

aspire

fall 2020

**Blair resident
thankful for the
care he received
in critical situation**



Page 3

With a mission to partner with our community to heal, nurture, and promote wellness, Memorial Community Hospital and Health System displays commitment to that mission through offerings and support of community needs.

**MCH & HEALTH
SYSTEM**

Blair • Fort Calhoun • Tekamah



Welcome to our Fall 2020 edition of *Aspire*. Since the previous publication last winter, our lives in healthcare locally, as well as worldwide, have seen changes that no one was hoping to ever have to face. Covid-19 was identified in December 2019 and by March of 2020 we found ourselves in the midst of an international medical crisis, a Pandemic of a novel coronavirus. In our region, the Covid-19 outbreak has posed critical challenges for public health, our local medical providers and caregivers as well as for many of the community partners, educators and businesses in our communities. At the same time, those same community members have provided support for our employees through large and small gestures, which have meant the world to me and to the staff at Memorial Community Hospital (MCH&HS). I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all that took part in all the various generous and helpful initiatives.

For the team here at MCH&HS, our response to COVID-19 started out with weeks filled with phone

conferences, online meetings and learning how to adapt to new information we received, on some days almost hourly. There is so much that we, as an organization, have learned from the COVID-19 crisis, including how to pull people together to make decisions quickly and implement new processes, policies and tactics rapidly. With the leadership of our Incident Command Team, we accepted the challenge head on and with lots of research of best practices as well as reliance on our Health Departments, the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as our partners in the Omaha Metro Emergency Response System. We reacted quickly to ensure the health and safety of our patients, visitors and employees. You can read specific details of this response in the article on page 3 of this publication.

On March 26th, MCH&HS suspended non-emergent surgeries and diagnostic services in order to comply with the Directed Health Measures by the Governor. This allowed us to preserve masks, gowns and other critical supplies in order to be prepared to care for the potential of a large number of COVID-19 patients. I am so thankful that while, over the months we have cared for several impacted individuals, we were never in a position where we had to overtax

our resources. During this time, we saw a flourishing of incredible teamwork as the staff of those departments with suspended services stepped up to help out in roles that were often far from what their usual duties entailed.

Since the beginning of May, surgeries and elective services have resumed with a careful eye to the safety of all involved and the availability of critical supplies. While it is unknown what the rest of the year will bring, one thing is absolutely clear in my mind, the team at MCH&HS has proven their ability and willingness to work as a strong and cohesive team. We are prepared to stay the course through the remainder of the pandemic and at the ready and even more prepared to face our next challenge.

I am hopefully anticipating what the future holds for our great community as well as for our organization. Our staff has proven that we will be here for our patients and for each other through difficult times. We are fortunate that our community members have acted to support our organization. Great things are yet to come!

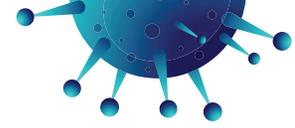
Yours sincerely,

Manny Banner



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Don't forget to schedule your exam!
Give us a call 402-426-1116 today.



Protecting the health and safety of patients and visitors during the pandemic

Efforts to safeguard others during the Covid-19 pandemic began when the outbreak initially occurred back in March. Precautionary measures such as screening all persons who enter the facility, to include temperature checks, restricting and/or limiting visitors, requiring that all persons entering our facility wear a mask and are offered one if they do not have one, and safety barriers are placed at all registration desks have all occurred and continue to be the norm today. In addition, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch surfaces within the facility and clinics has taken place, UV light for disinfection is being used, all common areas have seating available that is spaced to adhere to acceptable social distancing, and a COVID-19 phone triage line is in place for questions and treatment guidance. Over the last six months, MCH&HS has met regularly with DHHS to receive updates and strategies to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our facility and community. MCH&HS also continues to work very closely with our long term care facilities and the local health department to provide care for residents and the people in the community.

“The staff at MCH&HS continually follows our stringent cleaning protocols to ensure the safety of our patients, visitors and staff. I urge our community members to help safeguard each other by following the Directed Health Measures,” said Manny Banner, President and CEO at MCH&HS. Banner also urges the members of our communities to get tested by signing up for the

Test Nebraska COVID-19 testing by signing up at <https://www.testnebraska.com/en>.”

Messaging has been consistent during the pandemic, not only in our community, but nationwide, in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is essential for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

- Stay home if possible.
- Wash your hands often.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths).
- Keep away from people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched services.
- Avoid travel.
- Call your healthcare professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

During this pandemic, the Blair Walk-in Clinic began taking scheduled appointments for their clinic services. “We want to create a safe environment for all of our patients. In order to limit the number of patients waiting to be seen by a provider, we felt offering appointments would help control that,” said Banner. “This was just an additional measure we put in place to create an environment that was safe for those visiting.”



Test Nebraska and MCH&HS have partnered together to test the community for Covid-19 since early summer. The organizations host a drive-through testing event every Wednesday afternoon at MCH&HS. Dates are scheduled through October with the regular testing day being on Wednesday afternoons from 4-6pm. As of the end of August, Test Nebraska has tested 1,265 people at the MCH&HS site. The results are sent to St. Elizabeth’s in Lincoln by courier following the event, and we are fortunate in our area to have the results in a timely manner. Most results will be back in 72 hours, if not before.

If you are interested in getting tested for Covid-19, go to [TestNebraska.com](https://www.TestNebraska.com) to sign up for a time. Testing is free.

Every second counts in critical situation



It seemed like an ordinary summer day at the farm for Mark and Kay Petersen who live north of Blair in rural Washington County. Mark, age 58, felt fine that day and had just come in from mowing on a Sunday

afternoon in August. He sat in the living room for a while with Kay before going upstairs to clean-up. Mark had not been gone for long when Kay heard him call for her. She found Mark lying on the floor with terrible chest pains and immediately called 911. Rescue squads from both Blair and Herman were dispatched. While waiting for rescue personnel to arrive, Kay gave Mark baby aspirin and recalls having him chew it so it would get into the blood stream quicker.

The Herman and Blair rescue squads arrived at the Petersen home and acted quickly. Both teams assisted in stabilizing Mark for transport to the Blair hospital. After assessing him, the rescue team called Life Flight who immediately dispatched to Blair so they would be at the hospital when Mark arrived. While in the emergency department preparing for transport, Mark received medications to stabilize him and the nurse stayed by his side. The ER physician was on the phone with UNMC trauma staff making arrangements for Mark's arrival at their facility. As minutes and seconds mattered, it was critical for the MCH trauma team

to prepare UNMC for Mark's arrival so they would know exactly how to treat him. "If there was one word to describe how I felt while in the MCH Emergency Department, it would be safe. I felt very comfortable and well taken care of. I knew I was in good hands and the team was wonderful," said Mark.

Mark is back to work where he is a manager of Engineering at Great Plains Communications in Blair. He sees Dr. Kevin Sisk, who is new to MCH&HS, for his follow-up care and attends cardiac rehab three times a week at MCH&HS. Both Mark and Kay were glad they could schedule cardiac rehab right in town which made it more convenient for them being close to home. Mark's prognosis is good and he is anxious to get back to normal activities. He and Kay are busy grandparents, having seven grandsons and one granddaughter. The older grandkids are now playing baseball, football and soccer, so there is always a game to go to.

Thanks to the quick actions and excellent care by rescue squad members and the emergency department staff at MCH&HS, as well as Life Flight and the UNMC trauma unit, Mark plans to be around for many more ball games. They are thankful that everyone did their part to help Mark. "Everyone was in the right place, doing what they are trained to do. We are grateful and thankful for the care Mark received by all those involved and that he is on the road to a full recovery," said Kay.



For the first time in 64 years, the annual MCH Auxiliary Rummage Sale was canceled. The Covid-19 Pandemic, which has caused many long-standing events to be canceled, made the Auxiliary Board reassess what to do with all the donations that normally get sold at the annual fundraiser. The Board decided to host smaller sales in Blair to rid the storage warehouse and make room for 2021. By



doing so, they are better able to control the number of shoppers in the building at one time and enforce a mask and hand sanitizer protocol. Throughout September and October, the mini Rummage Sales will be at The American Legion and Country Tire in Blair. Both locations are within an easily walkable distance of each other and the Auxiliary Closet Thrift Store. All sales will be three-days long, on weekends, through October 10th. Much like the Rummage Sale, the smaller sales are divided into departments. There is Women's, Household, Men's, Children's, Toys, and more. For more information, please check out the MCH Auxiliary Facebook page or call the Thrift Store at 402-426-2030.

Sleep Apnea

Lying awake most nights listening to a spouse snore is not a pleasant experience. Aside from the sleep deprivation and crankiness that often ensues, worrying about a loved one throughout the night is especially difficult when he or she is snoring that is especially loud and involves gasping, choking, or snorting. Just how common is sleep apnea? Obstructive sleep apnea is estimated to affect between 2-9% of adults in the United States, but many cases are believed to go undiagnosed.

Common symptoms of sleep apnea include disrupted breathing in which a person's respiration can become labored or even stop for up to a minute at a time, excessive daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, irritability, and limited attention span or difficulty thinking clearly. Many of these symptoms arise because of poor sleep and decreased oxygen levels that occur as a result of interrupted breathing. Some additional symptoms are connected to obstructive sleep apnea, including snoring that is especially loud and involves gasping, choking, or snorting that may cause a person to briefly wake up. A person suffering from sleep apnea may also experience morning sore throat or dry mouth, and a frequent need to wake up to urinate. Chronic snoring is the most common symptom of obstructive sleep apnea, but that doesn't mean that everyone who snores has sleep apnea.

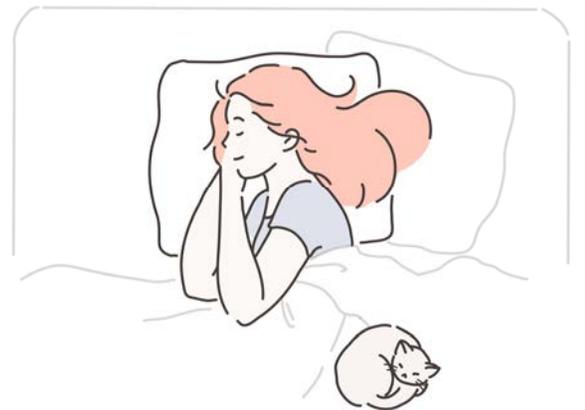
What Are the Causes of Sleep Apnea?

Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when a person's airway becomes blocked during sleep. Multiple factors have been found to increase the risk of blockage and Obstructive Sleep Apnea: Anatomical characteristics certainly have an impact. For instance, the size and positioning of a person's neck, jaw, tongue, tonsils, and other tissue near the back of the throat can directly affect airflow. Obesity also contributes to Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Being overweight is a leading cause of sleep apnea and may be an underlying risk factor in up to 60% of cases. Use of sedatives, including alcohol, family history, cigarette smoking, sleeping on your back, nasal congestion and hormonal abnormalities have also been determined as contributing factors. The Cardiopulmonary department at MCH&HS has a Sleep Lab where those who feel they may be suffering from sleep apnea can go to be evaluated. A patient must first meet with his or her primary care physician for a sleep study referral. Once an order is issued, the patient is scheduled for an in-home sleep study, where they come in for instruction on how to set up at home. Once the in-home study is complete, the patient returns the results to the cardiopulmonary team where they are evaluated. The patient will be called within 3-10 days with the results and whether obstructive sleep apnea is present. If it is, an overnight stay will be scheduled in the Sleep Lab where they will be monitored all night long. A sleep technician will stay with the patient all night to monitor them. From there,



Angie Rosenbaum, Lead Respiratory Therapist

“Sleep apnea is a growing area of concern that can cause so many more medical issues for a person if they do not get the necessary treatment.”



depending on the results, the patient will be set up with home healthcare to assist with the appropriate CPAP machine.

“Sleep apnea is a growing area of concern that can cause so many more medical issues for a person if they do not get the necessary treatment. At MCH&HS we are so fortunate to have two beautiful rooms as part of our Sleep Lab where testing is done, along with the ability to also perform home sleep testing for our patients,” said Angie Rosenbaum, Lead Respiratory Therapist at MCH&HS.

Memorial Community Hospital and Health System Announces Senior Life Solutions Partnership

MCH&HS recently partnered with Senior Life Solutions, an intensive outpatient therapy program designed to meet the needs of senior adults struggling with symptoms of depression and anxiety, stress from age-related health concerns, or difficult life transitions such as the loss of a loved one. The program's office is located on the hospital's main campus in the former Home Health office at 718 North 21st Street, just south of the Emergency Room entrance.

Senior Life Solutions patients are typically seen in groups; however, they also provide individual and family therapy. Individuals may benefit from the Senior Life Solutions program if they are experiencing indicators or triggers of depression and anxiety such as the following:

- Recently experienced a traumatic event
- Lost a spouse or close family member
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Changes in appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of energy
- Feelings of sadness or grief lasting more than two weeks
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness



Therapist Meadow Scott,
LIMHP, MSW



Program Director
Holly Mackie, RN



Following an individual assessment, patients meet up to three times per week in a supportive, encouraging group setting. The program staff includes a board-certified psychiatrist, licensed social worker, a registered nurse, and other healthcare professionals dedicated to the emotional well-being of the seniors in our community. Referrals to the program can be made by anyone, including a patient's physician, family member, the patient them self, or another healthcare professional. The Senior Life Solutions program is open to medicare beneficiaries, whether living at home or in a long term care facility, and is available in any of the communities that MCH&HS serves. For more information call 402-533-4448.

Dr. Kevin Sisk joined MCH&HS in June, and works at the Blair and Fort Calhoun Clinics. He specializes in Family Medicine and Obstetrics.

Prior to joining the team at MCH&HS, Dr. Sisk was deployed as a Family Medicine and OB Physician at Bagram AF, Afghanistan and as an OB Physician at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Prior to that, Dr. Sisk was a Junior Faculty Member at the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Medicine.

Dr. Sisk began his education at Texas Tech University where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics with a concentration in Mechanical Engineering. He went on to receive his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from the University of North Texas Health Science Center and completed his residency at Ehrling Bergquist Family Medicine Residency Program at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Dr. Sisk also completed a Fellowship in Advanced Obstetrics at the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Medicine. In addition to being an Osteopathic physician, his licenses and certifications include Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Advanced Life Support Obstetrics, and he is also a certified instructor for the Neonatal Resuscitation Program.

Dr. Sisk and his wife Megan have six children and have made their home in rural Blair.





“My passion for the MCH Foundation comes from my family.”

MCH Foundation

The MCH Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that was established in 2000 for the purpose of furthering the work of MCH&HS. The mission of the Foundation is to secure and serve as a steward of charitable gifts and bequests that further the mission of MCH&HS. Governed by a local board of directors, the MCH Foundation seeks and accepts charitable contributions from individuals, businesses, corporations and other foundations to assist the hospital in providing excellent healthcare to the communities it serves.

Through generous gifts, memorials and donations, the MCH Foundation has been able to enhance services that benefit MCH&HS and the communities it serves. The Foundation recently donated to the hospital's purchase of a 3D mammography machine which has made a significant impact on patient care and the screening for breast cancer. This purchase is just one example of the group adhering to its mission to further the work of NCH&HS.

“The MCH Foundation is blessed to receive gifts large and small, as well as combined gifts, from donors who recognize the importance of local health care. These gifts will ensure that quality care is here for future generations,” said Emily Petersen, MCH Foundation Board Chairman. Petersen has served on the board since 2013 and has been Chairman for many of those years. For her, serving the community in this capacity is rewarding. “My passion for the MCH Foundation comes from my family. My parents were committed to serving our community and supported MCH&HS because they recognized the importance of quality, local healthcare. I am honored to carry on their work through my involvement on the Foundation,” said Petersen.

Gifts given to the MCH Foundation can be targeted towards specific areas such as patient care or technology. They can also be undesignated so the Foundation may use the funds for areas of greatest need. All gifts, no matter the size, will ensure quality care for future generations.



Senior Life Solutions (SLS) is dedicated to addressing the emotional and behavioral health of adults typically over the age of 65. In honor of Suicide Awareness Month, the SLS team in Blair tied a teal and purple ribbon around the tree in front of their office. Shown are Program Director Holly Mackie, RN, Licensed Therapist Meadow Scott, LICSW, and Office Coordinator Tonia Harper.



MCH&HS Employees Give Back to the Community

Two separate blood drives for the American Red Cross were hosted this summer at MCH&HS. More than 30 employees signed up for each drive, resulting in a full schedule. Together, the drives successfully were able to get 47 units of blood and possibly saved 141 people. As an added bonus, the American Red Cross announced they were going to test for Covid-19 antibodies, which was free to the donor.



BABY EXPO

The year 2020 has proven so far to be a year of change. With Covid 19, processes have had to be altered and modified in order to keep our environment safer for patients, visitors and our employees. The annual Baby Expo is no exception to this. This year marks the event's fourth year, and with it, comes changes to the regular format. The Expo will be held Saturday, October 3, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. This year, guests must call to reserve a time for a tour of the Labor & Delivery Suites. During that time, expectant mothers may meet delivering physicians Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov and Dr. Kevin Sisk and sign up to win prizes, including an Ingenuity bouncy seat, Graco Pack n Play and Safety 1st car seat. All guests will receive a bag full of information and goodies from vendors who are supporting the event. A bonus this year will be a free gift just for attending – your choice of a Soundspa Lullaby or Simple Serve bottle warmer. For questions about the Expo or to reserve a time, please contact the marketing department at 402-426-1464 or 402-426-1494.



Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov



Dr. Kevin Sisk



Drawings for:
Ingenuity Bouncy Seat
Graco Pack n Play
Safety 1st Go & Grow Car Seat

Prizes • Goodie Bags • Drawings

MCH & HEALTH SYSTEM
LABOR & DELIVERY

Your choice when you sign up for a tour!



Mybaby Soundspa Lullaby



The First Years 2-in-1 Simple Serve Bottle Warmer