regional communities themselves. She believes it is crucial to support healthy communities as well as enhance health care services.

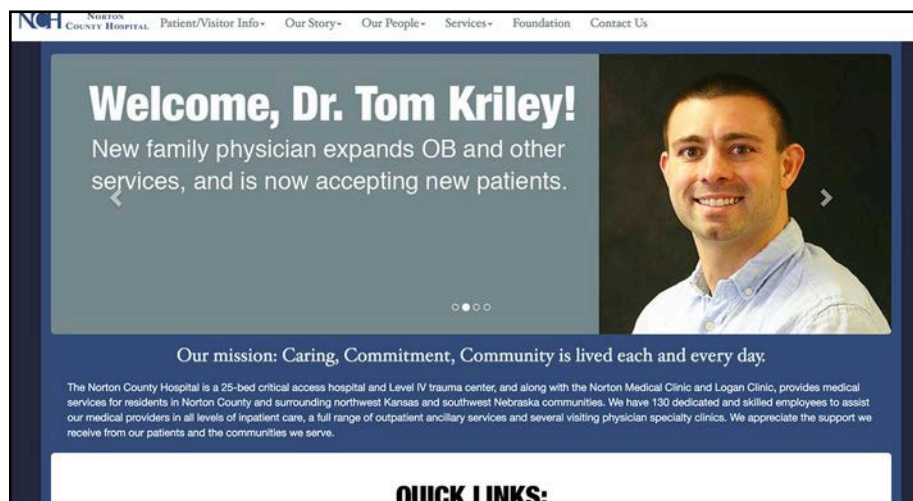
In addition to serving as the Foundation's executive director, Allen is also the Norton County Hospital's communications director and a full-time employee of the hospital. The work of the Foundation, therefore, is housed within the Norton County Hospital, although the Foundation itself is a separate entity governed by its own Board of Directors. Each year, the hospital's Board of Trustees votes to approve the Foundation's voting directors.

Voting directors pictured below include top row, left to right, Dennis Gilhousen, chair; Terry Nelson, vice chair; and Shad Chandler. Bottom row, left to right, is Jill Diane Edgett, secretary/treasurer and representative from the Norton County Hospital Board of Trustees; Karen Griffiths, representative from the Live Well Norton coalition; Jennifer Miller; and Phil Gottstine. ●●●



In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation



New year, new website for Norton County Hospital

A 2016 study by the Pew Research Center showed that U.S. adults often get their news on a screen, with television (57 percent) and online news (38 percent – through social media, websites and apps) rising to the top of the list. Radio (25 percent) and print newspapers (20 percent) also were important avenues for adults to get news information.

Norton County Hospital realizes that its patients, visitors and the public at large get information in different ways, which is why it works with many media avenues to release information. Because of the importance of online media in today's society, hospital staff developed and launched a new website for Norton County Hospital, which also includes information about the hospital's clinics – Norton Medical Clinic and Logan Clinic – and the Norton Regional Health Foundation.

Goals of the new website include:

- Build a responsive website, which means it is intended to have an optimal viewing display for all sizes of devices, including smartphones and tablets.
- Make the navigation simpler and more user-friendly, with a main navigation at the top and a pull-down sub-menu below the main navigation.
- Showcase the breadth of services of Norton County Hospital, Norton Medical

Clinic and Logan Clinic, as well as highlight all departments that make the hospital and clinics function on a daily basis. In addition to everyday services, the website includes a listing of outpatient specialty clinics and serves as a place where visiting specialists are listed, along with their contact information, how to make an appointment and when that specialist typically visits Norton.

- Create an online landing place to find more information not only about the Norton County Hospital and its clinics, but also allow for more information about the newly created Norton Regional Health Foundation.
- Provide more visual aesthetics to the website, such as photos and videos. For example, users can watch recent videos from the home page. Pages within the "Services" tab showcase photos, and more photos will continue to be added in the future. Pages within the "Our People" tab display information about medical providers, hospital leaders and board members, as well as photos that help put faces to names.
- Whether looking on "Patient/Visitor Info" pages, the "Contact Us" page or any of the "Services," display appropriate contact information (phone numbers, faxes and emails), as well as policies, hours and directions to

various parts of the facilities to make it as easy as possible for patients and visitors to get connected appropriately.

- Allow for the hospital to provide transparency to the public by posting more news information, a newly created internal newsletter, an upcoming events calendar and recent announcements, as examples.
- Tell more of "Our Story" by using that tab to continue to add historical information about Norton County Hospital and welcoming public input on building the history.
- Provide appropriate external links to more information on most website pages, which is intended to provide users with resources outside of Norton County Hospital and help them learn more about their health.
- Get social! Allow website users to easily find associated social media pages and email Norton County Hospital any testimonials or other feedback.

The website will be updated continually to enhance the goals mentioned. The website address is the same as it has always been, www.ntcohosp.com.

Join us on social media!

In addition to the new website, you can also follow some of the latest information about Norton County Hospital and Clinics on Facebook. Like the page, and share content on your personal pages if you wish! The link to the parent Facebook page is www.facebook.com/nortoncountyhosp. The page is now officially a verified account (you can see the verified gray check next to the "Norton County Hospital and Clinics" name).

You may also have noticed that the Norton Medical Clinic and Logan Clinic have Facebook accounts as well. These pages were unofficial and not created by a staff member of the hospital or clinics. Katie Allen claimed the pages earlier this year. While the Norton County Hospital and Clinics Facebook page will serve as the official page, Katie can share the same content or specific content on the other clinic-specific pages as well. Therefore, the clinic pages won't be updated as frequently, but Katie manages all three pages and can post content on all three as needed. The clinic pages are: Norton Medical Clinic (<http://bit.ly/2kX9JZQ>) and Logan Clinic (<http://bit.ly/2kDl4dT>)

Norton County Hospital and Clinics also has a Twitter account. Follow us at [www.twitter.com/ntcohosp](https://twitter.com/ntcohosp). ●●●

Other Celebrations

New Hostess Program announced

The hospital's Dietary department began its Hostess Program in November 2016. The department works as a team to make sure each patient receives his or her food preferences, according to his or her diet order. Each morning, the Hostess will arrive with each patient's breakfast tray, and after delivery the hostess will then take each patient's meal orders for the following day. Dietary now delivers the breakfast and lunch trays, while nursing delivers the evening trays. This program gives patients the ability to choose the items they wish to eat for each meal, as well as the opportunity to express any concerns they might have regarding their dietary needs. (Note: Some choices may be adjusted by Dietary to fit their diet order.) - Submitted by Dietary manager Shaylei Johnson

Photos below show Jamey Keen, RN, discussing with Dietary staff how to properly enter and exit patient rooms when delivering meals.



“Go Red for Women”

Feb. 3, 2017, was National Wear Red Day, or Go Red for Women. Each year, this day is meant to raise awareness that heart disease and stroke cause 1 in 3 deaths among women each year, killing approximately one woman every 80 seconds. Staff were encouraged to wear red in support, and we had several wearing red in the hospital and Norton Medical Clinic that day. Thanks to all who participated!



Other Celebrations

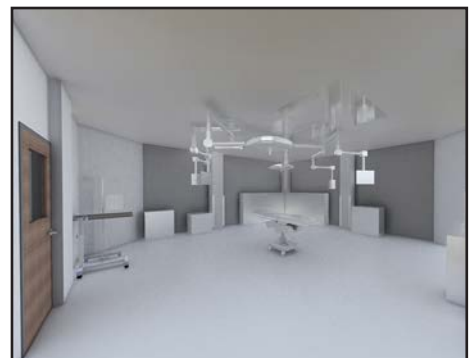
Drawings available for the upcoming renovation and expansion project!

Norton County Hospital has worked on architectural designs for a three-level renovation and expansion to include two state-of-the-art surgical suites, which will at least double the size of the current surgical area, as well as other updates for physical therapy, chemotherapy, dietary and the hospital's pharmacy.

The total renovation and expansion costs will be about \$11 million. Hospital administration and the Board of Trustees have worked to make the project come to fruition without additional taxpayer support. In fact, the project will be funded entirely by a revenue bond and outright financial gifts from community members. The exact start date for construction will be determined once the hospital receives its final approval for financing and subsequent approval from the Board of Trustees, but the project is tentatively set to begin this May.

More details will be available later, but administration wanted to share sketches of what the new and updated facilities will look like. Top row, L-R, includes physical therapy from the outside and the new therapy pool. Middle row includes the "pit" from the outside once the project is complete and the recovery area for surgery. Bottom row shows examples of the new surgical suites.

For those interested in what the finishes (carpet, paint, trim, etc.) will look like, displays will be placed in the dining area. ●●●



Other Celebrations

Physical Capacity Profiling

Norton County Hospital has expanded its occupational services to help employers and employees of Norton and the surrounding region by reducing workers' compensation injuries. In late 2016, the hospital purchased a special testing system, called the Physical Capacity Profile®, to be used to make sure new employees can do the physical work that their job demands. This is a proven system that is based on years of testing. When we medically document that a new employee has the strength to perform the requirements of his or her new job, the opportunity for injury is substantially reduced.

The benefits of Physical Capacity Profile® extend to both employers and employees. Employers may be faced with increased workers' compensation premiums, and lowering their injury rates will help them control their costs. Employers will be able to use this new service on newly hired employees as a way to protect them from injury as well. The testing is fully compliant with EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

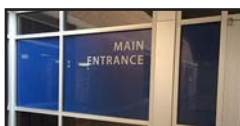
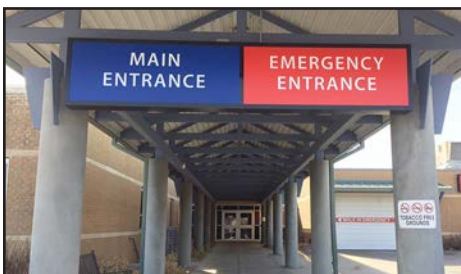
NCH staff will administer the 30-minute computerized test. The test is called the Physical Capacity Profile®, because it is a collection of 28 different measurements utilizing both isometric and dynamic lifting. Through this comprehensive testing, the hospital can protect new employees by confirming they have the strength to do their job. It could help all types of employees and could help small as well as large businesses. The Rehabilitation team has been practicing this test on staff and hopes to launch it to the public soon. *Photos below show the Rehabilitation department training for this service.*



New signs implemented at main entrance, emergency and outpatient/specialty clinic

Last fall, hospital administration took to the Board of Trustees some options for new exterior signage. The Board approved this signage to better direct patients and visitors. The cabinet signs labeled "Main Entrance / Emergency Entrance" and "Outpatient & Specialty Clinic" are also lit up at night to be easily visible. We hope this will help patients and visitors understand where they need to go to find the hospital's main entrance, walk-in emergency services and see a specialist for the first time, as examples. We know that in the past, many people not familiar with our facility were going to the clinic for specialist visits, and at other times emergency visitors were coming through the main lobby seeking services.

In addition to the new cabinets, you may also notice the windows at the main and emergency entrances have the same coloring and wording to match the cabinet at the front of the walkway. We also put a new banner on the ambulance door to direct walk-in emergencies to the appropriate entrance. The new website also has more explanations on where to park and how to check in for various services. While we hope these new signs and directions will help people, if you continue to see people needing help, please continue to lend a hand and point them to where they need to go. Thank you for your assistance!



Holiday Scenes

Halloween & Christmas

Thanks to all who donated gifts for the community's Angel Tree! Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic went above and beyond to make sure local children had a nice Christmas.



Lights, Camera, Action!



Logan Clinic and Norton Medical Clinic have a new commercial running on Smoky Hills Public Television. Thanks to Michelle and Jennifer, and patients from the Logan community, for being such good sports!

Human Resources

*From the desk of Shannan Hempler,
human resources*

Filing your own taxes - be safe online

In addition to avoiding email scams during the tax season, taxpayers and tax preparers should be leery of using search engines to find technical help with taxes or tax software. Selecting the wrong "tech support" link could lead to a loss of data or an infected computer. Also, software "tech support" will not call users randomly. This is a scam.

Taxpayers searching for a paid tax professional for tax help can use the IRS Choosing a Tax Professional lookup tool, or if taxpayers need free help can review the IRS Free Tax Return Preparation Programs. Taxpayers searching for tax software can use Free File, which offers 12 brand-name products for free, at www.irs.gov/freefile. Taxpayers or tax preparers looking for tech support for their software products should go directly to the provider's Web page.

Hospital & Clinic parking lots - professional courtesy

It is the practice of Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic staff to ensure that our patients, visitors and community members have the most accessible parking possible. Therefore, all staff should abide by the professional courtesy standard of parking in the employee parking lot across the street until all parking places are full before parking in the main parking lot during the day. If the employee parking lot is full (including along the highway), then staff can begin to use the parking spaces along the highway in the main lot so that staff use the spaces farthest from the building. Staff using the Clinic lot also need to ensure that the most accessible parking spaces are available for patients and use the south and east edges first.

Staff members who do not follow this professional courtesy create hard feelings among staff who abide by this practice daily.

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

NCH Blood Drive

The next NCH Blood Drive is scheduled for Friday, April 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

KPERS website for active members

<https://www.kpers.org/active/index.html>

The KPERS website has lots of information available for several life stages during your employment. These resources are available to you at any time on the KPERS website. See image at right.

BCBS of Kansas website for members

<http://www.bcbsks.com/BeHealthy>

The BCBS of Kansas website has many resources available to BCBS policy holders. Check out the Health & Wellness tab, including the Members Only Services. See image below.

Recent Milestones

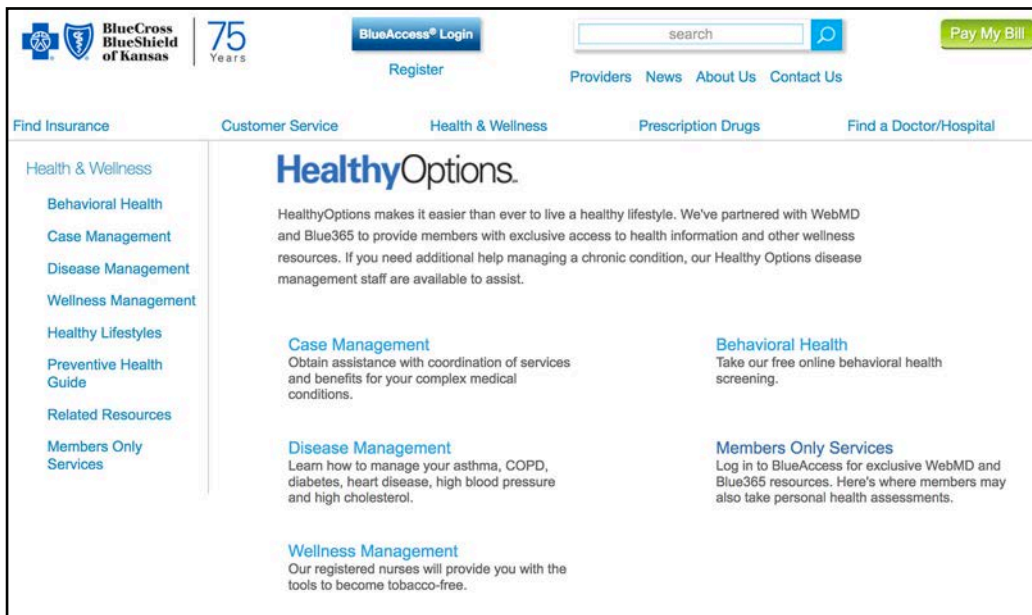
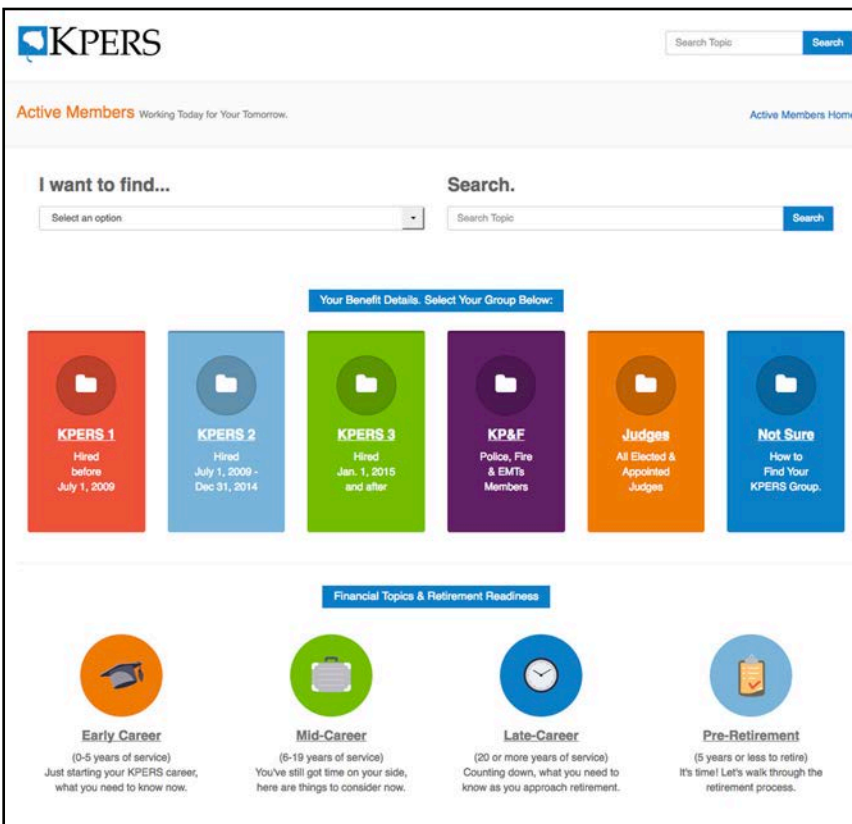
Congratulations to these employees, and thank you for all that you do!

November

Mike Annon	36 years
Eva Harrington	18 years
Shawnee Branek	15 years
Cami Cornelius	12 years
Emily Zillinger	6 years
Kelli Wyatt	5 years
Tracey Hartzog	4 years
Jennifer Taylor	2 years
Rita Conrad	2 years
Pam Bigge	1 year

December

Pam Miller	14 years
Sid Gosselin	11 years
Dorothy Misek	6 years
Rhonda McDowell	6 years
Christen Skrdlant	6 years
Morgan Griffey	4 years
Carol Richmeier	3 years
Mariah Farber	3 years
Elaine Albright	1 year
Nova Bates	1 year
Katie Kester	1 year

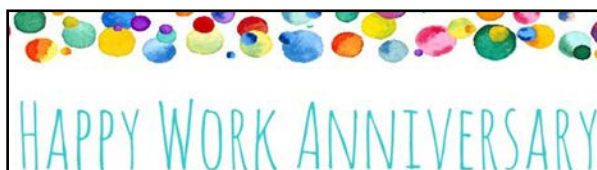


January

Kellen Jacobs	3 years
Claudette Graham	2 years
Shay Johnson	2 years
Jean Carmichael	1 year




February

Deb Witt	23 years
Staci Breiner	10 years
Jordan Brown	8 years
Sam Brown	6 years
Jessie Dougherty	5 years
Amie Scott	5 years
Linda Schriner	2 years
Claire Wellhouse	1 year
Natalie Davis	1 year
Riana Mays	1 year



Meet the Team!

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

	<p>Mikayla Wilkerson Nursing—CNA— Day Shift</p> <p>Mikayla joined our Nursing department on February 14th.</p>		<p>Piper Smith Nursing—CNA— Night Shift</p> <p>Piper joined our Nursing department on February 3rd.</p>
	<p>Destinee Stucky Nursing—CNA— Day Shift</p> <p>Destinee joined our Nursing department on February 14th.</p>		<p>Cassie Lowry Nursing—CNA— PRN</p> <p>Cassie joined our Nursing department on February 10th. She is currently in the CCC LPN program.</p>
	<p>Kyle McClurg Nursing—CNA— PRN</p> <p>Kyle joined our Nursing department on December 30th. Kyle is currently in the CCC LPN program.</p>		<p>M'Lynn Hinger Nursing—RN— Night Shift</p> <p>M'Lynn joined our Nursing department on January 20th. She recently completed her BSN at Fort Hays State University.</p>
	<p>Melody Renzelman Nursing—LPN— Day Shift</p> <p>Melody joined the Nursing department on February 13th.</p>		<p>Sharon Smothers— RN—Outpatient Clinic Coordinator</p> <p>Sharon joined our Nursing department as the Outpatient Clinic Coordinator on January 19th.</p>



	<p>Erika Prather Nursing—Aide— Night Shift</p> <p>Erika joined our Nursing department on January 12th.</p>		<p>Michelle Carpenter Nursing—RN— Night Shift</p> <p>Michelle joined our Nursing department October 26th on night shift.</p>
	<p>Desiree Schrader Nursing—LPN— Day Shift</p> <p>Desiree joined our Nursing department as an Aide on night shift on September 28th. She recently moved to day shift as an LPN.</p>		<p>Sandy Becker Logan Clinic—RN</p> <p>Sandy joined our Logan Clinic staff on December 16th. Sandy previously worked for NCH both full time and as PRN for about nine years.</p>
	<p>Monica Krenzer Physical Therapist</p> <p>Monica joined the Physical Therapy department as the third therapist on December 6th.</p>		<p>Kellie Gibson Dietary</p> <p>Kellie joined our Dietary department on February 10th.</p>



Marla Kuhn
Mobile
Ultrasound

Marla joined the Radiology department on January 16th. She will spend most of her time providing mobile ultrasound for area hospitals as well as provide additional ultrasound services here in at NCH. Marla previously worked for NCH for about five years.



Valerie Marble
Radiology—RT

Valerie joined our Radiology department on January 9th.



Corgan Nickelson
Physical
Therapy—Clerk—
PRN

Corgan joined our Physical Therapy department on January 16th. She is a NCHS student and helps after school.



Alana Murphy
Business Office—
BCBS Biller

Alana joined our Business Office staff on December 19th.



What Do Those Acronyms Mean?

We don't have enough acronyms in health care – right? Here are a few more you may be hearing about.

PFAC (Patient and Family Advisory Council)

A Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) partners patients and families with members of the health care team to provide guidance on how to improve the patient and family experience. As part of this PFAC process, patients and families are invited to serve on hospital committees to ensure that the consumer's point of view, perspective, and experience are not only heard, but also integrated into the service and quality improvements that are engineered to ensure high-quality, customer-centered care. Through their unique perspectives, they give input on issues that impact care, ensuring that the next patient or family member's journey is easier.

Norton County Hospital is in the early stages of development of this council. Expect more to come in the near future. A local Norton resident, Ward Foley (aka 'Scarman'), has volunteered to be the chair for this council. If you have questions about this council, see Jamey Keen or Gina Frack to find out more.

MACRA (Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015)

This is a bipartisan federal legislation signed into law on April 16, 2015. The law does many things, but most importantly it establishes new ways to pay physicians for caring for Medicare beneficiaries. The following acronyms are subsequent to MACRA.

ACO (Accountable Care Organization)

The ACO concept is one that is still evolving, but it can be generically defined as a group of health care providers, potentially including doctors, hospitals, health plans and other health care constituents, who voluntarily come together to provide coordinated high-quality care to populations of patients. The goal of coordinated care provided by an ACO is to ensure that patients and populations — especially the chronically ill — get the right care, at the right time and without harm, while avoiding care that has no proven benefit or represents an unnecessary duplication of services.

Norton County Hospital joined an ACO in the Fall of 2016 called the Kansas Clinical Improvement Collaborative (KCIC). Norton, along with 21 other hospitals in Kansas (mostly rural hospitals of similar size) are members of this organization. This ACO was developed by the same leadership that created the Kansas Heart and Stroke Collaborative.

As an ACO, the members still have to meet the requirements similar to

MIPS, but the advantage is that they do so together — reducing administrative costs and burden to assure compliance and avoid penalties. Savings in the cost of care are then given to the ACO to use as their governing board, the participating hospital's CEOs, so choose.

MIPS (Merit-Based Incentive Payment System)

This is the name of a program that will determine Medicare payment adjustments. Using a composite performance score (providers) may receive a payment bonus, a payment penalty or no payment adjustment.

Performance for MIPS will start on January 1, 2017, and will annually measure eligible providers in four performance categories to derive a "MIPS score" (0 to 100). The MIPS score can significantly impact a provider's Medicare reimbursement in each payment year from -9% to +27% by 2022. The four performance categories are weighted:

- 50% for quality (PQRS/VBM)
- 25% for meaningful use
- 15% for clinical practice improvement
- 10% for resource use

If NCH didn't become a member of the KCIC ACO, NCH would have been required to meet these MIPS requirements and reporting on our own likely with a contractor's assistance.

- Submitted by COO Gina Frack ●●●

Engage the Community

Norton County Hospital hosted a few community programs since October 2016. Thanks to Dr. Steinle and Dr. Nguyen for getting out in the community to help educate patients on their health.

Dr. Steinle presented at the "Tickled Pink" Breast Cancer Awareness Event at Bullseye Event Center Nov. 5. Silent auction proceeds from that event totaled nearly \$700 for the Norton Regional Health Foundation!

Dr. Nguyen presented Nov. 15 on how patients can protect themselves during the cold and flu season. Pharmacist Chase Rice was also on hand to answer



questions about medications and to discuss antibiotic stewardship.

On Dec. 5, the hospital welcomed a certified navigator for the Health Insurance Marketplace to discuss

options and help patients enroll in health insurance for 2017. Sara Russell from the Hoxie Medical Clinic served as our guest and answered many questions from a room full of people. ●●●