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Summer 2022



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The last two years have been difficult for patients and healthcare providers alike. Trust in healthcare has suffered, often through mis-information and misunderstanding. I want to take this opportunity to thank you, our patients, for continuing to trust us with your care, even through difficult times.

I want to thank each of our employees that have shown up to do what is necessary to provide exceptional care. I would like to list each of their duties separately, but there are just too many specialties to mention. It takes every single team member to support our Mission "To partner with our community to heal, nurture, and promote wellness", whether that team member works in a medical office, performs revenue cycle functions, works on a patient care floor, or performs environmental or maintenance duties. I am thankful for all of our employees that allow us to function at a high level and continue to care for our community members.

MCH's medical and professional staff are here to provide safe and up-to-date care to our patients. Our team truly

cares for our patients and continues to provide the highest quality of care for you. Having a local hospital in a small community has great benefits to that community. Our patient base consists of friends and neighbors, and our team understands how many of the residents of our communities like to be cared for. Our campus is easy to navigate, parking is never a problem, and our staff will work with you to get you scheduled with the right provider for your needs. We have providers in Blair for hospital services and in Fort Calhoun, Tekamah, and Blair for clinic visits. Our Walk-In Clinic is available every day (including Sunday), something you might not find in a lot of small towns. This offering allows many of our patients to avoid costly Emergency Room visits; however, if you do have an emergency, our experienced staff in the Emergency Room is ready for all emergencies 24/7.

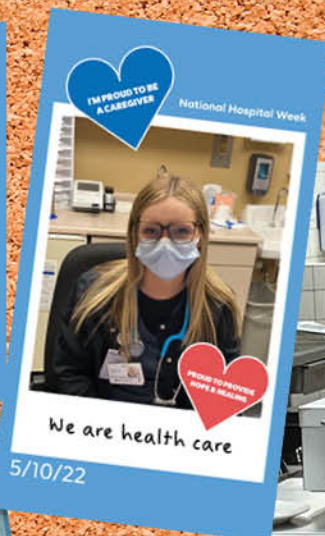
To summarize, MCH is fortunate to have wonderful patients as well as wonderful staff to care for you. Thank you for your trust and for your continued faith in MCH.

Respectfully, Manny Banner, RN, MHA, FACHE

M. Banner

MCH Celebrated National Hospital Week

May 8-14th marked National Hospital Week at Memorial Community Hospital and Health System (MCH). Employees were treated to a week full of fun, food, and activities to celebrate. On Monday, car wash tokens were handed out as a thank you to staff, Danishes were delivered to the cafeteria on Tuesday, on Wednesday Nutte House German Roasted Almonds were delivered and a corn hole tournament began, new long sleeve MCH t-shirts were delivered on Thursday, and Jake's Bar and Grill catered lunch brought in for the staff on Friday. The Pancake Man also came to serve breakfast one day. The outlying clinics had treats delivered to them during the week as well. We are so appreciative of the staff and the care they give that this week is a fun way for us to celebrate them.



MCH Auxiliary Scholarship Recipients

Memorial Community Hospital's Auxiliary gave seven scholarships for the 2022-2023 academic year, each valued at \$2,000-\$3,000. All recipients of a MCH Auxiliary Scholarship have to be pursuing a career in a health field.

Scholarship recipients are Torrance Loudner of Blair, who is currently attending College of St. Mary for Nursing, Noel Monif of Tekamah who will attend Bryan College of Health Sciences and major in Sonography, Kate Flesner an employee at MCH, is attending Methodist College of Nursing to re-obtain her LPN nursing license, Braeden Haptonstall, son of MCH employee Justin Haptonstall, who is currently attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for Nursing and will eventually become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), Isabella Benoit of Fort Calhoun who will attend Nebraska Methodist College to study Radiological Technology, Elena Jetensky from Tekamah who will attend the University of Nebraska at Lincoln to become a Dietician, and Danielle Spooner from Blair, who is currently attending Nebraska Methodist College for Nursing.

The recipient who received the distinguished Dorena Walker Nursing scholarship is Torrance Loudner of Blair. Torrance was awarded \$3,000 to go toward her education. The Dorena Walker Memorial Scholarship is presented annually to one student entering the nursing profession. Dorena Walker served as a longtime member of the Memorial Community Hospital nursing staff and Board of Directors. She was instrumental in coordinating the 1952 fundraising campaign to build the existing hospital, which opened in 1956.

The recipient who received the distinguished Ardis Grace Service Award Scholarship is Noel Monif from Tekamah-Herman High School. Noel was awarded \$3,000 to go toward her education. The Ardis Grace scholarship was developed to reward a student who exemplifies community service. Ardis was one of the founding members of the Auxiliary and the Rummage Sale and donated thousands of hours of her time over the years.

According to MCH Auxiliary Scholarship Chair Merri Misfeldt, "Encouraging young people to join the medical community is of utmost importance. The Auxiliary is so pleased to award these very deserving young people these scholarships to pursue their medical goals. Our hope is when their studies are completed they return to our community to continue their healthcare careers."

The Auxiliary Scholarship program is a vital way the Auxiliary directly supports the hospital and promotes health in our communities. For many years, they have been assisting students seeking a career in the medical field. Since 1992, 136 students have received more than \$100,000 in financial assistance from the MCH Auxiliary Scholarship program.



Scholarship recipients left to right, top to bottom: Bella Benoit, Kate Flesner, Braeden Haptonstall, Elena Jetensky, Torrence Loudner, Noel Monif, Danielle Spooner

Protecting Our Community from Controlled Substance Misuse

Though often perceived to be a problem of larger cities, substance use and misuse have long been prevalent in rural areas. Rural adults have higher rates of use for tobacco and methamphetamines, while prescription drug misuse has grown in towns of every size. Memorial Community Hospital and Health System (MCH) and its rural health clinics are not immune to these drug issues plaguing our country and work tirelessly to combat drug use in our communities. MCH is addressing the rural drug use in a variety of ways.

One of these is working in compliance with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to monitor all substance prescriptions. The DEA was established in 1973 as the federal organization in charge of enforcing the controlled substances laws of the United States. Today thousands of DEA employees located in hundreds of offices across the country and around the world are dedicated to fulfilling DEA's mission. These experts in drug law enforcement, including Special Agents, Diversion Investigators, Forensic Scientists, Intelligence Research Specialists and highly trained support staff, work together as one team to keep Americans safe from dangerous drugs and those that traffic in them.

Another tactic is the Nebraska Prescription Drug Management Program (PDMP), which is a unique statewide tool that collects dispensed prescription medication information and is housed on the Health Information Exchange (HIE) platform. The Nebraska PDMP is a public health model focusing on patient safety. Not only do various states utilize programs such as the PDMP to control prescription drugs from being over prescribed, now states are also working closely with their neighbors. Multiple surrounding states are now able to utilize their neighbor's programs to make sure they are catching those that "doctor shop" in nearby towns, many times across state lines, trying to get prescriptions. For example, Kansas and Missouri are now regularly tied into Nebraska's program. Dr. Amanda Duxbury, physician at the MCH Blair Clinic, notes that "part of the disease that is drug addiction is manipulative behavior and doing whatever it takes to get more of the drug, and so it really is invaluable to have a resource at the tip of our fingers that allows us to confirm what medications a patient is being prescribed, as well as from whom, how often and how many."

MCH also has a Controlled Substance Agreement policy it implements with all MCH patients being prescribed a controlled substance. The patient must enter into the agreement with an MCH provider to obtain their prescription(s). Patients are required to attend regular office visits, commit to use of a single pharmacy, only request refills when needed, and submit regular drug tests to continue to receive their prescription. If it is found that the patient has an illicit substance, or a prescribed substance that is not accounted for in the controlled substance contract, on their drug screen, MCH can remove a patient from the program all together.

Healthcare providers quickly identify behaviors of drug seekers and are vigilant in keeping the community safe. In 2021, there were over 100,000 opiate-related deaths in the United States. Dr. Duxbury continues on to say, "I very often hear, 'well I have taken this for years and its never been a problem for me' but the issue is it only takes one pill too many or one bad interaction with a different medication, including other prescribed medications like benzodiazepines, to cause a big problem. Our job as healthcare providers is to do everything in our power to treat the disease effectively without causing harm, even when the patient may not be in a state to see what is best for themselves."

As government and private organizations, pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals remain vigilant and work together, the overall goal is to have healthy communities and fewer issues from opiate-related addictions. MCH will continue contributing to this effort.

Hidden Facts About Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is perhaps one of the most controversial bacterial infections to look out for. It exists worldwide and affects more people than HIV, AIDS, and many cancers. Even with treatment, 40% of infected patients will suffer the long-term complications of this disease. It is transmitted through the bite of an infected tick and can cause a whole host of physical, cognitive, and neurological symptoms.

Despite the disease's wide range and rehabilitating symptoms, the medical community is still divided over treatment, research, and even diagnosis techniques. Many people do not realize the serious complications that Lyme can cause, and often their symptoms are misdiagnosed when they begin to feel sick. Here's some things about Lyme disease that you might not know.

01 Not Everyone Gets a Rash

The term 'Lyme Disease' often conjures images of a bullseye rash surrounding the bitten area on the skin. While this is certainly a good indicator that Lymes is present, often the rash never presents at all. In fact, it's estimated that around 20% of all infected people show signs of the bullseye rash. Instead, they will begin to show symptoms that are often mistaken for the flu-headaches, fatigue, and swollen glands. This often leads to the infections not getting treated until it has gotten much worse.



02 Ticks Can Be Small

While adult ticks are typically easy to spot, they aren't the only ones that carry Lyme. All ticks, regardless of where they are in their life cycle, have the potential to carry Lyme disease. Nymphs are easily the size of a poppy seed and can easily be missed during a routine tick check. It is estimated that only 30% of Lyme sufferers remember getting a tick bite. Any strange symptoms should always be evaluated by a physician.

03 Diagnosis and Treatment is Not Easy

There is a blood test that doctors use to confirm Lyme. It is called the ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay test) and it works by showing how many antibodies are in the blood for a *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme. Unfortunately, the test is not always accurate, and both false positives and false negatives are possible. Generally, testing is recommended four to five weeks after Lyme transmission, giving the body time to build up enough antibodies to be detected. Treatment is highly controversial and what works for one patient may not work for another. The longer Lyme is left untreated, the more damage it can cause. For some people, a round of antibiotics seems to do the trick. Others struggle with symptoms for much longer, even after their antibiotic regimen has been completed. There is controversy on how long antibiotics should be prescribed to Lyme patients, though there is evidence that the bacteria can survive antibiotic exposure.

04 Lyme's Symptoms are Vast

Lyme disease is typically associated with flu-like symptoms. This includes headache, enlarged lymph nodes, and body aches. There is a vast multitude of additional symptoms, however, and the disease is sometimes referred to as the "Great Imitator," as it mimics many other conditions. Digestion problems, neurological symptoms, and even anxiety and depression can all be signs of Lyme. If left untreated, patients can experience arthritis, palpitations, facial palsy, and memory problems. It's no wonder it often gets misdiagnosed, leaving the disease to remain untreated.

For those that live in tick-prone areas, the best way to handle Lyme disease is with prevention. Make sure all exposed skin is covered and use insect repellent when recreating in tick-infested areas. Check yourself thoroughly for ticks when you come indoors, and consider taking a shower to wash away any that may not have attached to your skin. If you have rodents or deer that enjoy your yard, consider ways to deter them to reduce the tick population around your home. If you start to notice strange symptoms, visit your doctor right away to prevent long-term struggles due to Lyme disease.

Dr. Kitchen Retires



Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. Steven Kitchen, retired on May 16th this year. Kitchen, who joined MCH in January 2019, was a physician with Rural Partners in Medicine, an organization of doctors who provide care and services to rural facilities where advanced care is not always available. As a member of that group, Dr. Kitchen

traveled to the Blair Specialty Clinic to provide specialty care. Providing full orthopedic services, including comprehensive surgical procedures, Dr. Kitchen performed 14 total hip and replacements 54 total knee replacements in Blair until his retirement. His expertise in this field has been a wonderful addition and he will be missed by his team at MCH. "Dr. Kitchen was the first Orthopedic Surgeon to bring joint replacement and other comprehensive orthopedic surgeries to Blair. He laid the ground work for our ongoing program and his knowledge and easy bedside manner will be sorely missed. I wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement," said Manny Banner, President and CEO of MCH. Dr. Kitchen has contributed to the growth of orthopedics since his arrival which has also had an impact on the inpatient census as well as the Physical and Occupational Therapy Services at MCH. Dr. Kitchen worked closely with the therapy team as part of his patients' continuation of care, which has led to great growth in therapy services as well. MCH is in the process of bringing another orthopedic surgeon who specializes in general orthopedics as well as joint replacements on board, to join Dr. Thomas Saylor who specializes in the shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist and hand and Dr. Daniel Ocel who is a renowned specialist in leg, foot and ankle injuries and disorders as well as in sports medicine.

Schmidt Earns Award



Congratulations to Megan Schmidt, RN, who received a 2022 Positive Image of Nursing award. Honorees of this award are selected based on peer recognition. Megan is a nurse at the Specialty Clinic and has been at MCH since 2018. Here is what a peer had to say about Megan:

"I am nominating Megan Schmidt, RN for the 'Positive Image of Nursing Award. Megan is a model nurse in the Specialty Clinic. She has worked in the Specialty Clinic for four years. She shows compassion for all of our patients and freely gives love and understanding to those in need and who are hurting. Megan demonstrates a quality and character of nursing that has gained respect from her co-workers, physicians, and patients by her care she gives her patients. Megan establishes integrity and honesty with staff and patients. She has a commitment to being an excellent nurse and seeks out opportunities to serve patients, families, and coworkers. Megan promotes and has the image of a professional nurse. Megan takes great pride in being a nurse and always maintains a professional image. She is courteous to patients and fellow employees. Megan treats her patients like she would like to be treated. She is knowledgeable in a variety of areas in the Specialty Clinic and has positive communication skills. Megan promotes a positive attitude when at work. She is encouraging and promotes team building with other coworkers."

Time to Schedule Sports Physicals

There are many activities going on during the summer break that keep families busy, whether it's games, events, or family vacations. As we all know, many activities are packed into a couple of months and the summer break goes by quickly. It is important, however, to think ahead a bit to the upcoming school year so that your child is prepared. If he or she plans to participate in a sport during the school year, a physical is needed before the season begins.

There are two options when considering a physical exam to prepare your child for the upcoming sports season. The first is a wellness exam that is billed to your insurance and includes a comprehensive evaluation, immunizations, and family history. This exam meets the requirements of a sports physical which are required by schools in order to participate in a sports activity. The second option is a sports physical which includes a physical exam with a provider to insure safe participation, along with completion of the sports physical form. This exam is not covered by insurance and payment is expected at the time of the exam.

Whichever option you choose, make sure you do it in advance so that your student athlete is prepared and ready to take the field or court when practice begins.

**Do you have a baby at home?
Are you concerned about their
development?**



CALL THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK!

Providing developmental supports and services early improves a child's ability to develop and learn. The goal of early intervention in Nebraska is for families to help their children with qualifying disabilities develop to their full potential. The Early Development Network works with Arlington, Blair, and Fort Calhoun Schools to provide FREE in-home Early Intervention Services for children birth to age 3.

Set up an evaluation today to see if your child
is eligible by calling 402-597-4936 or
visiting edn.esu3.org





How to Beat the Heat: 5 Tips for Summer Safety

Many people love the summer for the beautiful weather and the chance to spend more time outdoors. However, the extreme heat that summer can bring can be risky. If your body cannot cool you off quickly enough to combat the heat, you may suffer heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Hot weather kills people or causes illness for hundreds of people every year but getting sick from the heat is preventable.

With a little bit of planning, it is possible to beat the heat in the summer. 5 tips to stay safe in the heat are:

01 Check the Weather: When you are planning your day, it is best to check the weather before heading outside. Although the temperature is certainly a factor and you may want to avoid heading outside when the temperature is too high, humidity should also be considered. When humidity is high, your sweat will not evaporate as quickly as it should, which prevents your body from releasing as much heat as it needs to.

02 Wear Sunscreen: Sunscreen is important to prevent ultraviolet (UV) rays from damaging your skin. UV rays have the potential to give you painful sunburns, increase signs of aging, and damage your eyes. Too much exposure to UV rays also increases your risk of skin cancer. A broad-spectrum sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 is ideal and should be reapplied often.

03 Stay Hydrated: To prevent dehydration, which can occur more quickly in the summer heat, try to drink plenty of water. It can also be helpful to consume vegetables and fruit that have a high water content such as cucumber, watermelon, grapes, and strawberries.

04 Limit Midday Activities: If you must go outside on a hot day, it is best to avoid going outside at midday as that is when UV rays from the sun are most intense. Approximately half of the amount of UV radiation a location receives is between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. If you must go outside in these hours, it is best to stick to the shade. It is also best to avoid exercising outdoors during these hours as you are more likely to overheat.

05 Know How to Recognize Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion often precedes heat stroke. Thus, it is important to recognize signs that heat exhaustion may be occurring such as a headache, irritability, cramps, a high body temperature, skin that feels cool to the touch, and increased thirst. If any of these signs are observed, it is best to immediately go to a cool place, apply a cool towel, and drink a cool drink that contains salt. If someone does show signs of heatstroke, such as a lack of sweating, disorientation, seizures, or loss of consciousness, they should get medical attention immediately.

Although summer's high temperatures can be dangerous, with some planning and preparation, it is possible to be safe in the heat while enjoying the summer weather.

New providers at Cottonwood Clinic



The MCH Cottonwood Clinic in Tekamah welcomed two new providers. Emily Mahon, PA-C, has been with MCH since 2018 and transitioned from the Blair Clinic to the Tekamah Clinic in April of this year. Emily received her Masters of Medical Science, Physician Assistant Studies at Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona. She is a member of the Air National Guard. Emily and her husband Conor have a son, Elijah (4), and daughter, Sophia (2).

Amber Miller, APRN, is MCH's newest provider to join the Cottonwood Clinic team and began working full-time May 31. Amber grew up on her family's farm in Tekamah



and is a 2013 graduate of Tekamah-Herman High School. She graduated from Mount Marty College with a Nursing Degree and has four years of nursing experience, including cardiac, oncology, and ICU. Amber graduated from Clarkson College with a Family Nurse Practitioner degree in 2021. She is married to her husband, Jordan, and they share their home with two German Shepherds.

MCH is excited to have both Emily and Amber a part of the Cottonwood Clinic team. "I am happy to see the Cottonwood Clinic with two new providers that will continue to provide excellent care to the patients in Burt County," said Jennifer Wohlers, MCH Rural Clinics Manager.



What to Look for in Sunscreen

It's no secret that exposure to the sun's rays can be harmful to your skin. They can burn you, create blemishes and wrinkles, and cause cancer. Many outdoor lovers slap on the sunscreen and assume that they're safe. But sunscreen products are not well regulated in the U.S. Just because a sunscreen bottle says it is safe and effective doesn't necessarily mean that it is.

You don't need an advanced degree to figure out what makes a good sunscreen. Experts have already done that for you. Know what ingredients to look for in the sunscreen you buy, and you'll quickly be able to tell what's best.

The Bad Stuff

Oxybenzone: Some independent research organizations like the Environmental Working Group advise avoiding any sunscreens that use the chemical oxybenzone as an active ingredient. Their research suggests that it can act as a hormone disruptor when absorbed through the skin. When your body's natural hormone system is disrupted, it can lead to a variety of health problems including cancer.

Vitamin A, also called retinyl palmitate: this is a preservative used in many sunscreens that has been linked with cancer and isn't a necessary ingredient.

Insect repellent: while insect repellent may not be harmful in small amounts, increased exposure leads to risk of irritation and allergic reaction – and possibly seizure. The risk is greatest in children, who are more sensitive to chemicals. Bug repellent doesn't need to be applied every two hours, but sunscreen does. If you have to use repellent, apply it separately – don't use sunscreen with bug repellent in it.

The Good Stuff

Zinc oxide or titanium oxide: if you choose not to use sunscreen with oxybenzone, you'll need an effective alternative. Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are ingredients deemed effective and safe by most doctors and research groups. They protect you from both cancer-causing UVA rays and burn-causing UVB rays.

Lotions: these types of sunscreen bases are the best way to provide full skin coverage. Sprays, powders and

wipes may be less messy and more convenient, but with them it's harder to tell if you're effectively covering your skin. Furthermore, powders and sprays pose an inhalation risk and may potentially be harmful to lungs. If you don't like messy lotion, try a sunscreen stick instead.

The Confusing Stuff

SPF protection: according to the American Academy of Dermatology, an SPF 15 product protects you from 93 percent of the sun's rays and an SPF 30 product protects you from 97 percent. SPF labels higher than 50 are deceptive.

Broad spectrum: this term is not regulated, so it doesn't really mean anything. It's a marketing gimmick. If you want a sunscreen with sufficient protection from both UVA and UVB rays, choose one with zinc oxide or titanium oxide.

Baby and child marketing labels: just because a product is labeled for babies or children doesn't mean that it's necessarily the safest or most effective. If you're concerned about sensitivity, choose hypoallergenic products with no fragrances. For maximum protection from the sun, choose SPF 50.

Makeup: cosmetic products may claim to provide adequate protection from the sun, but they're misleading. If you want to protect the skin on your face, put sunscreen on underneath your makeup. Just remember it needs to be reapplied every two hours.

Additional Sun Safety Tips

Stay out of the sun: the fool-proof way to protect yourself against the sun's harmful rays is to stay indoors, particularly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you need to be outside, stay in the shade as much as possible.

Protect yourself: wear protective clothing, a hat and sunglasses. Sunscreen shouldn't be your primary line of defense. The best protective clothing is made with a tight weave. Avoid clothing that uses chemicals to enhance sun protection.

Apply and reapply: sunscreen doesn't protect you all day. Re-apply it every two hours or after swimming or sweating. Reapply it even if your sunscreen is labeled as "waterproof."



Memorial Community Hospital & Health System

Blair • Fort Calhoun • Tekamah

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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.

