

## Recruitment and Retention at NCH

*From the desk of Sonya Cap, Chief Clinical Officer*

### Valuing our workforce

Along with consistently working to improve quality cares and patient satisfaction at Norton County Hospital, we also understand how important it is to recruit top employees and keep our own amazing staff engaged and excited to be a part of the NCH family. Facing a national health care worker shortage, even before entering the COVID-19 pandemic, placed NCH in a precarious position, one that became worse as staff caring for those infected became infected themselves, or quarantined from exposure. Extra shifts, long stretches of call, added responsibilities, and the constant fear for family and friends placed an exorbitant amount of strain on our already burdened staff.

Part of NCH's 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment Strategic and Implementation Plan involved recruitment and retention as an

initiative. The team formed to answer that need consisted of NCH administration, a board member, economic development and other area businesses. The work of this team resulted in improvements to health care throughout Norton County such as Chamber website expansion and directory completion, Norton County brochure development, enhanced relationships with area schools, increased housing incentives through economic development and discovery of little-known scholarship opportunities.

The direct benefit to NCH from the original R&R strategic planning team was the development of tuition reimbursement and loan repayment programs. When COVID-19 interrupted the regular meeting of this community-wide diverse team, the idea to form a team of NCH employees emerged. The NCH R&R team consists of bedside caregivers from several areas, ancillary staff (those who support the bedside caregivers), physicians, HR, finance and administration.

Working together to identify opportunities for improvement, the team developed an employee survey, which revealed several key concerns affecting recruitment and retention. The team quickly developed and implemented several initiatives in response to that survey or in response to employee feedback, such as:

- Finalized the tuition reimbursement program
- Finalized the loan repayment program
- Assisted the CFO to develop a hiring bonus



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- Assisted the CFO to develop an employee retention bonus program
  - Formed a new employee welcome committee that welcomes all new employees with NCH-branded materials
    - Initiated a buddy system where each new employee is matched with an NCH employee to help him or her adjust to new beginnings
      - Increased on-call pay structure
      - Increased shift differential structure
      - Worked with HR to implement performance evaluations tied to merit raises
        - Enhanced Employee of the Month program to include priority parking and a bulletin board showcasing the employee
          - Developed new employee bulletin board
          - Recognized employee birthdays in huddle
          - Developed and communicated the "We Value You" document showcasing all new and existing incentives to NCH staff
- Continued on p. 2*

# Recruitment and Retention at NCH

*From the desk of Sonya Cap, Chief Clinical Officer*

## Valuing our workforce (from p. 1)

- Reviewed Family Friendly Worksite survey results and chose three initiatives to develop: (1) The ability to telework when needed; (2) Subsidized childcare costs as part of the employee benefits package; and (3) A workplace policy that protects victims of domestic violence
- Currently attending and discussing a series of recruitment and retention webinars offered by 3RNET, a nationwide recruiting company
- Researched and in the process of initiating the Daisy Award for outstanding nurses at NCH
- Continue to solicit and implement employee suggestions for recruitment and retention

The NCH R&R team meets monthly to develop initiatives, implement programs, discuss employee suggestions, review tuition assistance and loan repayment applications, evaluate effectiveness of current programs and assess NCH culture.

This team is making a tremendous difference, and the members will continue this work of supporting you and your needs. YOU are the most important part of NCH, and the team wants you to understand and realize just how much you matter to us all.

### **R&R Team Members:**

- Shaelin Beckstrom – dietary*
- Allison McChesney – radiology*
- Bethanie Ellis – inpatient nursing*
- Travis Nykamp – outpatient nursing*
- Kayla Broeckelman – respiratory*
- Dr. Neill*
- Dr. Maurer*
- Heather Saville – DON*
- Shannan Hempler & Mackenzie Blecha – HR*
- Ken Fischer – CFO*
- Brian Kirk – CEO*
- Sonya Cap – CCO*



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Next NCH Blood Drive is Jan. 18, 2022

*Blood Supply Statistics (from [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org))*

The Red Cross provides about 40 percent of our nation's blood and blood components, all from generous volunteer donors. But supply can't always meet demand, because about 3 percent of age-eligible people donate blood yearly.

- Each year, an estimated 6.8 million people in the U.S. donate blood.
- 13.6 million units of whole blood and red blood cells are collected in the U.S. in a year.
- About 45 percent of people in the U.S. have Group O (positive or negative) blood; the proportion is higher among Hispanics (57 percent) and African Americans (51 percent).
- Type O negative red cells can be given to patients of all blood types. Because only 7 percent of people in the U.S. are type O negative, it's always in great demand and often in short supply.
- Type AB plasma can be transfused to patients of all blood types. Since only 4 percent of people in the U.S. have type AB blood, this plasma is usually in short supply.
- Red blood cells must be used within 42 days (or less).
- Platelets must be used within just 5 days. ●●●

# Human Resources

*From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources*



## 2022 Open Enrollment

Open enrollment starts Dec. 1, 2021. Please note that NCH wants all open enrollment selections by Dec. 13 this year due to meeting the UnitedHealthcare and electronic file deadlines. There is a new benefit presentation video posted on the HR/Benefits page of The Beat. ●●●

## NCH Talent Management

The new performance management platform “NCH Talent Management” will launch in December 2021. This new section of Ascentis is a vital step in our transition to performance-based salary increases. This system will include goals, accomplishments, certification/license and other documentation, “kudos” and feedback, performance evaluations and improvement plans. ●●●

# Employee Anniversaries

**Congrats on these milestones!**

### June

Ruth Mizell	36 years
Shannan Hempler	23 years
Nikki Wright previous	2 years, plus 18
Deanna Hawks	14 years
Klare Bliss	12 years
Whitney Criqui	10 years
Christen Skrdlant previous	2 years, plus 8
Bethanie Ellis	4 years
Shaelin Beckstrom	1 year
Sandi Ross-Crowder	1 year
Lauren Schumaker	1 year
Cassie Stewart	1 year

### July

Ty Bruton	34 years
Dr. Glenda Maurer	24 years
Lana Jones 4 previous	17 years, plus
Benda Dole	7 years
Katie Wagner	5 years
Alasia Kenney previous	3 years, plus 2
Spencer Shirk	2 years

### August

Lynne Lewis	15 years, plus
9 previous	
Mitch Bartels	19 years
Kim Green	14 years
Sherry White	13 years
Elsa Temmel	8 years
Karen VanSlike	5 years
Sonya Cap	4 years
Alisha Simmons	4 years
Rachael Rushton	3 years
Benina Soriano	1 year
Ryan Bainter	1 year
Chelsea Hageman	1 year

### September

Sara Smith	14 years
Alan Brown	7 years
Brooke Breth	2 years
Dr. Josh Gaede	1 year
Dr. Miranda McKellar	1 year
Dr. Theresia Neill	1 year
Sara Richmeier	1 year
Gino Salerno	1 year

### October

Kristin Vogel	14 years
Travis Nykamp	7 years
Carolyn Long	6 years
Sarah Mohr	4 years
Todd Boller	3 years
Kayla Broeckelman	3 years
Mitch Pugh	2 years

### November

Eva Harrington	23 years
Shawnee Branek	20 years
Tracey Hartzog	9 years
Rita Conrad	7 years
Kelsee Hildebrand	2 years
Kylie Saville	1 year
Jennifer Wildeman previous ●●●	1 year, plus 14

## CEO Corner

*From the desk of Brian Kirk, Chief Executive Officer*

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the warm welcome my wife and I have received in moving home to Kansas. We are very pleased to be back, as are our families. As an organization, Norton County Hospital has many reasons to be thankful. It is always good to take time to reflect on the many blessings we have received. Thank you to our Norton County Commissioners for their mill levy support of our ongoing operations and the recent \$300,000 radiology equipment contribution to upgrade our x-ray machines from analog to digital, which is beneficial to all of our patients, medical staff and employees. This will assist with operational efficiencies, diagnoses and communications with specialists.

We are thankful to our Board of Trustees, who offers their guidance, care and concern on a voluntary basis. Our Human Resources Director successfully applied for a \$99,000 SPARK Fund grant to assist compensation for our employees in patient care areas. Our Chief Information Officer led a committee to find the best new electronic medical record (EMR) for a critical access hospital such as ours. We received notification that our current EMR will not be supported next year and is no longer a viable option for us. After much work, effort and leadership, our Board of Trustees approved a new Cerner tool that will help us move toward best practices as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Cerner solution is widely held as the best EMR available, and we plan to implement and go live in 2022.

It has also been great to see the way all of our employees and medical staff have pulled together during this ongoing pandemic. Our team has done wonderful things to cover for each other and to take care of our patients during these trying times. Let's continue to contribute and collaborate to make Norton County Hospital the best place to receive health care, the best place to work and the best place to practice medicine.

*Read more about Brian on p. 9 of this newsletter.*

*Photo below: Norton County Hospital would like to sincerely thank the Norton County Commissioners for granting \$300,000 to the hospital. The funds will be used to purchase updated Radiology equipment, including a digital radiography x-ray room and a digital portable x-ray machine. Pictured L-R at the Nov. 15 Norton County Commissioners meeting are Commissioner Marvin Matchett, Commissioner Richard Thompson, NCH CEO Brian Kirk, Director of Radiology Mitch Bartels, NCH Board Trustee Jill Edgett, NCH Board Trustee Jean Ann Wilson and Commissioner Garrett Beydler. Photo courtesy of The Norton Telegram. ●●●*



## In the Spotlight

### Norton County Hospital launches healthy living podcast

Norton County Hospital is pleased to announce the launch of “Health in the Heartland,” a podcast that examines current issues in health and health care, particularly relating to rural medicine. The podcast is centered on the health services provided by Norton County Hospital, a 25-bed critical access hospital and Level IV trauma center, and its rural health clinic, Norton Medical Clinic, located in northwest Kansas. Additionally, experts speak on timely information to encourage healthy living.

The podcast aims to inform, educate and empower individuals to live healthier lives, said Norton County Hospital community relations director Katie Allen Wagner. The hospital has been planning to use podcasts as a tool to reach local, regional, national and even global audiences for several months, but the project was initially delayed due to efforts to mitigate COVID-19 in 2020. The podcast project eventually took off with recording starting in the spring of 2021.

“Rural health care has its own set of challenges and rewards,” Wagner said. “We look forward to bringing our podcast audience along on the journey to learn about how we aim to provide high-quality health care in a rural area with limited resources, and how we play a role in the sustainability of the communities we enjoy. We welcome listeners to join us and be part of these important health care conversations.”

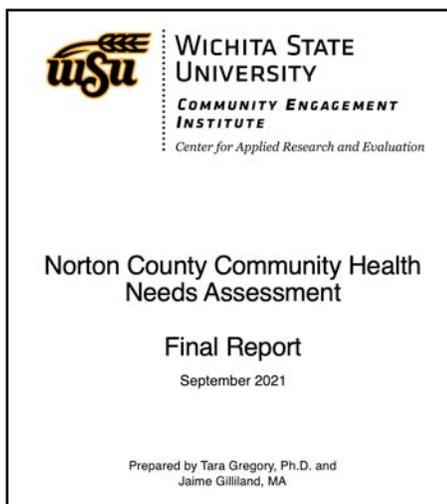
Examples of published podcast episodes include highlighting the occupational therapy profession, Stop the Bleed program and maternal health in a rural setting. Upcoming episodes will include a mixture of health advice from local doctors and advanced practice providers, as well as some of the latest trends in health care and their impacts on small hospitals like Norton County Hospital. A new season will begin in 2022!

“We wanted to build a library of podcast episodes to provide a flavor of our intended content and then officially launch this summer,” Wagner said. “Please take a listen to our published episodes and stay tuned to hear more local experts speak on an array of health care topics.”

Listeners can download “Health in the Heartland” podcast episodes from any podcast service provider, or they can listen on the Norton County Hospital website: [www.ntcohosp.com/podcast.html](http://www.ntcohosp.com/podcast.html). ●●●



## Engage the Community



### Community Health Needs Assessment important for progress

The Community Health Needs Assessment is required of hospitals every three years, and 2021 is an assessment year. The survey portion of the assessment was completed earlier this year through the help of Wichita State University’s Community Engagement Institute (WSU CEI) and funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* grant program. Now WSU CEI is working with Norton County Hospital staff to complete phase two of the process, which includes community focus group and staff feedback to update the implementation and strategic plan. This process follows the same format as 2018.

If you are interested in the community survey results (which was available for all of Norton County), visit the hospital’s website, [www.ntcohosp.com](http://www.ntcohosp.com), and click Our Story - Community Health Needs Assessment. Thank you to all who have been and will be involved in this important process. This data helps us to understand what we are doing right and what could be improved for the future. ●●●

## Other Celebrations

### Recognition weeks

Norton County Hospital recognized many employees (some are pictured below and at right) for their hard work and dedication during their respective national celebration weeks this fall, some of which included:

- National Healthcare Environmental Services & Housekeeping Week
- National Rehabilitation Awareness Week & Physical Therapy Month
- National Surgical Technologists Week
- National Healthcare Food Service Week
- National Healthcare Supply Chain Week
- Emergency Nurses Week
- National Healthcare Facilities & Engineering Week
- Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month & National Radiologic Technology Week
- National Respiratory Care Week
- National Healthcare Quality Week
- Perioperative Nurses Week
- National Physician Assistant Week
- National Nurse Practitioner Week ●●●



## Other Celebrations

### Employees of the Month

**June - Josie Logemann, Environmental Services**

Her nomination summary: Josie is a bright light at NCH. She always has a kind “hello” and smile to greet her fellow co-workers, patients and guests. She is also a hard worker who loves what she does. She is very deserving of recognition.

**July - Shawnee Branek, Radiology**

Her nomination summary: Shawnee has worked many years in Radiology. She is versatile and good at her job. She is also very kind and caring to patients and co-workers.

**August - Alesha Vahling, Human Resources**

Her nomination summary: Alesha has been helpful all across the board. She made it easy to know who to go to with questions. She goes above and beyond in making sure staff understand the tasks that need completed.

**September - Sarah Mohr, Nursing**

Her nomination summary: Sarah goes above and beyond to take care of patients here, but also to make sure that she is following policies and procedures at the same time. She is a great asset to the nursing team and our hospital!

**October - Bethanie Ellis, Nursing**

Her nomination summary: Bethanie is an amazing and dedicated nurse! She worked so hard to re-instate our OB program and continues to work so diligently within the OB program to keep our Labor & Delivery services top-notch!

**November - Kim Green, Nursing**

Her nomination summary: Kim goes over and beyond what is asked. She treats her patients like she would her own family. She has a good attitude when dealing with stressful situations and has a smile on her face.

*Congratulations to these outstanding employees!*



## Other Celebrations

### Norton Regional Health Foundation participates in Norton County Match Day

The Norton County Community Foundation hosted its annual Match Day at the Heaton Building in Norton on July 21, 2021. The Norton Regional Health Foundation was a participating organization to raise funds for new patient beds at Norton County Hospital.

Katie Allen Wagner, executive director, set up a booth at the Heaton Building where donors could stop in and learn about the project. Foundation board members that included Megan Keiswetter and Karen Griffiths also worked at the booth. Many people donated in person, as well as online.

Nearly \$17,000 was raised on Match Day for new patient beds! With the addition of other private donor funds, a new OB bed was purchased first and brought into the hospital in August. Now the focus is on five new inpatient beds. The hospital's foundation plans to seek other funding sources to raise another \$20,000 to get the total project funded. Thanks to all staff who have supported this cause!



### Video shoot highlights services

Smoky Hills PBS visited Norton County Hospital in July to shoot a new video sponsorship. The hospital underwrites content on PBS, including children's and weather programs. The new spot included many of our staff; some even volunteered to bring their children in to serve as patients in the video. Thanks to all who were part of this fun project!

### Jeanne Pharis retires

Congrats to Jeanne Pharis on her retirement in July! Jeanne has been an employee in the Norton County Hospital Dietary department for 33 years. Thanks, Jeanne, for the yummy meals and smiles. Enjoy your retirement.



## In the News

*From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation*

### Norton County Hospital sees change in leadership

#### *Welcome Brian Kirk, Chief Executive Officer!*

Norton County Hospital's Board of Trustees announced Brian Kirk as the new Chief Executive Officer. Kirk comes to Norton County Hospital with more than 25 years of health care executive leadership experience for hospitals and health systems throughout Kansas, Texas and Louisiana. His experience ranges from serving small rural communities to large teaching hospitals. Kirk holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University and a Master's in Business Administration from Regis University in Denver, Colorado.

Kirk was appointed to the Texas Hospital Association for a special Medicaid committee and successfully lobbied for tort reform in the state of Texas. Kirk is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Certified Medical Practice Executive and Fellow of the Healthcare Financial Management Association. Kirk is also a certified public accountant specializing in health care.

Kirk is originally from Wichita and is married to Stephanie Long Kirk from New Almelo. They have three adult sons and one granddaughter. He enjoys hunting, running and spending time with family.

"It will be an honor and privilege to work alongside Norton County Hospital's Board of Trustees, physicians, managers and employees," he said. "Together, we will work to meet the evolving health care needs of our region and to provide the highest quality patient care."

Kirk replaces Gina Frack, who resigned as CEO earlier this year. Her last day was Oct. 8. Frack joined the hospital as Chief Operations Officer in 2015, became interim CEO in the summer of 2017 and was named to the CEO position in December 2017.

The Norton County Hospital Board of Trustees would like to thank Gina Frack for her years of service and dedication to improve health care services for residents of Norton County and the surrounding area. The board wishes her well in her future endeavors.

Frack said a workplace culture with a healthy work and home life balance is important, and she tries to model this balance as she moves on to new things.

"The quote by Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important,' is on my desk," she said. "I am leaving NCH as the CEO to live by these wise words and take the opportunity to become the farm manager of the farm and ranch my parents built over their more than 60 years of marriage. I will be able to oversee their health care needs as well."

Frack said she and her husband, Russ, will remain living in Norton, and she plans to commute as needed to work on her family farm and ranch. ●●●



### Norton Regional Health Foundation welcomes new board members

The Norton Regional Health Foundation Board of Directors meets six times per year. Pictured front row L-R are Jill Edgett, Vice President; Karen Griffiths, Secretary/Treasurer; Jennifer Miller; and Megan Keiswetter (new member). Pictured back row L-R are Katie Allen Wagner, Executive Director; Terry Nelson, President; Dennis Gilhousen, Past President; Jill Hall (new member); Chris Tanner; and Gina Frack, former Norton County Hospital CEO. ●●●

## In the News

*From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation*

### **Norton Regional Health Foundation awards scholarships**

The Norton Regional Health Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to support the enhancement of quality health care for the residents of Norton County and surrounding counties, awards scholarships to students pursuing degrees in nursing and other medical fields. The Foundation awarded the following scholarships for the Fall 2021 semester:

- Carlie Voss (top, left), Almena, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Warren and Jean White Nursing Scholarship Fund and a \$1,000 scholarship from the George Jones Nursing Scholarship Fund. Carlie is a nursing major at Fort Hays State University.
- Amy Wentz (top, middle), Norton, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Warren and Jean White Nursing Scholarship Fund and a \$1,000 scholarship from the George Jones Nursing Scholarship Fund. Amy is a nursing major at Colby Community College.
- Lexi Kats (top, right), Lenora, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Warren and Jean White Nursing Scholarship Fund. Lexi is a nursing major at Benedictine College.
- Melissa Leiker (bottom, left), Logan, awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Warren and Jean White Nursing Scholarship Fund. Melissa is a nursing major at Colby Community College.
- Taryn Kuhn (bottom, right), Norton, awarded a \$500 scholarship from the Marvin and Mary Wudtke Health Care Scholarship Fund. Taryn is a biology major at Bethany College with plans to continue her education to become a physical therapist.

The Norton Regional Health Foundation at Norton County Hospital awards academic scholarships each year to students who are enrolled in college courses, are seeking degrees in the medical field and express interest in working at Norton County Hospital in the future. It is through donor support that these scholarships can be awarded, and the Foundation is grateful to donors for their generous contributions.

For more information about the Norton Regional Health Foundation, visit the Foundation tab of the Norton County Hospital website, [www.ntcohosp.com](http://www.ntcohosp.com). ●●●



## In the News

*From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation*

### **Norton County Hospital hires internal medicine physician**

Norton County Hospital is pleased to announce the hiring of Dakota Dreher, MD, an internal medicine physician. Dreher plans to begin his work in Norton in September 2022.

Dreher is originally from Norton. He graduated high school in 2011 and went on to attend the University of Kansas, where he received a bachelor's degree in cellular biology through the KU Honors Program. He also participated in the Scholars in Rural Health program, where he had the opportunity to shadow Martin Griffey, DO, for multiple summers and witness what practicing internal medicine would be like in a rural community.

Through this program, Dreher was accepted into the University of Kansas School of Medicine and attended the Wichita campus. He is currently in his last year of Internal Medicine Residency at Saint Louis University Hospital and will complete his residency in the summer of 2022. He has an interest in blending primary care with his role as an internist.

"I chose to train at SLU, because we take care of one of the most medically complex patient populations in the nation," Dreher said. "While in residency, I have been continuing to pursue my passion for primary care, by working with our program leadership to start a primary care specific track."

"It is amazing to offer internal medicine in a rural setting," said former Norton County Hospital CEO Gina Frack. "Dr. Dreher's passion for blending his training into a primary care setting like Norton is such a wonderful fit with the rest of our team."

Dreher will join a medical team at Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic that also currently includes Glenda Maurer, MD; Josh Gaede, MD; Miranda McKellar, MD; Theresia Neill, MD; Gino Salerno, PA-C; Kristin Vogel, PA-C; Jonna Inman, APRN; and Jimmy Sauter, CRNA.

Outside of his work, Dreher enjoys outdoor activities such as running, biking and hiking. His wife is Jordan, a physician assistant in interventional radiology. At this time, she will continue to work in St. Louis, Missouri.

"I most look forward to coming back to my hometown to continue growing Norton's medical community," Dreher said.

The hospital's administration, staff, and board members welcome Dr. Dreher and look forward to his arrival next year. ●●●



# Meet the Team!

Norton County Hospital is excited to announce our new employees. Please say hello, and welcome them to our team!



**Addison Brooks**  
*Nursing – CNA – PRN*  
 Joined the NCH Team on June 21, 2021.



**Melissa Leiker**  
*Nursing – CNA – PRN*  
 Joined the NCH Team on June 21, 2021.

Where I grew up: For most of my life, I grew up with my mom in Logan! On the weekends, I would go to Hays where my dad's family is.

My education or job training experience: I have an associate degree from Barton Community College, along with my Med Aide license. I am restarting nursing school through Colby.

My family: On my dad's side, I have five siblings, and on my mom's side, three. I am the oldest with the youngest being 1 year old. I am extremely close to my grandparents, aunts and uncles.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I love music, Disney, family and lake days. I am always up for meeting new people, but most of my time is spent with family.

Why I choose to work here: Grandpa was Joe Ballinger! Grandma Pam brought this job to my attention and lets me stay with her while I work.



**Mary Mann**  
*Dietary – Cook – Full Time*  
 Joined the NCH Team on June 28, 2021.

Where I grew up: Almena

My family: My sister Cheryl has been at the hospital for 40 years. My brother Roger is a commercial roofer in Denver. My niece C.J. lives in Watertown, South Dakota and works in a call center at a bank.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: My sister and I love visiting our niece, going to different states and sightseeing. We also visit casinos. At Christmas, I bake cookies and fruit breads. I also like to make microwave candy.



**Caryl Hale**  
*Grant Coordinator – Part Time*  
 Joined the NCH Team on October 13, 2021.

Where I grew up: The question presumes I am finished growing up...haha. I spent my childhood growing up in Council Grove, Kansas.

My education or job training experience: I attended KSU for mass communications and KU for pre-pharmacy. I have worked as a certified pharmacy tech at Lawrence Memorial Hospital and two independent pharmacies. After moving to Norton, I started working in the non-profit world at Kansas Rural Center.

My family: My spouse is Aaron Hale, and he and I have three kids, Starla 22, Allyson 14, and Miles 12. We also have a Wheaten Terrier, Oskar.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I enjoy hiking, running, gardening and photography. I also have volunteered in several groups including the Norton County Arts Council.

Why I choose to work here: I choose to apply for the position, because I have served on the Live Well Norton board years ago and continue to desire to promote overall community wellness.



**Brian Kirk**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
 Joined the NCH Team on October 18, 2021.

Where I grew up: Wichita

My education or job training experience: Bishop Carroll High School, CPA, Master's in Business Administration

My family: Married for 31 years to Stephanie (formally Long out of New Almelo, KS). Has three sons, one married with a daughter, one in college, one in seminary.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Running, Hunting, Reading

Why I choose to work here: Move closer to family.



**Lauren Heersink**  
*Nursing – CNA – PRN*  
 Joined the NCH Team on August 16, 2021.

Where I grew up: In Stuttgart (near Phillipsburg)

My education or job training experience: I am currently a senior at Phillipsburg High. I have my CNA certificate.

My family: My mom, my dad and one older brother who is working as a lineman.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I like to hunt and target practice, as well as play tennis for fun with my friends.

Why I choose to work here: I previously worked at other hospitals as a dietary aide and CNA to gain experience. Why NCH? Everyone at Norton seemed so welcoming!



**Mackenzie Blecha**  
*Administration – Payroll/HR Assistant – Full Time*  
 Joined the NCH Team on October 11, 2021.

Where I grew up: I grew up in Oberlin and moved to Hoxie after my freshman year, where I graduated!

My education or job training experience: I have an Associate's through Fort Hays State University. I also have a certificate in dental assisting that I earned in California when my husband was stationed at Camp Pendleton.

My family: I've been married to Ryan since 2012, and we have two girls, Gentry (4 in December) and Charlie who turned 1 last summer. We have two dogs and a cat!

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Being a mom takes up most of my free time! We love to be outside, especially fishing. My husband is trying to get me into golf at the moment!

Why I choose to work here: We moved back to Norton in April to be closer to family and to raise our girls in a small town. We have loved it so far! I have always been interested in HR and cannot wait to join the NCH family!



**Kris Andersen**  
*Nursing – CNA Day Shift – Full Time*  
 Joined the NCH Team on September 20, 2021.

Where I grew up: Born in NYC. Lived in Colorado for 45 years.

My education or job training experience: Fire Fighter/Paramedic/Captain on fire department in the Denver Metro. Primary instructor for Paramedic/EMT/Fire at the Community College of Aurora, Colorado.

My family: Married 21 years to Pamela Anderson, three kids, nine grandkids.

My hobbies, special interests, or activities outside of work: Bike riding, hiking, working out, volunteer in nursing homes/meals on wheels. Work with organizations that help with sex trafficking and Christian persecution and like to work with the elderly.

Why I choose to work here: Love the medical field, helping patients and camaraderie among health care workers.



**Chaylee Lowry**  
*Nursing/OB – RN Night Shift – Full Time*  
 Joined the NCH Team on October 21, 2021.

Where I grew up: Almena. High school at Northern Valley.

My education or job training experience: I got my LPN from Colby Community College and my RN from Cloud County Community College.



**Chanda Fitzmaurice**  
*Nursing – CNA Day Shift – PRN*  
 Joined the NCH Team on September 21, 2021.

Where I grew up: El Dorado, Kansas

My education or job training experience: CNA – RA – CMA at Butler County Community College. SSD-AD at Colby Community College. CDM at Barton Community College. Law enforcement at K-State.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Weather permitting, I like to ride my motorcycle.



**Brian Kirk**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
 Joined the NCH Team on October 18, 2021.

Where I grew up: Wichita

My education or job training experience: Bishop Carroll High School, CPA, Master's in Business Administration

My family: Married for 31 years to Stephanie (formally Long out of New Almelo, KS). Has three sons, one married with a daughter, one in college, one in seminary.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Running, Hunting, Reading

Why I choose to work here: Move closer to family.



**Mitch Stahl**

**Environmental Services – EVS Tech – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on June 28, 2021.

Where I grew up: Hutchinson

My education or job training experience: CDL over-the-road driving

My family: Married in August to Amberlea. Our son Koen is 2 years old. My family lives in Hutchinson, hers in Logan and Castle Rock, Colorado.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Computers/electronics, video games



**Emily Brack**

**Registration – Patient Access Rep. – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 2, 2021.



**Janelle Eagleburger**

**Clinic – CNA – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 9, 2021.

Where I grew up: I grew up in Gaylor, Kansas. I went to school in Kensington.

My education or job training experience: I have my CNA and CMA certificates.

My family: I have been married since 2015; we have three amazing kids, two boys and one girl.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: We love, as a family, to hunt, fish, camp, go for walks, spend time together, swim, play games and grill out.

Why I choose to work here: I choose to be a part of NCH because I love the environment and the people involved. I want to show my outgoing personality and show the patients they are well taken care of.



**Laura King**

**Surgery – Scrub Tech – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 12, 2021.

Where I grew up: I grew up in California then moved to Topeka when I was 10. We recently moved to Norton.

My education or job training experience: I was a hospitality aide from age 15-18, then became a CNA. I've been a CMA and HHA for 4 years.

My family: I am a single mom of four girls. Two are grown and do not live with me, and two live with me.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I do a lot of things with my church and Celebrate Recovery.

Why I choose to work here: I have always wanted to be a surgery/scrub tech.



**Robin Akins**

**Dietary – Cook – Part Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 13, 2021.

Where I grew up: Norton and Athens, Texas

My family: I have six sisters and one brother. My biggest supporter in my life is my mother.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Working on my house.

Why I choose to work here: I came back to Norton after 32 years in Texas to be closer to my family. I love to cook, and when I heard there was a part-time position at NCH, I felt I would be a perfect fit.



**Randi Holub**

**Clinic – CNA – Part Time**

Joined the NCH Team on September 9, 2021.



**Eden Nickell**

**Nursing – CNA Night Shift – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 31, 2021.

Where I grew up: Norton

My education or job training experience: I started college for nursing in the fall of 2019, and I hope to finish in May of 2023 with specialty training in OB nursing.

My family: I have eight brothers and one sister. I also have three cats: Spradlin, Bean and Winnie. Someday, I would like a large family of my own. I am also very close with my grandma and Aunt Robin.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I enjoy reading, watching movies, camping with my family and traveling whenever I can.

Why I choose to work here: I will be finishing up my nursing degree in Norton through CCC, and I wanted to get my foot in the some with some hospital training.



**Kellie Belleau**

**Nursing/ER – RN Day Shift – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on September 2, 2021.

Where I grew up: Originally from Graham County

My education or job training experience: Attended NCKTech in Hays, have my Associates Degree as an RN. Started health care as a nurse aid and advanced to LPN, then RN.

My family: I am married with two daughters.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I love being a volunteer. Currently, I am a Girl Scout volunteer and enjoy helping with outdoor camping. I also actively volunteer for Moms4Kids and enjoy giving back to the youth in our community.

Why I choose to work here: My husband works at KDOT, and his job brought us to Norton. I am excited to be a part of the community.



**Jessah Daymiel**

**Laboratory – MT – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 13, 2021.

Where I grew up: I grew up in a small city, Zamboanga City, located in the Philippines.

My education or job training experience: I graduated with a Bachelor's in Medical Technology from Cebu Doctors' University. I have been working as an MT for over four years from two respectable hospitals namely Chong Hua Hospital, Mandaue City and Amosup Seamens Hospital, Manila.

My family: I am the only child in my family. My parents are both retired government officials. My mom died in 2017, so it is just my dad and me. I was hoping to bring him here to the USA.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I have a passion for dancing ever since I was young. I love reading books, watching movies and surfing the internet.

Why I choose to work here: I believe my interests are the same as your hospital. You value your patients and give the best health care service you could offer.



**Divine Tan**

**Laboratory – MT – Full Time**

Joined the NCH Team on August 13, 2021.

Where I grew up: I grew up in a small town in Canjulao, Jagna, Bohol.

My education or job training experience: I finished my Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology in 2015. I have working experience as a Medical Technologist for 5 years and 7 months in Lim Community Hospital.

My family: I have a big family. My father is a nurse in Saudi Arabia and my mother is a housewife. I have four other siblings. I am the second to the eldest.

My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I love reading books, listening to music and just surfing the net. I also love baking goodies and pastries.

Why I choose to work here: I want to achieve my American Dream, which is to work in a nice hospital as a lab tech. I want to enhance my skills and expertise as a lab tech, and I know Norton is a great hospital.