

aspire

winter 2021



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**Memorial Community
Hospital & Health System**

Blair • Fort Calhoun • Tekamah

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.



Manny Banner, President & CEO

While 2020 was not the year any of us could have anticipated, it was the year in which our staff distinguished themselves for creatively and selflessly doing whatever was needed to be accomplished in order to keep our patients and their families safe and cared for during this nationwide pandemic. Looking forward to 2021, it will be a year of hope and a year to recover, regroup and refresh for our organization, as well as for the communities that we serve.

Our new brand, which you will read about later in this publication, kicked off on Jan. 1. This has given a fresh new look to our organization, and we will continue to provide our signature quality and personalized care to our patients, close to home.

As a great start to the year for two area families and MCH, we welcomed our first two births of the year in January 2021. The deliveries happened to occur within 15 minutes of one another! Dr. Sandra Baumberger and Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov delivered

our two new additions to the community.

Clinically, our first priorities in 2021 revolve around providing vaccines to community members as quickly and efficiently as possible. The vaccines are a science-based effort to slow and hopefully stop this virus that has disrupted our lives for the last 14 months. Vaccination clinics are underway. The vaccines are being administered in a prescribed order to our most vulnerable community members and eventually to all that wish to receive one. Our charge is to administer all vaccines that are allotted to our county within the same week. All doses that arrive at MCH at the beginning of the week are being distributed to community members by the end of the week.

This vaccination effort is possible in part through a partnership with Angels Share, who has so graciously allowed us to utilize their facilities on the former Dana campus to hold our vaccine clinics. Both clinical and administrative staff from our health system are collaborating together to make the logistics of the vaccinations as efficient as possible. Parallel with this effort, we are continuing to partner with Three Rivers Public Health Department and the Washington County Recycling Center to hold a weekly TestNebraska event here in Blair. Additionally, COVID-19 testing, including rapid testing, has also become more available in our own clinics.

Both the vaccine clinics and the TestNebraska site would not be possible without the dedication of our team members and employees. My heartfelt thanks goes out to each of them for all the tremendous and tireless work in battling this pandemic.

As conditions have allowed us to resume services, our General Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Oncology as well as Obstetric and Gynecologic services are reaching new heights. We continue to be able to provide chemotherapy in Blair and are able to provide top quality surgical skill for patients to receive knee, hip and shoulder replacements with personalized aftercare locally. New moms enjoy the safety and restfulness of one-on-one care in our Labor and Delivery department in ways that are impossible in larger metro facilities. In short, MCH is THE place to receive top quality, personalized care!

I look forward to what we will be able to accomplish in 2021 at MCH and in our communities that we serve. We are here for you and appreciate our community being supportive of us and each other. I want to hear from you, so don't hesitate to contact me at mbanner@mchhs.org.

Respectfully yours,

Manny Banner

Little Blessings

Arrive at MCH to Welcome 2021



Meah Marie-Lynn Robins



Alexander Elias Enns

MCH has a long-standing tradition of honoring the first baby of the new year. This year was different when 2021's first babies arrived within minutes of each other on a blustery Friday evening on Jan. 15.

Dr. Sandra Baumberger first delivered a little girl, Meah Marie-Lynn Robins, weighing 7 pounds, 12 ounces and measuring 20 ½ inches, at 8:39 p.m. Meah is the daughter of Genie Burgmeyer and Joshua Robins. Just a bit later in the evening, Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov delivered a little boy, Alexander Elias Enns, at 8:54 p.m. Alexander weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces and measured 21 inches long. He is the son of Janee and Jason Enns. Welcome to the world little ones!

Dr. Kevin Sisk, the newest physician to join the MCH team, also offers obstetrical care, along with Dr. Thielen-Kocharov and Dr. Baumberger. Dr. Sisk sees patients at both the Blair and Fort Calhoun Clinics.



Dr. Baumberger

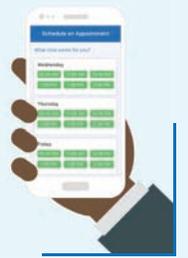


Dr. Sisk



Dr. Thielen-Kocharov

MyChart: Your Medical Chart in Your Hands



MyChart is an easy-to-use computer platform with all your health information located in one place. It is easily accessible on your computer or tablet to see your medications, test results, upcoming appointments, medical bills, and more. By registering for an account on MyChart, you can reach your medical information at any time, any day of the week.

MCH has offered MyChart as a part of our patient experience since 2015. By joining MyChart, the results of your visit will appear on your page as soon as they are available. Another great feature of MyChart is any facility that participates with MyChart can also see your information. For example, if you have an initial appointment at MCH, then a follow up with a specialist at a CHI hospital, the doctor can see your health information and history if you participate in MyChart.

Registration staff at MCH are working hard to offer MyChart to all patients that come to our hospital. At check in, you will receive a flyer explaining what MyChart is and how to sign up. The nurse that assists with your appointment can sign you up on the spot or you can use the information on the flyer to set up your account at home.

MyChart is just another way MCH is helping bridge the information gap and timeline for you to get your health data.

OUR COVID EXPERIENCE

by Molly Dahlgren



Usually when I put on my writing cap, I do so as the marketing representative for the hospital. This time, as a family member who witnessed first-hand the effects of COVID and the urgent care my husband received after Christmas, as it did a lot of people. Our symptoms varied, ranging from barely any at all to a 17% oxygen level. Most part we were able to quarantine and treat symptoms at home. Two of our children came home on day 12 and 14 of COVID, after Dan was released from quarantine to go back to work, he began to experience

"I believe I contracted the COVID virus around Dec. 26. After a family member tested positive following the holiday, my wife Molly and I signed up for testing on Dec. 29. I had some of the COVID symptoms right away. This included loss of taste and body aches. Molly had a very slight dry cough and that was about all she ever experienced. We were tested on Dec. 30 and got the positive results back the next day. We quarantined and I treated symptoms with over the counter medications. We monitored our temperature and neither of us ever had a fever.

On the day I was released to return to work, I did not feel much better, so I stayed home. We became more concerned that my condition was not improving, so we scheduled appointment with my PA, Dana McCabe, on Jan. 11. Again, we monitored my temperature through the next few days, and it never elevated. My cough remained, but wasn't any worse than the previous few days. On the day of my appointment, Molly came home from work to take me. Still no fever, however, that morning I felt worse than I had the previous 14 days. We promptly made the decision to head directly to the Emergency Room at MCH rather than drive to my appointment in Fort Calhoun.

Upon arrival at the Emergency Department, we waited just a few minutes for personnel to get their COVID PPE on and went inside. The nurse who led me in the ER, Bob, seemed to know right away that I was struggling and took charge. He got me in an examination room right away and checked my oxygen level; it was at 60% (Normal pulse oximeter readings usually range from 95

to 100 percent. Values under 90 percent are considered low.). Bob immediately put me on oxygen and got my levels up to 85%. Just that shift in my oxygen made me feel much better. I'm not sure I have seen someone act as quickly as he did, and all I could do was thank him. The other staff that were there started an IV and began my breathing treatment. Dr. Birdwell was engaged within a few minutes and immediately ordered a scan of my lungs. It was like a pit crew working on a car at the racetrack. It makes me kind of emotional writing this, because within just a few minutes, all of these people were doing so much for me. And again, all I could do was say thank you through my oxygen mask.

The scan showed viral pneumonia in both lungs. Dr. Birdwell explained what was going on and that I would most likely be getting transferred to an Omaha hospital for ongoing treatment. He even warned me that this virus could require several weeks of hospitalization and treatment. It was 17 days later that I was well enough to go home and leave CHI Immanuel.

I want to thank Dr. Birdwell, Bob, and all the others that helped me when I arrived at the ER on Jan. 11, including Kathy and Haley in the ED, and Shelby from Diagnostics who performed the scan of my lungs. I know I have left individuals out and I apologize. Everyone was working so fast it was hard to remember who all did what. But again, I want to thank them for their professionalism and for the care I received. I am forever very grateful. Again, I say thank you."

Dan Dahlgren

EXPERIENCE

...time, I am writing from a different perspective – and Dan received at MCH. COVID hit my family just 7-day hospital stay, mostly in ICU, for Dan. For the time to quarantine in our basement. Then, between the experience shortness of breath. Here is his story.



I feel very blessed to work at MCH. For me it is easy to promote the services we have and the excellent care our professionals offer every day because I know these individuals and have the pleasure of working with them. This time, though, was different. I witnessed the care in an emergency situation first hand when Dan's health was in their hands. COVID is a scary illness and we learned during our experience that this virus affects everyone differently, and that things can change quickly and head in the wrong direction fast. Not everyone experiences mild symptoms and there is no rhyme or reason as to who will be hit the hardest. I am thankful for the MCH Emergency team's quick action in treating Dan. I knew he was in good hands, but the fear of a loved one being that ill is very frightening. Dan is home now and continues to recover while undergoing pulmonary rehab at MCH. It has been quite a journey, and we will forever be thankful for the care he has received at MCH.

Vaccinating our community



As soon as MCH received word they were getting the Covid-19 vaccine from Moderna, a much anticipated and well-thought-out strategic plan went into play. Following state and local health department guidelines, MCH began vaccinating healthcare workers on the front lines in mid-December. One hundred-eighty-eight shots were given out in December to those in Tier 1A.



As vaccination efforts slowed for those individuals in Tier 1A, actions were taken to begin vaccinating the public. Following guidelines from Three Rivers Public Health Department, Tier 1B was next, which included starting with those age 75 and older. Community members who signed up on the Three Rivers website for the vaccine were first to be called. The first vaccination clinics



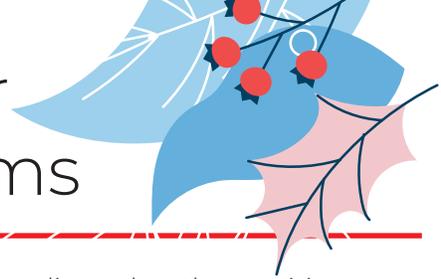
were held on Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 at the hospital, vaccinating 100, then 150 people respectively.

In early February, MCH received word that 200 doses would be arriving to be used in a vaccination clinic on Feb. 11. Because of the increase in doses, vaccination clinics going forward would be held at the Gardner-Hawks Center on the former Dana College campus. MCH will continue to receive an allocation from Three Rivers Public Health Department, but quantity may vary week to week.

“What we've learned is we have to be flexible. Information changes weekly and dose availability changes frequently so we have to be able to be flexible to meet the current demand. So far we're doing a great job and the public is still signing up in full. We want everyone to know that if your name is on the list we will call as doses are available,” said Keala Roy, Emergency Department Manager and Trauma Nurse Coordinator at MCH.

To sign up to be vaccinated, please visit the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Portal at vaccinate.ne.gov.

The Benefits of a Pulse Oximeter for Monitoring COVID-19 Symptoms



Who would have imagined that a global pandemic, caused by a coronavirus would ravage the globe? If you're unfortunate enough to develop COVID-19, it's important to monitor your symptoms closely. With COVID-19 the risk of developing pneumonia that makes oxygenation of your blood difficult. If the oxygen content of your blood drops too low, it's risky to your health. One tool that health care centers use to monitor oxygen levels in the blood is a pulse oximeter and these are available for home use too.

How Does a Pulse Oximeter Work?

A pulse oximeter is an apparatus that measures the amount of oxygen, or oxygen saturation, in your bloodstream and also your heart rate. A rapid heart rate can also be a sign that blood oxygen levels are dropping, so it's helpful to monitor both. The device is electronic and clips easily to a finger.



Because of how easy they are to use, more people are adding a home pulse oximeter to their medicine cabinet, and it's not just for people who have COVID-19. If you or a family member has any lung disease, it's a useful way to monitor lung function.

However, a pulse oximeter can be useful if you have COVID. It's a way to ensure your lung function isn't declining to the point that you need hospitalization. One criterion doctors use for referring a patient to the emergency room is a low oxygen saturation or symptoms of low oxygen saturation such as shortness of breath.

What is Normal Oxygen Saturation?

To know whether your oxygen saturation is too low, you first must know what's normal. A healthy person has an oxygen saturation of 95% to 98%. When determining whether a patient needs immediate evaluation, doctors usually use a cut-off of around 90%. If oxygen saturation falls below 90%, it's a signal your body isn't getting enough oxygen and you need immediate evaluation.

However, what's normal may vary slightly with the individual. People who have pre-existing lung disease may already have a lower than normal oxygen saturation because their body has adapted to low levels of oxygen. So, these folks may not need supplementary oxygen until oxygen saturation drops even lower than 90%, although this is something only your doctor can tell you based on your history. It's always better to be

conservative and seek help earlier rather than waiting too long. If you think you have COVID-19, you should also get a test to be sure and take the advice your doctor gives since they know your history.

COVID-19 and Oxygen Saturation

COVID-19 can cause pneumonia, inflammation of the lungs that reduces the amount of oxygen that enters your bloodstream. If your oxygen saturation too low, you need to be on oxygen to raise your blood oxygen level. Sometimes, oxygen saturation may continue to fall to the point that a person needs mechanical ventilation. Monitoring oxygen saturation using a pulse oximeter is a way to know if that's happening to you.

When your oxygen saturation drops, you might feel short-of-breath, anxious, sweaty, lightheaded, or confused, but some people who have a low oxygen saturation have few symptoms. The only way they become aware is by seeing that their oxygen saturation has dropped. Some people with COVID-19 have "silent hypoxia," where they don't feel short-of-breath, yet their oxygen saturation is too low. Using a pulse oximeter is a way to monitor for silent hypoxia, so you can get treatment as early as possible.

Oxygen Saturation is Only Part of the Picture

COVID-19 can present in a variety of ways and affects many organs of the body, including the lungs, kidneys, brain, heart, and pancreas. So make sure you follow your doctor's guidelines on when to go to the emergency room. Keep track of your pulse oximeter readings too, so you can share them with the health care professionals who evaluate you.

The Bottom Line

If you buy a pulse oximeter for home use, purchase from a reputable supplier. Make sure you know how to use it properly. There's always the risk of getting faulty readings that send you to the emergency room when your oxygen saturation is normal or give you a false sense of security when your reading appears normal and it's too low. Avoid smartphone apps that measure oxygen saturation. There's not enough evidence to say these apps work, and they may give you false readings. That's why not all practitioners recommend them. In any case, don't use a pulse oximeter as a substitute for medical evaluation.

References:
AARP.org. "Your Lungs, Heart, Brain and More: How Coronavirus Attacks the Body". Health.com. "Pulse Oximeters May Be Helpful For People With COVID-19--Here's What to Know Before You Buy One". BMJ 2020; 371 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4151> (Published 27 October 2020)

Annual Tree of Life Campaign



MCH's annual Tree of Life campaign set a record high in donations, raising nearly \$19,000 this year! The money is being used to purchase a new bed for the Labor and Delivery department.

The Tree of Life Campaign gives others an opportunity to sponsor the "Holiday Tree," located in the MCH main lobby, in honor of a close friend or relative, or someone special that is gone but not forgotten. This year, the tree was adorned in red, silver and white ornaments. A large Christmas card was placed next to the tree displaying the names of all donors and those being remembered and honored.

Supporting Our Seniors

MCH had the opportunity to give back to the community during the holiday season and spread some much-needed cheer during a challenging year. Nearly 300 blankets were given as Christmas gifts to area nursing home residents in Blair, Fort Calhoun and Tekamah. This has become somewhat of a tradition for MCH, but this year the gift giving had an added twist. MCH employees were given the opportunity to purchase the blankets to be given to the residents. MCH employees were eager to participate in this activity as a way to brighten the holiday season for those in the care facilities.

The Senior Life Solutions team at MCH also found a way to give back during the holiday season by hosting a gift drive for seniors in the community during the month of December. Enough items were collected to make 35 gift bags with multiple items in each. Twenty four of the gift bags went to the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging's (ENOA) Meals on Wheels recipients and the rest of the gifts were sent to Good Shepherd Lutheran Home.



Auxiliary donates \$16,000



The MCH Auxiliary donated \$16,000 from the mini-Rummage Sales and thrift store proceeds toward the purchase of new inpatient mattresses and TV's. This will improve the patient experience at MCH. Thank you to the Auxiliary!



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810 N 22nd St. | Blair, NE 68008

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Introducing Our New Look!

MCH introduced a new look at the beginning of January. I'm sure you have seen our new logo displayed in the newspaper, social media, and on printed materials by now. On average, businesses rebrand about every 10 years, a process that often involves restyling the color palettes, logos, photographic style and visual language. While there's often one main reason, a combination of factors can motivate a rebrand. In MCH's case, a more recognizable name and updated look was our motivation. Much time and consideration was given to the design process and we are very pleased with the outcome and final design, including the added colors. We hope you find it pleasing as well and that it reminds you of MCH's mission... to partner with our community to heal, nurture, and promote wellness.

