

aspire

Winter 2021



**Celebration for
Dr. Bagby**
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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.



As we are concluding 2021, despite our sincere hopes, Coronavirus has not been defeated but we have gained a high level of expertise in caring for our patients that have been affected by COVID-19. At MCH, we're always focused on how we can meet your needs, and I'm proud of the work we've done with the community.

It is my true belief that I am not alone in looking toward this coming year with a sense of hope. After almost two years of affecting everyday life with restrictions, new regulations and new outbreaks, it is my hope that in the near future, we can finally begin returning to normal, albeit a little different from the normal we are used to. The pandemic will continue to shape life for the next year and it will probably be remembered as one of the more significant historical events.

For healthcare providers that are currently in the workforce I predict that the pandemic will remain in their memories as the most significant event in their professional lives, bringing us bed shortages and staff and material shortages that affect our work every day.

MCH will continue to lead by example when it comes to COVID boosters. We will continue to advocate for evidence-based practices, such as vaccines, to keep our patients and our communities safe. We need to

help protect our community and together we can do that by becoming fully vaccinated and receiving the booster when we are eligible.

Over the last two years we have found ways to manage the care of COVID-19 patients, while at the same time caring for our patients with other health conditions. We have also continued to encourage wellness and screening in order to continue efforts of prevention and early detection.

Even as we continue to navigate the unprecedented challenges brought to us by the pandemic, we have to continue to move forward and plan for the future. We will keep an eye toward expanding access to care in the communities we serve with expanded and promoted access to behavioral healthcare services, as well as additional service offerings as the year unfolds.

Recruitment and retention of staff in a range of roles across our organization will continue to be a top priority. MCH is offering a number of recruitment and retention incentives that will help us keep our valuable staff and recruit the right individuals into open positions. If you have always wanted to join our team at MCH, this may be the right time to become a member of our wonderful hospital system.

Wishing you a healthy and happy 2022.

Sincerely,

Manuela Banner

MDsave Offers Predictable Upfront Pricing



MCH's partnership with MDsave has proven to be beneficial for many patients who have used the program. MDsave offers those seeking medical treatment another way to buy medical services. Through MDsave, your providers can give you one upfront, easy to understand price, which includes the most common fees that go along with your procedure. This means no surprise bills for you later on!

Here's how MDsave works. Just like shopping online, you pay for your procedure upfront and receive a voucher as proof of purchase. When you prepay through MDsave, your medical provider is able to offer special pricing on the same quality care because it makes the billing process much more efficient. Based on your individual care needs, you may require additional treatment which will be billed separately from your purchased procedure. If you do need additional services at the time of care, you also may be able to purchase them through MDsave. It is important that you discuss this with your financial counselor or registration representative.

Who is eligible for MDsave? Those frequently benefitting from MDsave are people with a high deductible or high co-pay plan, or those who are uninsured. The MDsave program can give you a fair, upfront price for your procedure, which may be even lower than you would pay with your insurance. MDsave is for out of pocket



purchases and does not file claims with your insurance company of accept Medicare or Medicaid. If you have a deductible, your insurance company will decide if your MDsave purchase will count towards it.

For many patients, MDsave has been a wonderful option. "I was so grateful to the administrative person in the radiology department at the hospital who told me about MDsave and how it could benefit me. I paid right at registration. They took my credit card and honored the voucher, and off I went to get the MRI," said a patient and MDsave user. If you are interested in learning more about the MDsave program, please visit mksave.com/memorial-community-hospital.



Cleanliness Advances at MCH

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, is a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill, signed on March 27, 2020, in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Memorial Community Hospital and Health System (MCH) was a recipient of CARES Act funding and utilized the funds to improve our hospital. The coronavirus taught us to prepare and respond in a different way and to consider future pandemic needs. MCH replaced an aging HVAC system, allowing for better air filtration throughout the facility and Med Air was added in patient rooms. Also obtained was a new Bipap machine, UV sanitizing equipment, no-touch ice machines in patient areas, a floor scrubber, and many more items. A large project that was able to happen due to the additional funding was the installation of new hard flooring to replace carpet throughout most of the hospital. This will increase our infection prevention measures. All of these investments have been made with the safety of our employees and patients in mind and will last well into the future.

Asthma & the FLU

Other Preventive Actions for People with Asthma

There are many preventative actions for people with Asthma. In addition to getting a flu vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine, people with asthma should take the same everyday preventive actions CDC recommends for everyone, including avoiding people who are sick, covering coughs, and washing hands often. Additional health actions for people with asthma include taking asthma medication exactly as prescribed, knowing how to use your asthma inhaler if your doctor or other medical professional tells you to use one, planning ahead to maintain sufficient supplies of your regular medications for chronic medical conditions (e.g., at least a 2-week supply), and knowing and avoiding the asthma triggers that can cause you to have an asthma attack.

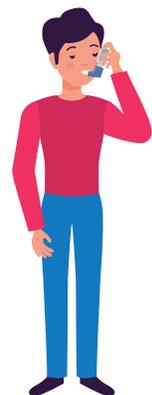
People with asthma are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, even if their asthma is mild or their symptoms are well-controlled by medication. People with asthma can develop swollen and sensitive airways, and flu can cause further inflammation of the airways and lungs. Flu infections can trigger asthma attacks and a worsening of asthma symptoms. Flu also can lead to pneumonia and other acute respiratory diseases. In fact, adults and children with asthma are more likely to develop pneumonia after getting sick with flu than people who do not have asthma. Asthma is the most common medical condition among children hospitalized with flu and one of the more common medical conditions among adults hospitalized with flu.

A Flu Shot is the Best Protection Against Flu

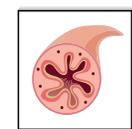
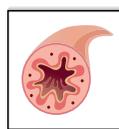
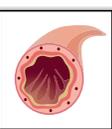
Flu vaccination is especially important for people with asthma because they are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications. Flu vaccines are updated each season to keep up with changing viruses. Also, immunity wanes over a year so annual vaccination is needed to ensure the best possible protection against flu. Everyone 6 months of age and older needs a flu vaccine and immunity from flu vaccination sets in after about two weeks after getting vaccinated.



What is Asthma?



TRIGGERS



SYMPTOMS



Wheezing



Cough



Shortness of Breath



Common Cold



Chest Pain



Night Cough



Difficulty Breathing



Tachycardia



Dyspnea

Symptoms and Treatment

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than in adults. People may be infected with flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

Because you are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, if you get sick with flu symptoms call your health care provider right away. There are antiviral drugs that can treat flu illness and prevent serious flu complications.

HOW IS ASTHMA DIAGNOSED?

An asthma diagnosis is based on several factors, including a detailed medical history, a physical exam, your symptoms, and overall health and test results.

ASTHMA TREATMENT

Treatment usually involves learning to recognize your triggers and taking steps to avoid them.



Medication



Inhaler

Article taken from CDC.gov. For more information please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/asthma.htm>

Employees Recognized for Outstanding performance

Every year MCH recognizes employees for their outstanding performance. Three awards are given: Employee of the Year, Manager of the Year, and Provider of the Year. MCH would like to congratulate the following individuals for their accomplishments during 2021:

Donas Charbonneau, RN - Employee of the Year (Emergency Department)

Kim Ruengert, MHA, BSMT - Manager of the Year (Laboratory)

Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov - Provider of the Year (Blair Clinic and Cottonwood Clinic)



Donas Charbonneau



Kim Ruengert



Dr. Paula Thielen-Kocharov



Farewell to Lois Jensen

Lois is a Master Gardener and has been caring for the Healing Garden at MCH since it was built in 2008. Her countless hours and dedication to the Garden are appreciated by the staff and all who have visited and enjoyed the Healing Garden and Railroad over the years.

Thank you Lois!

Lois is shown with Dr. K.C. "Doc" Bagby in the Healing Garden.



65th Anniversary celebration and special recognition for Dr. Bagby

MCH celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2021 and hosted a gathering in October, welcoming many guests. Along with this celebration, Dr. K.C. Bagby was remembered at a special dedication ceremony of the Healing Garden Railroad. Known better as "Doc" in the community, he had a great impact not only on those at MCH, but on those whose lives he touched. Doc had a love of trains and spent many hours working on the Railroad and making sure the trains were up and running. He spearheaded the building of the Railroad at MCH when the hospital was renovated years ago. An appropriate sculpture was created that is now on display in the Garden for everyone to enjoy.

Orthopedic Team Expanding



Dr. Daniel Ocel will be joining the orthopedic team at MCH during the first quarter of 2022, adding to services currently provided by Dr. Steven Kitchen and Dr.

Thomas Saylor. He is a board-certified Orthopaedic Surgeon and fellowship trained in foot and ankle reconstructive surgery, and also practices in general orthopaedics and sports medicine. Dr. Ocel's treatment philosophy focuses on compassionate, individualistic care. "In my years of experience, I have found that similar injuries may affect people in a different manner. Therefore, careful attention to each patient's condition remains a cornerstone of my care of the orthopaedic patient," said Dr. Ocel. He is a member of the Colorado Medical Society, American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Dr. Ocel served our country for three years as head of Orthopaedic Surgery at Naval Hospital in Corpus Christi. He received the Naval-Marine Corp Commendation medal for his military service. Dr. Ocel moved with his family to Sydney, Australia to continue his medical education, where he completed a fellowship in foot and ankle surgery with Dr. Martin Sullivan, Australia's premier foot and ankle surgeon. During his fellowship, Dr. Ocel cared for many of Sydney's top professional athletes, including Australian Olympic athletes competing in the summer games of 2004. Dr. Ocel completed his fellowship with Dr. Robert Anderson at the Miller Clinic in Charlotte, NC.

His areas of interest include the leg, foot and ankle, arthroscopic surgery, foot reconstruction, fractures, regenerative medicine, physical therapy, sports medicine, and total joint replacement.

When Dr. Ocel is not performing a surgery or on a medical mission trip to Cambodia with the Cornerstone Foundation, he loves spending times with his wife and children, as well as golfing and playing soccer.

Duxbury joins OB team

Dr. Amanda Duxbury joined MCH as a Family Medicine Physician in September. Having a passion for women's health and Obstetrics, Dr. Duxbury has completed a Fellowship in Advanced OB.



Dr. Duxbury obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Genetics, Cell Biology and Development from the University of Minnesota and her Doctor of Medicine from the University of South Dakota, Sanford School of Medicine. She then attended the St. Joseph Family Medicine Residency Program in Denver, specializing in Family Medicine, followed by a Primary Care Maternity Care Fellowship as part of the St. Joseph Family Medicine program.

Prior to joining MCH, Dr. Duxbury practiced as a Family Medicine Physician at Sanford Health in Vermillion, SD where she provided full spectrum care specializing in Obstetrics. She has expertise in performing multiple in office procedures including vasectomy, colposcopy, and contraceptive management (IUD/Nexplanon placement). Dr. Duxbury is certified with the American Board of Family Medicine.



What is Swing Bed Care?

A Swing Bed program is a type of nursing program that offers transitional care to patients. The program allows hospitals to "swing" a patient between acute care and skilled nursing. The room itself doesn't physically change, rather the care changes to better fit the needs of the patient. A Swing Bed program allows for the patient to continue to recovery from their acute illness or surgery before discharging to another setting or returning home.

Transitional care or "Swing Bed" programs are typically offered in smaller communities where critical access hospitals are located. The program includes highly skilled health care professionals that work with the patient and family to obtain best possible outcomes. MCH is a critical access hospital that participates in Medicare that has been approved to provide post-hospital, skilled nursing care. All patient rooms at MCH are private.

MCH offers the following services as part of its Swing Bed program:

- 24-hour Skilled Nursing Care
- Wound Care
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- 24-hour Respiratory Therapy
- Case Management – Discharge planning
- IV Antibiotic Infusions
- 24-hour Hospitalist/Physician
- Dietician

Many patients may benefit from MCH's Swing Bed program including orthopedic and joint replacement patients who need frequent physical and/or occupational therapy, patients requiring wound care and/or intravenous antibiotics, and patients with weakness and/or deconditioning due to COPD, CHF, pneumonia and other acute conditions. Questions about MCH's Swing Bed program may be directed to Keala Roy, Director of Nursing, at 402-426-1401.

Covid Continues its Wrath

By Kaylee Smith, BSN RN
Infection Preventionist and Quality Improvement Specialist

In fall and winter of 2020, the COVID surge of hospitalizations did not escalate to what was anticipated. Unfortunately, this holiday season is looking a lot different. Let's take a look at some COVID statistics for Nebraska as of mid-December 2021.

Hospitalizations of those not vaccinated for 2021: 4565
Hospitalizations of those fully vaccinated for 2021: 555
COVID deaths of those not vaccinated: 1302
COVID deaths of those fully vaccinated: 209
Percentage of fully vaccinated in the state: 59%
Percentage of fully vaccinated in Washington County: 53%



Vaccines are an ongoing hot topic. Whatever your personal beliefs are about the vaccines, the numbers do not lie. The amount of hospitalizations for unvaccinated citizens compared to fully vaccinated citizens is significantly higher. While you can still get COVID after being vaccinated, it has been found the symptoms are milder and there is less risk of being hospitalized. If you have been vaccinated, it is time to start considering getting your booster dose, especially with the unknowns surrounding the new Omicron variant. It is recommended that you receive a booster of the same vaccine you initially received, but it has been approved to mix vaccines. The booster dose is half the dose of the initial doses. If you are immunosuppressed it is recommended you receive a third dose (it will be a full dose).

The Delta variant is still considered the dominant strain in Nebraska as of mid-December. The Omicron variant is being investigated and it is a fluid situation. It may be more transmissible than Delta, but the symptoms may be milder. A lot is unknown about the Omicron variant and more information will be released in the coming weeks.

Please continue to take precautions. Wear a mask when indoors, wash your hands frequently, and stay home when you are feeling sick. The hospital systems in Nebraska are being strained by the amount of COVID hospitalizations. It is taking longer to send people who need high level care (ICU) to the Metro hospitals because of the limited amount of beds. This is also affecting anyone who needs to be admitted to a hospital. Patients are waiting in ER rooms for a bed whether they have COVID or not. Let's all do what we can to be part of the solution rather than add to the problem. Get your vaccine or booster, wear a mask when appropriate, wash your hands, and stay home when you're sick. If we all work together, we can put COVID where it belongs, behind us.

What is Occupational Health at MCH?

Occupational Health (OH) is one of many departments at MCH; however, not many people know what they do. In short, OH provides medical evaluations and manages vaccine requirements for businesses in the area, including the hospital. A business can contract with OH to provide medical evaluations, clearing for respirators, physical fit testing, hearing tests, vision screenings, vitals, Covid testing, flu shots and other vaccines. If a company is interested in partnering with MCH, the hospital sets up an account through the billing department and has a point of contact that works directly with the OH nurses. MCH also provides Department of Transportation exams and pre-employment drug screening through the Laboratory if a physical is not needed.

Currently MCH has partnerships with 12 local businesses in which OH will visit the business on a regular basis to provide services as scheduled. Many more local businesses have a partnership where they send employees to the facility. In addition to this, MCH employs roughly 250 people who are screened, fit tested, and have their immunizations tracked and updated. They also handle employee sick calls, all internal worker's compensation cases and bloodborne pathogen tracking and lab testing.

If you or your business is interested in more information, please call our Occupational Health Department Nurse at 402-426-1134.

MCH Labor and Delivery is Growing

Baby Expo

- On October 30th, MCH hosted its 5th annual Baby Expo for expectant moms in our service area. The new moms and their families were able to sign up for a tour with our three delivering physicians, receive a tote bag of information and giveaways from community organizations, and enter into a raffle for a chance to win great baby items. Items included in the raffle were a pack-n-play, car seat, and bouncer. In addition, just for coming, the mom-to-be also received a sound machine and some take home goodies. MCH gave 19 tours in the three-hour window this year, increasing the number of tours in 2020. While the Baby Expo is becoming a regular event, tours of our Labor and Delivery Suites can be arranged at any time by calling 402-426-1153.

Childbirth Education Classes

- New in 2022, MCH's delivering physicians will be hosting a free childbirth education class quarterly to patients and members of the community. Quarterly classes will be alternated between a Saturday class and an evening class. During each class there will be a birth and postpartum care section, a tour, and a breastfeeding section. While we hope each mom and partner will attend all three sessions, we understand some seasoned moms may just need a tour or breastfeeding refresher. Be on the lookout for advertisements for our free class or call 402-426-1494 to sign up today. The first class starts on January 15th.



Memorial Community Hospital & Health System

Blair • Fort Calhoun • Tekamah

810 N 22nd St. | Blair, NE 68008

find us on 

Community Support

MCH Auxiliary Presents Checks



MCH Auxiliary members presents a check to MCH President & CEO Manny Banner

Board members of the MCH Auxiliary recently donated \$38,000 toward the purchase of new Electrosurgical Cautery Equipment for the Surgery Department at MCH. Surgeries have grown substantially at MCH over the last couple years and new cautery equipment was needed to update the older unit currently in use. With this donation, the surgery department will receive the equipment sooner than expected.



Members of St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church hosted a "Baby Shower for Mary" during the month of December and donated all gifts to MCH. Baby donations will be given to moms who deliver at MCH and shared with The Bridge (who has an office at MCH). The Bridge assists individuals and families experiencing domestic violence.

- The Senior Life Solutions team was busy this holiday season gathering items during the Senior Christmas Drive and delivering gifts to seniors. Gifts were given to Carter Place and Good Shepherd for residents to enjoy.
- Enough donations were collected to make 50 gift bags!



Hannah Hartley, Office Patient Coordinator at SLS



Holly Mackie, Program Director at SLS, showing gift bags



'Tis the season for giving!

- MCH was happy to deliver holiday gift blankets to the residents at Good Shepherd Lutheran Home and Crowell Memorial Home.

Tree of Life Campaign



The annual Tree of Life campaign kicked off the first week of December and donations continued to come in through the end of the year and even into 2021! Every year it is determined how the campaign funds raised will be used to enhance MCH's services, and this year the money will be used to purchase new exam tables for the MCH Specialty Clinic. These tables are an ideal solution for reliable patient transfers, offering an upright seat back and safety grab bars. With their chair-to-table design, patients are taken from exam to consultation effortlessly.

The Tree of Life Campaign gives people an opportunity to sponsor the "Holiday Tree," that is placed in the MCH main lobby. The donations are given in honor of someone special, or in their memory if they are no longer with us. This year, the tree was adorned in red, silver and white ornaments, and a large Christmas card was placed next to the tree displaying the names of all donors and those being remembered and honored.

The support of the hospital's many donors plays an important role in ensuring that MCH exceeds the needs of their patients and families. MCH continues its commitment to making a difference by leading with innovation, delivering quality service, and serving with compassion.



Bomgaars Donations

Memorial Community Hospital and Health System (MCH) was grateful to be the recipient of Bomgaars Ladies' Night donation again in 2021. This year the Blair store donated \$1,218.11 and the Tekamah store donated \$455.19 to the hospital. Every year Bomgaars gives 5% of their total sales from one evening to a hospital or healthcare organization to raise awareness of women's health issues. MCH will use this donation for our Diagnostic Department and the early detection of breast cancer.