

# aspire

fall 2018

## Continuing Growth

*Strategic planning process, new Tekamah Cottonwood Clinic, and addition of medical staff leads growth efforts*

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## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Welcome to the fall edition of Aspire magazine. It's been a very busy and action-packed eight months since I have joined the staff at Memorial Community Hospital and Health System as the President and CEO. Now that I have had a chance to get to know the staff and many of the community members, I am even more proud to be part of this great organization and community.

In April, the staff and Board of MCH&HS, along with community members, started a strategic planning process that lasted several months. A strategic plan to guide the path of Memorial Community Hospital and Health System for the next several years was developed. In a healthcare environment that is in constant change, it is extremely important to the leadership of an organization to anticipate challenges, rather than react to them. The strategic planning process has provided us with a system to lead, manage, and grow the organization in a well-planned, integrated manner based on our strategies.

In the process, our current strengths have been identified in the quality and dedication of our medical providers, nurses, and all other staff, who ensure that exceptional care is provided to every person who walks through our doors. Our beautiful facilities and easy access to health services give MCH&HS the advantage to be the number one healthcare provider in the area. Opportunities have been found in expanding utilization of our current services and providing additional needed services, as well as in making better use of strategic partnerships and in becoming an even more active part of the community.

Our strategic plan concentrates on the priorities of patient experience with high quality and safe patient care, the continued recruitment and retention of medical staff, employee engagement, community outreach and growth.

Construction of our long anticipated new Cottonwood Clinic in Tekamah was kicked off with the groundbreaking ceremony on August 30, 2018. This celebration officially started the building project, and by today, the construction of the building is well on its way. As I said during the ceremony, I am looking forward to what the clinic will become to the community of Tekamah. A building is only brick and mortar; it is up to us to make it the best place to give and to receive care. For those of you that would like to keep track of the building progress, updated photos are posted weekly on our Facebook page.

All the hard work that is done by the staff here at Memorial Community Hospital and its associated clinics will only be successful with the support our community members and patients. We want your experience to be one that exceeds your expectations and makes us your first choice when you choose your healthcare provider.

Yours sincerely,  
Manny Wolf



*New Tekamah Cottonwood Clinic Coming Soon*

# New faces joining MCH&HS Staff



In September MCH&HS welcomed Dr. Paula Thielen to the provider group. Dr. Thielen is based at the Blair Clinic, but also treats patients at the Tekamah Cottonwood Clinic on Mondays, building on the OB care offered in Tekamah. Most recently Dr. Thielen practiced at Banner Medical Group in Ogallala, NE. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH and her medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Medicine (UNMC). Dr. Thielen completed her residency at UNMC in Family Medicine, and is board certified in Family Medicine with a strong interest in and focus on women's health and maternity care. She is experienced in C-Sections and minor office procedures.

When she is not working, Dr. Thielen enjoys cooking, reading, spending time on physical fitness and with her dog, Indy. She also enjoys musicals, plays and the ballet.



Dr. J. Scott Graves will be joining MCH&HS at the end of the year. He currently is practicing at Hereford Regional Medical Center in Hereford, Texas, and serves as the Medical Director of Talecris Plasma Resources in Amarillo, Texas. Prior to this, he was employed by St. Mary's Health System in Lake Ozark, Mo. and Versailles, Mo.

Dr. Graves attended Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. He went on to receive his Doctor of Allopathic Medicine degree from the American University of the Caribbean in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles. Dr. Graves completed his residency at Cox Family Medicine in Springfield, Mo. He has a special interest in Obstetrics and performs C-Sections.

In his spare time, Dr. Graves enjoys scuba diving, motorcycling, fishing, and wakeboarding. He and his wife, Alissa, have two children, Hayley (age 15) and Ryan (age 13).



Ryan McCabe, PT, MPT, prefers his short commute to work these days. McCabe, a physical therapist and MCH&HS's new Therapy Services Lead, has driven approximately 300,000 miles to work over the past six years. On his first day at MCH&HS it was just a five mile jaunt. "Certainly, driving as much as I have over the years was never the goal.

My businesses were always out of town, and driving was a large part of my day and week. That does tend to wear on you," said McCabe.

MCH&HS is comfortable to McCabe and feels a little like home to him. His wife, Dana, is a Physician's Assistant at the Fort Calhoun Clinic and has been with MCH&HS for 12 years. "I am thankful the opportunity arose at MCH&HS," said McCabe. "I'm at a point in my life and career that I want to be around more for my family. My wife has benefitted personally and professionally from working at MCH&HS, and I look forward to myself and our family benefitting from me doing the same."

Ryan graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 1997 and went on to attend the University of Nebraska Medical Center Physical Therapy program where he graduated in 2001. The first position he held was with the Nebraska Medical Center

in their sports medicine department. "I come from a sports background being the son of a coach, and playing football at University of Nebraska-Kearney, so sports medicine and orthopedics was always a major interest of mine," said McCabe. His interest in orthopedics includes extremity joints and the spine, and he enjoys the diagnostic and rehabilitation program aspect that Physical Therapy provides.

After leaving the Med Center in 2006, Ryan began private practice with two different entities. The first was a two-clinic practice that was built in mid-town Omaha. His goal always was to build the practice and sell it, which he did in 2010. He also purchased another practice that included two stand-alone clinics, home health contracts, and multiple hospital contracts. Government contracts were later added to the practice. "I enjoyed the diversity of the practice and worked with some great people, in many different communities and settings," said McCabe.

McCabe is where he needs to be at this time in his life; in Blair, where he and Dana live with their four children; Taylor (age 14), Peyton (age 12), and twins Colin and Declan (age 5). As you can imagine, they stay very active with a family of six. Though he once enjoyed playing golf and an occasional game of poker, most of this free time now and over the past several years has been spent with the kids and family activities, and growing the businesses. "I wouldn't have it any other way," said McCabe.



# Flu Vaccination *Is Important*

While seasonal influenza (flu) viruses are detected year-round in the United States, they are most common during the fall and winter. The timing and duration of flu seasons can vary, but influenza cases often begin to increase in October. Most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, although activity can last as late as May.

“I often feel people base their decision of whether or not to get vaccinated only on themselves without considering others,” said Molly Dahlgren, Marketing Lead at MCH&HS. “Back in 2002, my dad underwent a stem cell transplant at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Our kids were pretty young then, ages 3, 8, and 10. Being diagnosed with multiple myeloma, we knew it would be a long and difficult battle, and that we would do everything we could to help Dad in his journey back to health. Before, during, and after the transplant, it was important for the rest of his family to stay as healthy as we could so we didn’t pass along any illnesses to him in his fragile

state. Actually, we weren’t allowed to even see Dad if we weren’t first vaccinated. And ever since his diagnosis in 2000, my entire family and I have taken extra precautions during flu season; not only to protect ourselves, but to protect those whose health may be compromised due to an illness. It has become a part of our routine in the fall when flu vaccinations become available.”

People with flu can spread it to others up to about six feet away. Most experts think that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

People with flu are most contagious in the first three to four days after their illness begins. Most healthy adults may be able

to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. Children and some people with weakened immune systems may spread the virus for longer than seven days. Those who are most at risk for the flu are adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, young children, children with neurologic conditions, and those with asthma, heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and cancer.

Symptoms can begin about two days (but can range from one to four days) after the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those people may still spread the virus to others. If you are able, please get vaccinated. If not for you, then do it for someone else. It could certainly make a difference.

Some content taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Oncology *locally in the MCH&HS Specialty Clinic*

For the past several years, Sandy Metz has chosen to receive treatment for her colon and lung cancer at Memorial Community Hospital & Health System in Blair. Once a week, Sandy makes a short trip from Tekamah to the Specialty Clinic where her infusion therapy takes place. Each visit takes about 6 to 7 hours from start to finish. For her, the Cancer Center at MCH&HS has become a place where she is comfortable and “at home”, surrounded by a friendly staff that has become her friends.

“The oncology staff at MCH&HS is the best,” said Sandy. “I am so grateful for the special nurses there. These ladies explain the treatment, nutrition, and are there for me always.” Whether it’s greeting her with a warm smile when she arrives, or offering her a hot meal or warm blanket as she sits in her favorite chair during treatment, Sandy always knows the staff care about her and that she is well taken care of.

This is the second time Sandy has undergone treatment for cancer. Her first diagnosis came in 2009 when she began treatment for colon cancer. Back then, not knowing there was treatment available so close to home, she traveled to Omaha. The facility there did not seem as warm and there were so many on staff, Sandy did not

form the strong relationships with her caregivers as she has done at MCH.

“Some weeks this is my only time away from home,” said Sandy. “This has become a part of my weekly routine and the MCH Oncology team has become a part of my extended family, offering both physical and emotional support.” She praises not only Dr. Popa and her physician’s assistant Brandi for excellent

care, but commends the ladies who are consistently there for her during treatments --- Kathy, Chele, Sheryl, Sandy, Lana and Dawn. “They are simply the best,” said Sandy. From day one, when she was greeted by Kathy, she felt at ease knowing Kathy would be there for her at the next appointment. “I just love her,” said Sandy.

Sandy will continue to receive weekly treatments at MCH&HS to control her cancer. And she will continue to enjoy her time visiting with the oncology team there, sharing stories about grandkids and exchanging recipes with those special nurses. “I’ve been blessed to know them,” said Sandy.



# Save our Antibiotics!

## *Prevent unnecessary use.*

By Kaeley Gerstle, 2019 PharmD Candidate and Dr. Patty Smith, PharmD.

Antibiotics save lives, but any time they are used, they can lead to antibiotic resistance. The need to understand responsible use of antibiotics has expanded way beyond just healthcare professionals, but includes all consumers. After years of over-using antibiotics, we now know how the unnecessary use of antibiotics has led to a serious epidemic of resistance and the huge cost of unnecessary side effects.

Being more responsible and limiting the use of antibiotics is a worldwide effort to reduce the growing problem of bacterial resistance. Many bacterial illnesses are resistant to the limited antibiotics we have available to fight against bacteria and fungi infections. In 2013, the CDC reported the danger of antibiotic resistance, stating that each year in the U.S., at least 2 million people get an antibiotic-resistant infection and at least 23,000 people die.

Antibiotic resistance is when germs, like bacteria and fungi, develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them, and they continue to grow and spread.

Efforts for Responsible Use of Antibiotics Includes:

- Avoid prescribing antibiotics for illnesses that are most likely viral. Antibiotics will NOT work on viral illness.
- Confirming the patient has a bacterial infection before prescribing antibiotics.
- Using “Delayed Prescribing.” Waiting 3 to 5 days to see if the patient will get better on their own, before starting antibiotics.
- Controlling the source of the bacterial infection. HANDWASHING is so important, and also to avoid coughing and sneezing in our hands or near other people.
- Identifying the bacteria causing the infection. Culturing the bacteria and knowing the exact sensitivity of the bacteria to antibiotics, so the exact antibiotic with the narrowest coverage can be prescribed to treat the bacteria.
- Prescribing the correct antibiotic at the appropriate dose, and for the appropriate duration.

Studies have shown that 30-50% of antibiotics may be unnecessary or inappropriate. As a healthcare community, we want to promote appropriate use of antibiotics in an effort to slow down, if not stop, this increasing resistance problem. Hospitals and long-term care facilities have started Antibiotic Stewardship programs to have guidelines for appropriate antibiotic use. Prescribers continue to balance the needs of their patients and the ever growing importance of patient satisfaction. Patient education is vital. The entire healthcare industry must help spread the word to the public on the risks of unnecessary antibiotics. This will help patients understand why physicians may say antibiotics may not be the best medicine for your illness, at least for today.

It comes down to the fact that the pharmaceutical industry has not developed many new antibiotics to fight these new resistant bacteria. So, if we don't do something, we will run out of effective antibiotics and more people will die of infections.

Understandably when we, or our loved ones, are sick and not feeling well (sore throat, runny nose, coughing, etc.), we want something to make us/them feel better. However, many times the sickness is not bacterial, but in fact, may be a viral infection or allergy symptoms. In 2010 through 2011 a study examined doctor office visits and estimated that per 1,000 patients, 506 received antibiotics in a given year. Of the 506, only 353 needed the antibiotics they were given. This means about 30% of the antibiotics were given for viral/allergy related issues.

When antibiotics aren't needed, the side effects could still hurt you. A study from 2008 found that approximately 20% of Emergency Room visits were due to antibiotic related problems. The most common side effects included allergic reactions (rash), neurologic and psychiatric issues, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, yeast infection. A more serious side effect is a Clostridium Difficile infection, (aka C.Diff), that causes severe diarrhea and can lead to severe colon damage and death.

So how can we be sure whether we need an antibiotic? Doctors and urgent care clinics have special tools and training to determine this for us. We do need to know when to seek their expertise. Usually, if your symptoms get progressively worse and last longer than 7 days, you may have a bacterial infection and should visit the doctor to be examined. However, the very young and very old, or if you have other health conditions, such as asthma, COPD, heart failure, diabetes, etc. you will want to see your doctor much sooner.

What can we do in the meantime to help ease our symptoms? Get plenty of rest, and fluids if you have a fever. Treat your muscle aches and fevers with fever and pain relievers. Your local pharmacist can safely assist you in choosing the best over the counter medications to help ease your symptoms and get you and your loved ones through the worst of the sickness. Your pharmacist can also recommend products to avoid interactions with other medications or health conditions you may have. Pharmacists can also advise you when you probably should go see your doctor.

Patients and healthcare professionals must work together to avoid unnecessary use of antibiotics to help slow/prevent further resistance! Antibiotics can save lives, when used correctly. In an effort to be responsible with antibiotics, we must make sure the benefits of using antibiotics outweigh the risks of side effects and developing resistance.

References:  
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Health Research & Educational Trust (November 2017). Preventing Unnecessary Harm from Antibiotics Change Package. Chicago, IL: Health Research & Educational Trust. Accessed at [www.hret-hiin.org](http://www.hret-hiin.org).  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oct 4, 2018/Sept 10, 2018.



# Tree of Life Campaign

*Annual fundraising tradition honors someone who is gone but not forgotten*

Honoring friends and loved ones who hold a special place in our hearts and minds is the heart of the annual Tree of Life campaign at MCH&HS. A tradition that began in 1956 still continues today. Each year, a tree is placed in the hospital lobby and decorated for the holidays. The Tree is a symbol of those individuals we have lost, but whose memories are still alive. It is a time to honor someone special in our lives, like a relative or close friend, or it can be made in memory of someone who is gone, but not forgotten.

Lana Pleak, Clinics Director, takes pride in the Tree, and over the years has enjoyed the holiday display. Pleak, who has been at MCH&HS since 1982, said “The Tree of Life is a tradition we look forward to every year. Our patients and visitors enjoy coming to see the Tree and the names that adorn it that are in memory or honor of those we care deeply about.”

Last year, more than \$18,000 was raised during the campaign, which was a record over the last decade. Money is used to purchase an item the hospital needs, that will make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Last year, the funds went toward the purchase of a 3D mammography machine for the Radiology department. This year new recliners for the Med Surg floor will be purchased with money raised. “The new recliners will enhance the patient experience by providing comfort, promote a safe environment for patients and staff, and aid in the mobility of our patients. These recliners offer safety features to ensure patients are aligned properly and assist in patient transfers from bed to chair. We have been fortunate to have two of these new models on the unit and have witnessed the patients having positive outcomes. Our goal is to be a “no falls facility” and with these recliners it will aid in reaching this goal,” said Angie Livingston, Med Surg Lead.

The Tree will be up and decorated following Thanksgiving and the campaign will run through mid-January. Please consider sponsoring the Tree of Life campaign and recognize someone special in your life. Tree of Life donations may be mailed to the hospital or dropped off at the main hospital lobby.



## MCH & HEALTH SYSTEM 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL BABY EXPO

Twenty four vendors, physicians, staff members, and guests filled the conference center at MCH&HS, for the second annual Baby Expo in late September. The event, held from 9 a.m. to noon, on Saturday, September 22, was a great time for expectant or new mothers to tour the Labor and Delivery Suites and meet the delivering physicians and pediatrician on staff at MCH&HS.

“The Baby Expo gives us an opportunity to showcase our beautiful facility and the benefits of delivering at MCH&HS. We are always happy to visit with expectant mothers about this exciting time in their lives, and we want them to feel at home here. We truly believe the one-on-one care they receive at MCH&HS sets us aside from other hospitals,” said Angie Livingston, Labor & Delivery Lead.

With the arrival of new physician Dr. Paula Thielen, MCH&HS hopes the number of deliveries will grow at MCH&HS. “We have an excellent opportunity to increase the number of babies born here in town, moving forward with the addition of not only Dr. Thielen, but also Dr. Graves who will be joining our team by the end of 2018,” said Manny Wolf, President and CEO of MCH&HS. “We are ready to grow this area and look forward to the opportunity to take care of expectant mothers, and continue caring for those babies.”

The Baby Expo is an event that MCH&HS plans to sponsor every year. “The response from the community and this year’s vendors was wonderful,” said Molly Dahlgren, Marketing Lead at MCH&HS. “The conference center was packed full of 24 vendors who were excited to share information about their services. “We have a great team of delivering physicians here with Drs. Baumberger, Scott, and Thielen, and are excited to welcome Dr. Graves to the team soon. We are fortunate to have an excellent facility and team of physicians who offer OB care right here in Blair,” said Dahlgren.



From left to right - Dr. Reel, Mel Booton, RN, and Angie Livingston, RN

# Community-Wide Support at the *61st Annual MCH Auxiliary Rummage Sale*



Kim Dutton, Rummage Sale Co-Chair



Rummage Sale Volunteers Mikki Mullally, Valerie Reyes, and Co-Chair Laura Willey



Toy Department

Volunteers have been the backbone of the Auxiliary's Rummage Sale for over half a century. Over 300 volunteers helped at the sale this year, working hard to unload racks, shelving, boxes, and merchandise all in preparation of the four day sale. They come from near and far, with some coming regularly from Seattle and Houston. Many of the hospital's front desk and gift shop volunteers spend the week at the sale helping. Local businesses, such as Washington County Bank, Cargill, and Two Rivers Bank, and the hospital support the Auxiliary by supplying workers all week, and many athletes and students from area schools come to help as well. "This is an incredible event, said Kim Dutton, co-chair of the Rummage Sale. It's like a well-oiled machine with people from all over the community working together to better our hospital." In addition to volunteer labor, many companies also donate behind the

scenes. McKinnis donates dumpsters every year, SE Smith and Sons donate lumber and blocks to use as shelving, many local construction companies come with skid loaders and muscle, farmers bring their semi-trailers and trucks. Many of the local restaurants and grocery stores help feed the volunteers, in addition to the MCH&HS kitchen staff. Though the event has the Auxiliary's name front and center, it's really a community effort to make the hospital a better place. For over 60 years the Auxiliary has purchased needed items for MCH&HS. In the late 1950's and 60's, clocks, a sewing machine, curtains, kitchen equipment, mattresses, and other monetary donations to special units were gifted from Rummage Sale proceeds. In later years when the amount of money jumped substantially, they donated larger pieces of equipment including a mammography machine in

1987, a blood gas machine in 1990, a C-arm in 1994, an OBIX Fetal Monitoring system in 2010, and this year, a mobile ultrasound unit for the Emergency and Surgery Departments. The total projected amount of money raised by the Auxiliary tops \$1.4 million dollars. It would be hard pressed to find someone in our community that hasn't at one time or another been touched by the MCH Auxiliary. Through the use of donated equipment at the Hospital, shopping or donating to the Auxiliary Closet Thrift Store, experiencing the Rummage Sale, or shopping at Simply Yours hospital gift shop, many have felt the effect of the Auxiliary. Next time you see a volunteer for the Auxiliary, tell them thank you. They are the behind-the-scene gems that have put in decades of work to make this a better place!

## A Better Community, A Better You

What does a healthy community mean to you? Do you visualize the vitality of the schools, the safety of the community or the physical health of the residents? A healthy community can include a variety of things, to a lot of different people. Every three years, Memorial Community Hospital and Health System (MCH&HS) is responsible for doing a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to comply with federal rules around funding. One of the main issues determined by this assessment is the mental health of our community. MCH&HS is stepping forward to meet this need by working with the local schools and our youth.

MCH&HS is partnering with the local junior and senior high schools in Burt and Washington Counties to distribute A Better You magazine to the students. The teen years can be difficult, particularly with today's challenges. A Better You is a 10-page magazine with a series of small articles designed for the teen population. Articles such as Vaping and Juuling: A Trend on Fire, "Break Free: Releasing Anxiety's Grip", "Rude, Mean, or Worse: Always Take the Kind Road," and "Trophy-Free Self Esteem" are examples of some of the articles written solely for their age group. Not forgetting that parents need some skin in the game, there are many articles that explain how parents can help

their teens get through these sometimes difficult times. The magazine is an easy read, with many short articles, bullet-points, and images. Depending where the student goes to school, will depend on how they receive the magazine. Blair High School will be delivering and discussing the magazine to all students during health class. Arlington will be distributing the magazine to all students during their health classes or sophomore English classes. Otte Middle School, Fort Calhoun and Tekamah will also receive the magazine to distribute.

If you'd like an e-copy of the magazine, please email [lwilley@mchhs.org](mailto:lwilley@mchhs.org).



*Celebrate the holidays  
with us!*

Thursday, December 13th  
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

MCH&HS Hospital Lobby  
& Bagby/Gentry Rooms

*Enjoy holiday snacks, kids crafts, games,  
hot chocolate bar, and a selfie with Santa!*