

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Judy Wenzl, BSN, RN, infection prevention

Show Me the Science - Why Wash Your Hands?

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water.

How germs get onto hands and make people sick

Feces (poop) from people or animals is an important source of germs such as Salmonella, E. coli O157 and norovirus that cause diarrhea, and it can spread some respiratory infections like adenovirus and hand-foot-mouth disease. These kinds of germs can get onto hands after people use the toilet or change a diaper, but also in less obvious ways, like after handling raw meats that have invisible amounts of animal poop on them.

A single gram of human feces—which is about the weight of a paper clip—can contain one trillion germs. Germs can also get onto hands if people touch any object that has germs on it because someone coughed or sneezed on it or was touched by some other contaminated object. When these germs get onto hands and are not washed off, they can be passed from person to person and make people sick.

Washing hands prevents illnesses and spread of infections to others

Handwashing with soap removes germs from hands. This helps prevent infections because:

- People frequently touch their eyes, nose and mouth without realizing it. Germs can get into the body through the eyes, nose and mouth and make us sick.

- Germs from unwashed hands can get into foods and drinks while people prepare or consume them. Germs can multiply in some foods or drinks, under certain conditions, to make people sick.

- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, like handrails, table tops, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.

- Removing germs through handwashing helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

Teaching people about handwashing helps them and their communities stay healthy. Handwashing education in the community:

- Reduces the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 23-40%

- Reduces diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by 58%

- Reduces respiratory illnesses, like colds, in the general population by 16-21%

- Reduces absenteeism due to gastrointestinal illness in schoolchildren by 29-57%

Not washing hands harms children around the world

About 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die each year from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, the top two killers of young children around the world.

- Handwashing with soap could protect about 1 out of every 3 young children who get sick with diarrhea and almost 1 out of 5 young children with respiratory infections like pneumonia.

- Although people around the world clean their hands with water, very few use soap to wash their hands. (Continued on p. 2)

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Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Judy Wenzl, BSN, RN, infection prevention

Handwashing (from p. 1)

- Washing hands with soap removes germs much more effectively. Handwashing education and access to soap in schools can help improve attendance.
- Good handwashing early in life may help improve child development.
- Estimated global rates of handwashing after using the toilet are only 19%.

Handwashing helps battle the rise in antibiotic resistance

Preventing sickness reduces the amount of antibiotics people use and the likelihood that antibiotic resistance will develop. Handwashing can prevent about 30% of diarrhea-related sicknesses and about 20% of respiratory infections (e.g., colds). Antibiotics often are prescribed unnecessarily for these health issues. Reducing the number of these infections by washing hands frequently helps prevent the overuse of antibiotics—the single most important factor leading to antibiotic resistance around the world. Handwashing can also prevent people from getting sick with germs that are already resistant to antibiotics and that can be difficult to treat. *Information for this article was provided by the CDC.* ●●●



In the Spotlight

Norton County Hospital undergoes maintenance for new chiller

Norton County Hospital experienced work around its facilities prior to and on July 26th to have a new chiller installed for its air conditioning system. Gino Salerno was working at our hospital on a locum basis at this time and took a video of the project with his drone; he took other photos that week at the Norton County Fair. Check it out at the links below:

New chiller installation: <https://bit.ly/2UhN6zb>

Norton County Fair: <https://bit.ly/2Ldtiu1> ●●●



In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

times of crisis when communication is vital,” Thompson said. “It also provides a means for continuous situational awareness for hospital administration on a daily basis. Critical access hospitals such as ours require multiple methods of this communication, both inside and outside of the community to coordinate assistance and relief as quickly as possible. Without multiple sources, victims could remain in danger for a longer period of time, which could lead to more casualties.”

The Norton Regional Health Foundation previously assisted the Norton County Hospital in purchasing new equipment. In early 2018, the foundation purchased a new fetal heart monitor to allow better mobility for laboring mothers. In January of 2019, new surgical instruments were purchased to allow for a quicker turnaround time between surgeries, which means more procedures can be completed in one day.

All equipment previously funded by the Foundation went through an internal application process. This method was also used to obtain the new 800 MHz radio and decontamination supplies. Equipment funded in the past two years has totaled more than \$36,000 to benefit staff and patients at Norton County Hospital.

“Many thanks to the Norton Regional Health Foundation for the funding of these products,” Thompson said.

“The foundation is proud to support the Norton County Hospital emergency preparedness program to make sure it has up-to-date and necessary supplies if an emergency were to occur in our area,” said Katie Allen, Norton Regional Health Foundation executive director. “It allows staff and the community to find comfort in knowing we are ready to treat patients and save lives in these situations.”

The Norton Regional Health Foundation is 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. It was established in 2016, and since then it has worked to fund hospital equipment, developed a scholarship program for nursing students, and collaborated with Live Well Norton to complete community health projects such as the Armory Drive Trail and Norton Kids’ Café. The foundation is currently raising funds to support the purchase of a new CT scanner for the hospital, which is a major equipment purchase.

Allen said the foundation is grateful to donors for their generous, tax-deductible contributions. These contributions allow for healthier local communities. For more information about the Norton Regional Health Foundation, visit the Foundation tab of the NCH website. ●●●



Foundation purchases radio and decontamination supplies for hospital

In April 2019, the Norton Regional Health Foundation purchased a new 800 MHz radio and decontamination supplies for just more than \$3,000 to be used for situations involving a disaster or any other preparation procedures at Norton County Hospital. Decontamination supplies must be replaced often for safety purposes. The new radio will enhance situational awareness and communication among community members and staff to make educated and timely decisions in a disaster.

Julia Thompson, BSN, RN, is the emergency preparedness and safety coordinator at Norton County Hospital. She said that the decontamination supplies included chemical-resistant gloves, hazmat over boots, PAPR (powered air purifying respirator) hoods and filters, which are a few of the incredibly crucial components of the hospital decontamination team’s gear.

“Having up-to-date decontamination gear provides needed protection for hospital staff so they may administer appropriate and timely care to the patient,” Thompson said.

In a critical access hospital or any other hospital, it is essential to have decontamination supplies, she added. There are many hazardous materials that go in and out of communities at all times of the day. The need for tools within local health care facilities to care for the possible victims is crucial, as other resources could be hours away.

“The 800 MHz radio is an essential external communication tool for Norton County Hospital in

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital leads full-scale disaster exercise

Norton County Hospital sponsored a full-scale and functional disaster exercise on July 10, 2019. This exercise provided participants with an opportunity to assess capabilities, plans, policies and procedures. It focused on decision making, coordination and integration with other organizations during an active shooter incident. The expected outcome of the exercise was strengthening interagency coordination and management of victims. The scenario for the fictional exercise was an active shooter incident at Eisenhower Elementary School. The following agencies and organizations participated in the exercise:



- Norton County Hospital
- Norton County EMS
- Norton County Emergency Management
- Norton County Health Department
- Norton City Fire
- USD 211

The incident was not real; however, the response activities during the fictional exercise were practiced in a manner to make it as realistic as possible. There are simple steps that Americans can take to prepare themselves and their loved ones for emergencies: be informed, make a plan, build a disaster supply kit and get involved through opportunities that support community preparedness. By gathering supplies to meet basic needs, discussing what to do during an emergency with your family in advance, and being aware of the risks and appropriate actions, you will be better prepared for the unexpected and can help better prepare your community and the country. Please visit <https://www.ready.gov>, or call 1-800-BE-READY to learn more about preparedness activities. For more information on this exercise and other emergency preparedness activities at NCH, please contact Julia Thompson, emergency preparedness coordinator, at 785-877-3351 or jthompson@ntcohosp.com. ●●●

Norton County Hospital announces relationship with TruBridge

Patients may be contacted by TruBridge for private pay assistance.

Norton County Hospital recently established a relationship with TruBridge, a company that is helping the hospital and patients with private pay billing matters. TruBridge is intended to help handle balances that are the patient's responsibility after insurance or if the patient is uninsured. TruBridge's call center number is 1-855-342-7042. The call center number is available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. TruBridge is also following up with guarantors who have outstanding balances by directly reaching out to them via phone. TruBridge representatives make these phone calls Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Patients would be informed that TruBridge is calling on behalf of Norton County Hospital. If a TruBridge representative leaves a voicemail, patients may be asked to return a call to the call center number. Patients should know that the calls are legitimate.

If you have specific questions, please contact the Norton County Hospital Business Office at 785-877-3351. ●●●

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital welcomes new physician on temporary assignment

Dr. Josh McCoy will be the next doctor to join Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic on temporary assignment. He will be in Norton periodically through the month of August and later in October to provide additional coverage throughout the facility.

Dr. McCoy grew up in a small town in the state of Washington. He completed his undergraduate degree from Seattle Pacific University and medical school at Loma Linda University in California. He is a member of the class of 2019 family medicine residency program at Ascension Via Christi in Wichita.

“Medical training, wonderful people and amazing sunsets brought my wife and I east from the Pacific Northwest to Kansas,” Dr. McCoy said. “What I like most about medicine is the art. No two people are the same despite any similarity of diagnosis.”

Like several other visiting physicians in Norton this past year, Dr. McCoy has a passion for medical mission work abroad. Dr. McCoy said that his faith in Jesus is his motivation. He also enjoys hiking, fishing, camping, outdoor projects, rock climbing with his wife and tossing his 1-year-old daughter in the air. ●●●



Norton County Hospital to offer telebehavioral health

In an effort to further support rural primary care and extend specialty resources across Kansas, the University of Kansas Health System's Care Collaborative has established an outpatient telebehavioral health network. Norton County Hospital is one of 10 participating sites in the network, and telebehavioral health services will be provided through Norton Medical Clinic beginning late August 2019.

These new services allow local patients to come into the clinic for an appointment as they normally would for primary care purposes. Within a private patient room in the clinic, they would be able to see a Kansas City-based licensed clinical psychologist over a secure videoconference. The psychologist can assess and treat a wide range of behavioral health concerns in patients, such as coping with depression and anxiety symptoms associated with a chronic illness, grief with the loss of a loved one, and life-threatening diagnoses, as examples. Broader behavioral health services may include healthy lifestyle interventions, support with complex medical regimens, pain management and help with substance use disorders. Services for emergent, crisis situations and high-acuity, severe, persistent mental illness are outside of this scope, but individuals with these needs would still be referred as necessary to an appropriate mental health center.

The need for behavioral health services in a primary clinic setting is backed by a wealth of data. According to the 2018 Mental Health America report, Kansas ranks 32nd in the nation for access to behavioral health services. More than 53 percent of Kansas adults with mental illness do not receive treatment, according to a Kansas Health Institute report.

Screening for behavioral health needs, such as depression, is an important first step to determining patient treatment. This is why depression screening is now part of a standard visit process for patients at Norton Medical Clinic. However, research has shown that while screenings are useful in increasing recognition of an issue, the screening alone does not consider the subsequent care needed.

Gina Frack, Norton County Hospital CEO, said that the depression screenings currently in place take a bit more time for the patients, their families and clinic staff, but this procedure may be helpful in saving lives.

“A screening helps the health care team identify when a patient may need additional support for his or her mental and spiritual well-being,” Frack said. “We then need to help patients get connected with those resources preferably as soon as possible.”

Now that the telebehavioral health services are added, more follow through will occur for care and treatment. (Continued on p. 6)

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital to offer telebehavioral health (from p. 5)

“The benefits of having telebehavioral health services at Norton Medical Clinic are numerous,” Frack said. “Services will benefit patients, many of whom may not have immediate access to a behavioral health specialist when they need it. Further, we will be able to provide these services in close proximity to home for patients in a place where they typically receive care – the rural health clinic. This reduces any stigma or privacy concerns over seeking behavioral health care.”

Frack added that a main benefit for Norton Medical Clinic and its primary care providers is the enhanced coordination. The clinic providers would be able to work with the psychologist in determining the best treatment for a patient.

Historically, traditional medicine has treated the physical needs and ailments separately from the mind. Sometimes health care forgets that “the head is connected to the body,” Frack said, and the clinic providers are on board with new ways to treat the entire person. Evidence shows that doing so can improve patients’ overall quality of life, both physically and emotionally.

The outpatient telebehavioral health network was made possible by a 3-year award from the Health Resources and Services Administration, and Frack said Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic are proud to be part of the program and thankful to the University of Kansas Health System for the opportunity.

To take part in telebehavioral health, patients must see their primary care provider at Norton Medical Clinic first, so the provider can refer the patient for these services. Then an appointment will be scheduled with the psychologist. Adult behavioral health care is the initial focus with this grant-funded project.

“It is our hope that we will see patients embrace and benefit from these new services provided locally,” Frack said. “Also, it is our hope that these services and the method in which they are provided will only become better so that more people of all ages can benefit from this care model. We know from statistics and the community’s input on surveys from prior Community Health Needs Assessments that behavioral health has consistently been in the top four health issues impacting our county and communities. It is imperative we move forward collaboratively to address this growing need to improve quality of life and increase the quantity of years of our friends and families.”

Telebehavioral health is covered by most insurances. If a patient does not have insurance, the health system offers discounted rates to support a patient’s decision to receive treatment. Uninsured patients may also work with one of the health system’s financial advisors to explore additional options. For more information, contact Norton Medical Clinic at 785-877-3305. ●●●

Three new physicians to join Norton County Hospital

Three physicians have signed contracts with Norton County Hospital and will begin employment in summer 2020. The contracts were formally approved at a special meeting of the hospital’s Board of Trustees on Friday, Aug. 16.

All three physicians are family practice and obstetrics providers. This means the hospital will bring back its labor and delivery program with the onboarding of these new physicians. The three physicians are also native rural Kansans.

Joshua Gaede, MD, is originally from Hoxie, Kansas. He is currently a resident in the Cox Family Medicine Residency program in Springfield, Missouri.

Miranda McKellar, MD, was raised in Sycamore, Kansas. She is currently a resident in the Smoky Hill Family Residency Program in Salina, Kansas.

Theresa Neill, MD, grew up in Severy, Kansas. She is currently a resident in the Smoky Hill Family Residency Program in Salina, Kansas.

All three physicians attended the University of Kansas School of Medicine on the Salina campus, which was created to address the critical shortage of physicians in rural areas, according to the university’s website. After completing medical school, they moved on to their respective residency programs and are in the class of 2020. They will move to Norton with their families within the next year.

“We are thrilled to officially welcome Dr. Gaede, Dr. McKellar and Dr. Neill to Norton County Hospital,” said Gina Frack, the hospital’s CEO. “We know they will do great things in Norton and provide our patients with wonderful and compassionate care. We look forward to having their expertise and adding new medical services with them and our current providers – Dr. Glenda Maurer, Jonna Inman and Kristin Vogel. I also can’t thank our current providers enough for all they have done and continue to do to ensure quality patient care even when we’ve been short-staffed. It truly takes a team.”

While the hospital has been recruiting for more permanent physicians, it has worked with several entities to have provider coverage in the Emergency department and to assist in the clinic. This will continue to happen while awaiting the arrival of the three newly signed physicians. Frack said the hospital has worked diligently to ensure that patient needs are met during this time of transition and has been fortunate to have several exceptional providers work on a locum, or temporary, basis.

Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic administration, staff, and board members welcome Dr. Gaede, Dr. McKellar, and Dr. Neill, and look forward to working with each of them. Bios of each physician are located on p. 7. ●●●

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Dr. Joshua Gaede



Joshua Gaede, MD, is a native of northwest Kansas, as he was born and raised on a farm and cattle ranch outside of Hoxie. Dr. Gaede said he learned from an early age that hard work and determination are the main traits necessary to succeed in life. This upbringing also ingrained in him a passion for rural living that has driven him to his current role as a family medicine physician.

Dr. Gaede's adult life started with a four-year jaunt as a collegiate athlete. He ultimately graduated with a degree in comprehensive chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry from the University of Nebraska Kearney. From there, his passion for the rural way of life and rural medicine came together as he attended the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Salina campus.

Following medical school, Dr. Gaede went on to become a resident in the Cox Family Medicine Residency program in Springfield, Missouri. He is currently in his last year of residency, to be completed in summer 2020.

"I am excited to continue my career back in my old stomping grounds of northwest Kansas," Dr. Gaede said.



Dr. Gaede, along with his wife, Kim, will be making the move to Norton with their strapping young son, Elliott, and additional child, as the couple is expecting another baby in December. Dr. Gaede said spending time with his family is at the top of the list of things he enjoys in his free time, but he also enjoys working out – especially weight training, woodworking, playing the piano, playing any kind of sport, and last but certainly not least, brewing beer.

Dr. Miranda McKellar



Miranda McKellar, MD, is originally from Sycamore, Kansas, which is located in the southeastern part of the state. She graduated as valedictorian from Neodesha High School in 2009. During high school, Dr. McKellar began working for a rural family physician, Dr. Bert Chronister, in Neodesha. This started her passion for full-scope family medicine that includes working with babies to those patients at end of life.

Following high school, Dr. McKellar attended the University of Kansas, where she cheered on the Jayhawks as she received her bachelor's degree in genetics. During her undergraduate career, Dr. McKellar continued to pursue her interest in rural family medicine by participating in the Scholars in Rural Health program. This program allowed her to spend more than 200 hours shadowing Dr. Chronister and learning the inter-workings of a rural family medicine practice.

Through the Scholars in Rural Health program, Dr. McKellar was accepted to the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Salina campus. She subsequently stayed in Salina at the Smoky Hill Family Medicine Residency program to finish her medical education and training, and she will complete her final year of residency in summer 2020.

While in residency, Dr. McKellar discovered a passion for women's health, full-scope obstetric care, diabetes management and wound care. She also enjoys procedural medicine both in the clinic and in the operating room. She plans to bring her medical passions to Norton County Hospital to help patients.

"I had the pleasure of attending medical school in Salina with two individuals who would come to be great friends and eventual colleagues, Dr. Neill and Dr. Gaede," Dr. McKellar said. (Continued on p. 8)



In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Dr. Miranda McKellar (from p. 7)

“After a visit to the hospital and tour of the town, it was evident that Norton is a great place to raise a family, be involved in the community and be a part of expanding the medical services at NCH.”

In her spare time, Dr. McKellar enjoys spending time with family, including her four pets (three cats named Doris, Ethel and Bobbi, and one dog named Minnie), spending time outdoors, hiking, fishing, hunting and photography. Dr. McKellar, her husband Ian, and their rambunctious 2-year-old son, Sawyer, said they are elated to be joining the community of Norton.

Dr. Theresia Neill



Theresia Neill, MD, grew up on a dairy farm near Severy, Kansas, which is straight east of Wichita in Greenwood County. She graduated from Butler Community College, then cheered on the Wildcats while receiving a dual bachelor's degree from Kansas State University in human nutrition and kinesiology, with a secondary major in gerontology.

She obtained her medical degree at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Salina, where she currently lives with her husband, Tate, while completing her residency through the Smoky Hill Family Medicine Residency program. She will complete her residency in summer 2020. Dr. Neill's primary medical interests are women and children's health, as well as obstetrics.

In her spare time, Dr. Neill said she enjoys doing many house and yard projects (much to her husband's dismay), cooking and baking, cycling, traveling and spending time in the Colorado outdoors with her sister.

She and Tate have two dogs, Lucy and Leo, and a cat, Boots, who provide a constant source of entertainment. Dr. Neill said her greatest goal is to be able to keep up with the daily sweeping from the hair off of her Labrador Retriever.

The Neills are expecting their first child very soon. The couple looks forward to putting down roots in Norton.

“We are looking forward to moving back to a rural community to raise our family and allow me to practice full-scope family medicine,” Dr. Neill said. ●●●



Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

Take advantage of your wellness benefits

As 2019 rapidly comes to a close, make sure you review your insurance policies and get your wellness visits scheduled. Check out the Human Resources—Benefits page on The Beat, and review the benefits on the NCH health insurance. If you are not on the NCH policy, make sure you review your own policy. Also, remember to schedule and submit your wellness exams on your supplemental insurances like cancer, accident and critical illness policies. ●●●

Mark your calendars! The next NCH Employee Blood Drive is Friday, Oct. 18th!



Human Resources

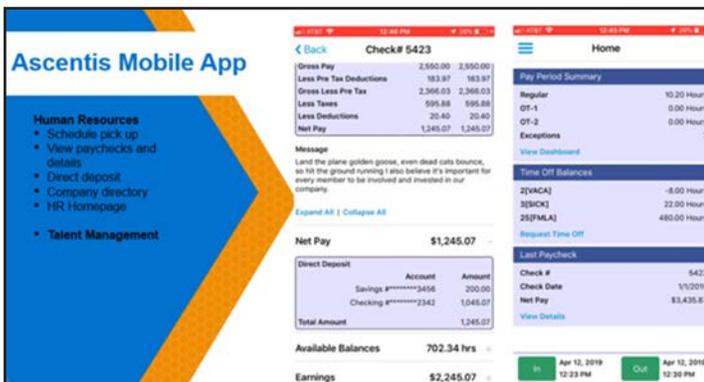
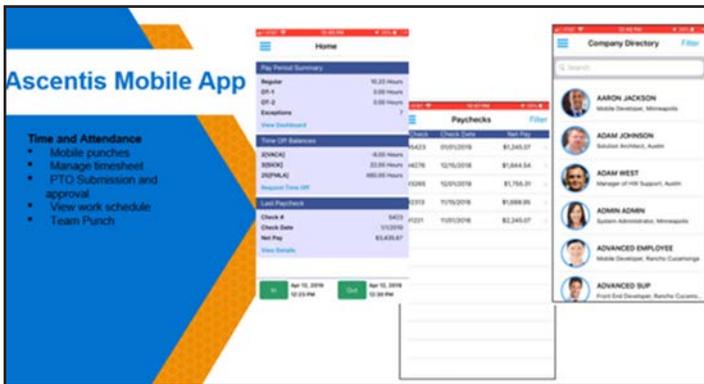
From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

KPERS optional life insurance enrollment

KPERS' optional life insurance open enrollment is September 1-30. Most members can apply for new coverage or increase their current coverage without answering any health questions. This is called "guaranteed coverage." This new coverage becomes effective January 2020. ●●●

Sneak peek samples!

This fall will be crazy busy building our new HR-Payroll-Timekeeping system. We are really excited to bring this new complete system to our employees! ●●●



The health of millennials

Nearly 73 million people in the U.S. are millennials – people born between 1981 and 1996. In a recent study, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index examined the health of the 55 million commercially insured millennials. The BCBS Health Index quantifies more than 200 different health conditions to identify which diseases and conditions most affect Americans' longevity and quality of life. It's powered by annual data from more than 41 million BCBS members who are commercially insured Americans. The study revealed the top health conditions that are impacting millennials, as well as a troubling trend in the overall health of millennials compared to the generation before them.

Health conditions impacting millennials

The BCBS Health Index data indicated the top 10 health conditions that impact millennials. These conditions are ranked by the adverse health impact of the condition, also known as the reduction in future healthy years due to the presence of the condition. When compared to the national population, millennials were more affected by behavioral health conditions.

1. Major depression
2. Substance abuse disorder
3. Alcohol use disorder
4. Hypertension
5. Hyperactivity
6. Psychotic conditions
7. Crohn's disease/Ulcerative colitis
8. High cholesterol
9. Tobacco use disorder
10. Type 2 diabetes

Additionally, the total adverse health for millennial women is 20% larger than for men. The gap is mainly driven by major depression, Type 2 diabetes and other endocrine conditions. The BCBS Health Index assigns U.S. populations a score between 0 and 100. A score of "100" represents optimal health. The higher the score, the closer a population is to achieving optimal health. The lower the score, the more a population has been adversely impacted by certain health conditions. In Kansas, millennial health ranks as 95.0, with major depression, alcohol use disorder and hypertension ranking as the conditions with the highest impact on millennial health.

For a detailed look at millennial health by Kansas counties or in other states, visit the BCBS Health Index website.

Millennials are less healthy than Generation X members were at the same age

In an effort to understand how the health of millennials differed from those of previous generations, the BCBS Health Index compared like age groups of Gen Xers who were ages 34-36 in 2014 with millennials who were ages 34-36 in 2017. (Continued on p. 10)

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

The health of millennials (from p. 9)

Four aggregate condition groups were created to better understand and compare the health conditions between the two generations: behavioral health, cardiovascular, endocrine and other physical conditions. The comparison found that millennials had 11% more total adverse health across these conditions than Gen Xers had at the same age. The increase was driven by the fact that millennials had a 21% increase in cardiovascular conditions, and a 15% increase in endocrine conditions, including diabetes.

With the millennial generation about to become the largest living adult generation, it's important to examine the generation's long-term health and wellness and how their health can impact workplace productivity and health care costs.

Source: Blue Cross Blue Shield Health of America report ●●●

Employee milestones

Congratulations to these employees, and thanks for your service to Norton County Hospital!

June

Ruth Mizell	34 years
Tami Black	30 years
Shannan Hempler	21 years
Deanna Hawks	12 years
Klare Bliss	10 years
Devaney Wells	9 years
Whitney Criqui	8 years
Brittany Porter	3 years
Corene Smith	3 years
Bethanie Ellis	2 years
Amber Graber	1 year

July

Ty Bruton	32 years
Deb Bowen	27 years
Dr. Glenda Maurer	22 years
Lana Jones	19 years
Brenda Dole	5 years
Tami Higby	4 years
Katie Allen	3 years
Faith Dulany	1 year
Alasia Kenney	1 year (+2.5 previous years)



August

Lynne Lewis	22 years
Mitch Bartels	17 years
Ashley Wonderly	16 years
Kim Green	12 years
Sherry White	11 years
Amy Griffey	10 years
Elsa Temmel	6 years
Monica Dial	3 years
Karen VanSkiike	3 years
Sonya Cap	2 years
Alisha Simmons	2 years
Rachael Rushton	1 year



Meet the Team!

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



Spencer Shirk

Physical Therapist

Joined NCH Team July 8, 2019

Spencer grew up in Norton. He graduated from Wichita State University with a Bachelor of Exercise Science, followed by a Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2017.

Spencer and his wife Bethany, also a native of Norton, enjoy all forms of outdoor recreation and are excited to be moving back to the community.

When asked why he chose to seek employment at NCH: "I'm looking forward to moving home and working with the current Rehab department and all staff at NCH to improve the health and lives of people in and around Norton County, whether that's through PT or joining community efforts that are already trying to provide healthy and active opportunities."



Kiana Estes

Dietary & Environmental Services

Joined NCH Team July 25, 2019

Kiana was born in Maine and moved to this area almost 15 years ago. She has worked at Dairy Queen, Pizza Hut, Andbe Home and volunteered at the Norton Theater.

Her family are those in her life who have earned her trust and have stuck around. Most of her biological family is not family any longer.

Kiana loves working on cars and trucks, reading and walking the dogs when it's cool out at night.

When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I've been here most of my life, and this is the most trustworthy place around Norton!"



Laura Compton

Environmental Services

Joined NCH Team Aug 5, 2019



Alyssa DeBoer

Nex-Gen Intern

Joined NCH Team May 29, 2019

Alyssa, along with her parents; brother, Gage; her dog, Angel; and her cat, Bear, live in Prairie View, KS. She graduated from Logan High School in Logan, KS, in May of 2017. She is currently attending Fort Hays State University in Hays, KS, to major in nursing.

Her dream is to become a Labor and Delivery Nurse once she graduates from Fort Hays State University. Alyssa is the summer 2019 Nex-Gen intern for NCH.



Angie Alexander

Nursing – RN PRN

Joined NCH Team May 30, 2019

Angie grew up in Norton. She graduated with her BSN, RN from Bethel College. She is the school nurse at USD 211 for early childhood through 12th grade. Angie enjoys the outdoors: biking, gardening, camping, kayaking and her kids' activities.

Her husband, Jay, is an Infusion/PICC nurse at NCH. They have a son, Connor, who is a senior and likes to fish, camp and play basketball, football and track. Their daughter, Olivia, is in 6th grade and loves volleyball, basketball, softball, swimming, camping and has 21 cats! (Anybody want a few cats!? 😊)

When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "We moved last summer to be closer to family and moved into my grandparents' house. We all enjoy living in the county and being closer to family!"



Nikki Wright

Health Information Management

Joined NCH Team June 5, 2019

Welcome back, Nikki!



Alesha Vahling

Administrative Assistant

Joined NCH Team June 19, 2019

Alesha grew up on a small, family farm near Norcatur, and was a member of one of the last graduating classes of Jennings High School. She graduated from Fort Hays State University with a B.B.A. in Management in 2001 and has worked in banking, telecommunications and customer service since starting her career.

She and her husband, Greg, have two children: Alyson, a junior at Norton Community High School; and Dominic, a 6th grader at Eisenhower Elementary School.

Alesha enjoys spending time with family, listening to a good book, playing volleyball (when she gets the chance) and shopping.

When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I have always had an interest in health care, and this opportunity gave me the chance to try something new while broadening my skills and abilities."



Christy Bloodworth

Clinic Patient Access Rep

Joined NCH Team June 3, 2019

Christy grew up in Norton. She has her Associate's Degree in Christian Education. She was previously a sales coordinator for a manufacturing company for 15 years.

She has 6 kids – 3 adult daughters named Brianna, Autumn and Courtney who are all married, and 3 sons ages 11, 12 & 13 named Manny, Juan and Zeke. She also has a 3-year-old cockapoo named Lilah.

Christy enjoys running and refinishing furniture. She also likes to read, watch her kids play sports and spend time with them at their activities.

When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I wanted to move closer to family as I am starting a new chapter in my life."



Ryan Zaragoza

Environmental Services

Joined NCH Team July 8, 2019



Mason Brackney

Engineering

Joined NCH Team June 25, 2019

Mason grew up in LaCrosse, KS. He received a degree in HVAC, plumbing and basic electrical from NCK Technical College in Beloit, KS. He enjoys hunting and fishing.

When asked why he chose to seek employment at NCH: "Family brought me up here, and thought this would be a good place of employment."



Haley Hamel

Business Office Coordinator

Joined NCH Team July 8, 2019

Haley is from Beloit, KS, where she grew up with 2 brothers and 4 sisters. She lived in Beloit most of her life until 2017, when she lost her mother to cancer. Almost all of her family either was or is in the health care field, so you could say she was born into it.

She attended Beloit Jr. Sr. High school until 2013. She obtained her Certified Nursing Assistant License in 2011 and worked in a nursing home until 2016. After having both of her children, she decided she wanted a change in her career and started working for a traveling nursing agency. She loved traveling across Kansas. That is where she developed a love for working in hospitals. She worked at small town hospitals and also big city hospitals. She fell in love with the bigger hospitals, and she and her family moved to Salina where she worked on the surgical/pediatric floor, ICU and sometimes ER for the past 2 years.

She and her husband, Phillip, got married in 2018 and have two boys, Ryker and Jordan. The family loved Salina but wanted to be closer to family and wanted Ryker to go to a smaller school. They moved back to Phillipsburg in June.

Haley enjoys anything outdoors and getting together with family.

When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "What drew me to NCH was how friendly everyone is here and all the improvements being made to help meet the needs of the community!"



Dani Brockmann

Nursing – RN

Joined NCH Team May 20, 2019

Dani grew up in Phillipsburg, KS. She attended Colby Community College for her LPN 2008 and RN 2015. She is also with Phillips County EMS-AEMT 2015. She most recently worked in the cardiac cath lab at KRMC in Kearney. She has been accepted into a Nurse Practitioner program and will start this fall.

She has three amazing boys: Jackson-14, Blake-12 and Tobias-4. She enjoys hunting and fishing with her boys. When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I always heard great things about NCH growing and thriving, and I wanted to be a part of a rural hospital that cares for their community."



Sarah Vasquez

Nursing – CNA

Joined NCH Team May 23, 2019



Amy Wentz

Nursing – CNA PRN

Joined NCH Team May 22, 2019

Engage the Community

Also, a special thanks to those who volunteered at Kids' Cafe and the Norton County Fair this summer!

Norton County Hospital staff volunteer at OK Kids Day

The annual OK (Outdoor Kansas) Kids Day was June 1 at Prairie Dog State Park. Our hospital again provided



a Wellness Exhibit! The children were given bottled water and goodie bags (donated by the Norton County Landfill) that included a first aid kit, surgical hats, masks, gloves, Band Aids, NCH coloring book, and several handouts on home/recreational safety and injury prevention, disaster preparedness, handwashing, car seat/booster safety, and safe Tylenol and Ibuprofen administration for parents.



Children also had the opportunity to pin the body parts on Anatomy Jack, practice hands-only CPR, view real X-rays and draw their own X-ray. Lana Jones, our Health Coach, had a table with several informational hand-outs on cardiac and stroke wellness, and children



could decorate their own bookmarks. Other staff volunteered as well. We saw more than 150 kids, and fun was had by all! ●●●

New commercial!

Our hospital and Norton Medical Clinic worked on a new video in June. The video was made for commercials on various cable stations and PBS. It is also linked on the NCH website and Facebook page. Thanks to Smoky Hills Public Television for their great work! ●●●



Give Back Kansas Challenge

The Kansas Volunteer Commission and Volunteer Kansas reported that 10 organizations participated in the first-ever Give Back Kansas Challenge, and the total volunteer hours reported by 922 employees was 2,593. This challenge took place between April 1 and May 31. Our hospital was proud to participate! ●●●

Hands-only CPR

On June 11, approximately 15 students ages 5-12 participating in the Almena City Library's Summer Reading Program had the ability to learn and practice hands-only CPR taught by one of our nurses, Julia Thompson, RN!

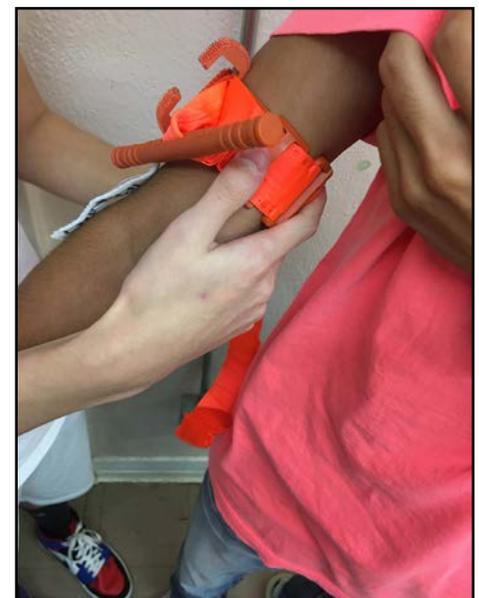
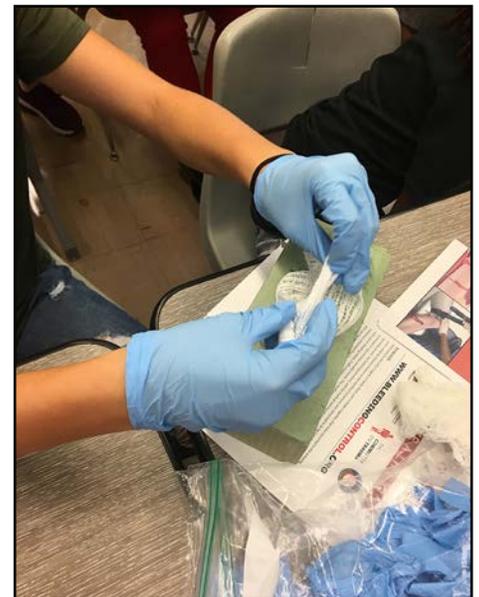
The three key things to remember are: PUSH HARD (at least 2 inches), PUSH FAST (100-120 beats per minute) and let the chest RISE FULLY.

Students practiced to the tune of Baby Shark (115 beats per minute). Students were also educated on how and when to call 911 in an emergency and what information to provide to dispatch. ●●●

Students learn Stop the Bleed

Our own Julia Thompson, RN, taught another Stop the Bleed class, this time at Northern Valley High School. This is the second year the program has been taught at the school to freshmen and juniors. A total of 24 students participated this year!

Stop the Bleed is a national awareness campaign and call-to-action. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Stop the Bleed is intended to cultivate grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives. ●●●



Other Celebrations

Employees of the Month

Adam Jolly

Our June 2019 NCH Employee of the Month was Adam Jolly, who works in Environmental Services. Adam's nomination included the following:

"Adam is fun to work with, as he is friendly and has a great sense of humor. He is also an incredibly hard worker and seems to always be working on something to improve the facility. He's a great model of 'Being Our Best.'"

"Adam is very detail oriented when cleaning our facility and dedicated to doing his job well. He goes above and beyond with patients as far as helping and showing love and care to them. He is energetic and enthusiastic; he brings a smile to the workplace every day he's here!"

"Adam is always so eager to help out and cheery. He is friendly to the patients as

they walk through. They really enjoy it when he is around. He goes above and beyond when he cleans our area. He is a real asset to our hospital!"

"Adam goes above and beyond to assist staff members, patients and visitors. He goes out of his way to make a patient's or family/visitor's experience better. I have heard many positive remarks about the care and service he provides the hospital. He is very deserving of this recognition."

Congrats to Adam on this achievement!

Ruth Mizell

Our July 2019 Norton County Hospital Employee of the Month was Ruth Mizell, RN! Ruth's nomination read:

"Ruth is a tremendous asset to Norton County Hospital. She is a caring and giving person, which makes her not only a great nurse but also a great co-worker. She represents the very best of us."

Congrats, Ruth, on this well-deserved recognition!

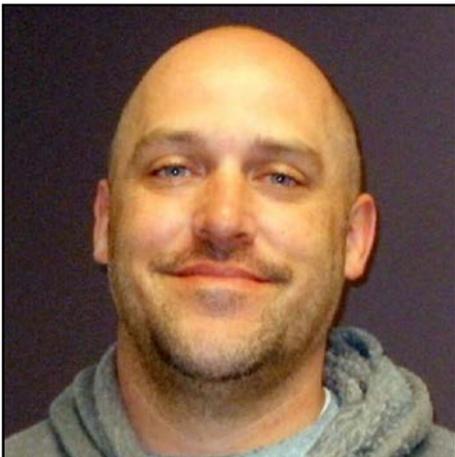
Julia Thompson

The August 2019 Employee of the Month for Norton County Hospital was Julia Thompson, RN! Julia is our Emergency Preparedness, Safety & Trauma Program Coordinator. Her nominations read:

"Julia is a wonderful nurse. She is very knowledgeable and always finds ways to improve patient care and programs/policies at NCH. As an example, she has taken the lead in organizing a full-scale emergency exercise in July to make our plans and processes better. I am truly amazed at all she does; she is very deserving of this recognition!"

"Julia is a great asset to this Hospital. She is willing to work wherever needed and also did a great job with the disaster drill."

Congrats, Julia! ●●●



Thank you, Alyssa!

We were thrilled to have Alyssa DeBoer working with us through the Nex-Generation Round Up for Youth program summer 2019! She did a great job presenting at the intern graduation in Phillipsburg. We also hosted a reception in her honor. This is a wonderful program, and we are glad to be a participating business.

(Photos above and at right)

