

Employee Healthbeat

Keep your heart healthy!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. February was Heart Month. Take these steps today to lower your risk of heart disease.

- Eat healthy
- Get active
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Quit smoking, and stay away from secondhand smoke
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure
- Drink alcohol only in moderation
- Manage stress

Anyone can get heart disease, but you're at higher risk if you:

- Have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes
- Smoke
- Are overweight or have obesity
- Don't get enough physical activity
- Don't eat a healthy diet

Your age and family history also affect your risk for heart disease. Your risk is higher if:

- You're a woman over age 55
- You're a man over age 45
- Your father or brother had heart disease before age 55
- Your mother or sister had heart disease before age 65

What is heart disease?

When people talk about heart disease, they're usually talking about coronary heart disease (CHD). It's also sometimes called coronary artery disease (CAD). This is the most common type of heart disease.

When someone has CHD, the coronary arteries (tubes) that take blood to the heart are narrow or blocked. This happens when cholesterol and fatty material, called plaque, build up inside the arteries.

Experts aren't sure what causes plaque to build up. They think it may happen when your arteries get damaged by:

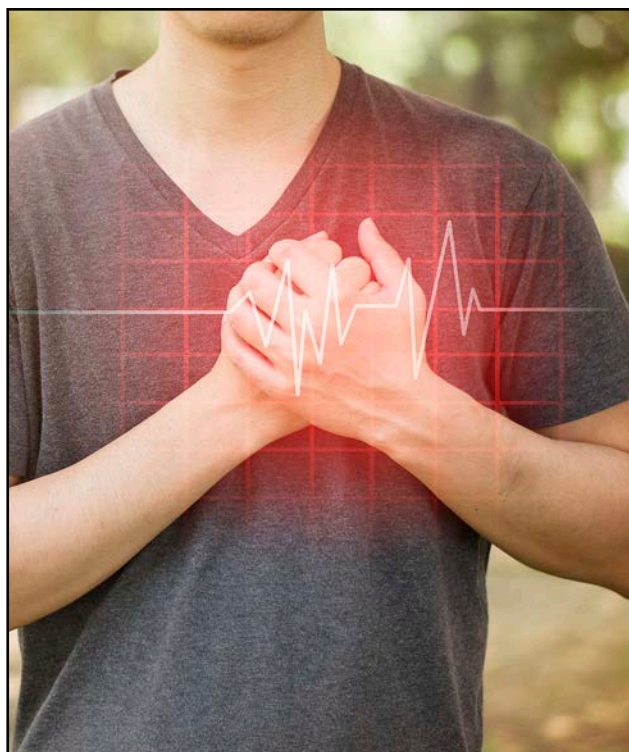
- Too much fat and cholesterol in the blood
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Too much sugar in the blood because of diabetes or other health problems

What are signs of a heart attack?

When plaque blocks an artery, it's hard for blood to flow to the heart. A blocked artery can cause chest pain or a heart attack.

A heart attack happens when blood flow to the heart is suddenly blocked. Part of the heart may die if the person doesn't get help quickly. Some common signs of a heart attack:

- Pain or discomfort in the center or left side of



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the chest, or a feeling of pressure, squeezing, or fullness

- Pain or discomfort in the upper body
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing (while resting or being active)
- Feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up
- Stomach ache or heartburn
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed or very tired
- Breaking out in a cold sweat

Not everyone who has a heart attack will have all the signs. Signs of a heart attack often come on suddenly. But sometimes, they develop slowly—hours, days or even weeks before a heart attack happens.

Talk to a health care provider if you feel unusually tired for several days, or if you develop any new health problems (like pain or trouble breathing). If you've had a heart attack in the past, it's important to know that symptoms of a new heart attack might be different from your last one, so talk with your provider if you have any concerns about how you feel.

Information provided by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ●●●

COVID-19 QUARANTINE VS. ISOLATION



QUARANTINE

keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.

Quarantine if you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, unless you are up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations or had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

If you are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations

- You do NOT need to quarantine unless you have symptoms
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days following exposure
- Get tested at least 5 days after your exposure

If you are not fully up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations

- Stay home and quarantine for at least 5 full days
- Wear a well-fitting mask if you must be around others in your home
- Get tested at least 5 days after your exposure, even if you don't develop symptoms

If you had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days

- You do NOT need to quarantine unless you develop symptoms



ISOLATION

keeps someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 away from others, even in their own home.

During isolation, stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom, if possible. Wear a well-fitting mask and improve the ventilation in your home.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status

- Stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others
- Wear a well-fitting mask if you must be around others in your home

Ending isolation if you had symptoms

- After 5 days and when you are fever-free (without use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving

Ending isolation if you did NOT have symptoms

- After at least 5 days after your positive test

If you were severely ill with COVID-19

- Isolate for at least 10 days
- Consult your doctor before ending isolation

Take precautions until day 10

- Wear a well-fitting mask anytime you are around others
- Avoid travel
- Avoid being around people who are at high risk



cdc.gov/coronavirus

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen Wagner, communications and foundation



New nurse practitioner to join Norton County Hospital

Norton County Hospital is pleased to announce it has hired Rebecca Kahrs, APRN, as an emergency medicine provider. She will begin working in the hospital's Emergency department as a part of the medical team on April 1, 2022.

Kahrs is an experienced nurse practitioner in family medicine, urgent care, inpatient care, emergency medicine and wound care. She received a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology from Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska. She then received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Nebraska Methodist College and a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Most recently, she has provided care at a critical access hospital in Nebraska.

Norton County Hospital adds Kahrs to the medical team that currently includes Josh Gaede, MD; Theresia Neill, MD; Miranda McKellar, MD; Gino Salerno, PA-C; Jonna Inman APRN; and Kristin Vogel, PA-C.

"We are excited to bring Rebecca on board with our great medical staff team," said Brian Kirk, Norton County Hospital CEO. "Her primary focus will be coverage in the Emergency Room, but she will also see clinic patients as her schedule allows. This will also afford our current providers more time to accommodate our clinic needs. We are confident this will be a win-win-win for all!"

Kahrs said she is passionate about providing well-rounded patient care and personalizing care based on what is best for the patient and his or her family. She lives on a ranch near Republican City, Nebraska, with her husband and daughters, Violet and Monroe. Her family raises cattle and horses. She and her family also enjoy their dogs and alpacas.

Norton County Hospital appreciates the community welcoming Rebecca Kahrs in the coming weeks. ●●●






Communication videos

The NCH Recruitment and Retention Committee has been working on a series of video skits related to respectful communication. You can find two videos on the Committees page of The Beat! One is focused on telephone etiquette, and the other is on having respectful conversations. ●●●

Meet the Team!

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

	<p><u>Tanya Guthrie</u></p> <p><i>Nursing – RN – PRN to Full Time in February</i></p> <p>Joined the NCH Team on December 3, 2022</p> <p>Where I grew up: Ulysses, Kansas and Austin, Texas</p> <p>My education or job training experience: LPN for 6 years, RN for 3 months from Colby Community College</p> <p>My family: Married to Jasen, who works at Tamko for 26 years now. Fayth and Gracie are also in the medical field going to school for paramedic. Brenen is getting married October 2022; he does fiber optic cable work.</p> <p>My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: I love the lake! I like to wakeboard. Volunteer EMT at Phillips Co. EMS for 3 years. Love to shop! Like to travel.</p> <p>Why I choose to work here: NCH is a great learning hospital. I am excited to learn more about my new role as an RN. There are many different areas of nursing for me to explore at NCH.</p>
	<p><u>Lacey Richardson</u></p> <p><i>Nursing – RN – PRN</i></p> <p>Joined the NCH Team on December 10, 2021</p> <p>Where I grew up: Oakley, KS</p> <p>My education or job training experience: Associates in Nursing, Bachelor in Justice Studies</p> <p>My family: I'm the youngest of 5 children. I have an 11-year-old daughter, 7 nieces and 1 nephew.</p> <p>My hobbies, special interests or activities outside of work: Reading, crafting, and spending time with family and friends</p> <p>Why I choose to work here: I am planning to move to Norton in the summer.</p>
	<p><u>Fayth Davenport</u></p> <p><i>Nursing – CNA Day Shift – Full Time</i></p> <p>Joined the NCH Team on January 27, 2022</p> <p>Where I grew up: Norton</p> <p>My education or job training experience: CNA/Surgical Tech</p> <p>My family: I have two little boys, Kaine is 5, Ryker is 2. My mom is Tanya Guthrie.</p> <p>My hobbies, special interests, or activities outside of work: I like to collect rocks, fish and go on road trips.</p> <p>Why I choose to work here: I am looking for more experience in a bigger hospital.</p>

Other Celebrations

Employees of the Month

Mitch Bartels, Radiology: Mitch was the Employee of the Month for December 2021! His nomination read:

“Mitch is a long-time employee of NCH. He is someone you can always count on to find answers to questions. He has worked very hard in preparing for new equipment in this department. He is very deserving of recognition for all he does to help patients, staff and NCH.” *Pictured below, left*

Shaelin Beckstrom, Dietary: Shaelin was the January 2022 Employee of the Month. Her nomination read:

“Shae is so very kind and caring and always has a smile on her face for all patients and staff. She goes out of her way to help in any way she can. She picks up extra shifts when we are short! She is a great asset to NCH.” *Pictured below, center*

Chelsea Hageman, Occupational Therapy: Chelsea was the February 2022 Employee of the Month. Her nomination read:

“Chelsea is an example of what NCH wants in a great employee. She consistently goes above and beyond. She helps outside of her department routinely. She helps on the floor when things get busy. The Rehab department gets great feedback from her patients as well. She does a great job with all things OT and has great patient care but also is constantly learning more to better herself with lymphedema, wound care, and women’s health. She also looks for ways she can help serve other departments. She very likely isn’t appreciated enough for all that she does for NCH.” *Pictured below, right*

Congratulations to these amazing employees!



Walk with a Doc continues at Norton Rec Center

Walk with a Doc is every first Tuesday of the month at noon! In the winter months, NCH has hosted it at the Norton Rec Center. This will continue until at least April. In nice weather months, the event will be at the USD 211 track. This program is made possible by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant and the Kansas Hospital Association. Join us for health education and a nice walk! Thank you to our doctors who have led the walks!

Pictured at right, Dr. McKellar leads the December walk focused on nutrition and healthy eating over the holidays.



Other Celebrations

Strategic planning

Wichita State University has been working with our hospital on the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment and updating the strategic and implementation plan. This project will be wrapped up in Spring 2022! *Photos of meetings are included below.*



Wear Red! February was Heart Month, and Feb. 4th was National Wear Red Day!

**Make heart healthy habits a priority!
Talk with your provider about ways to manage stress, manage blood pressure, eat a heart-healthy diet, move more and keep the beat—learn hands-only CPR!**



In the Spotlight

Bomgaars gives to the Norton Regional Health Foundation

Thanks so much to Bomgaars for using proceeds from Ladies Night in October 2021 to benefit the Norton Regional Health Foundation! This donation of \$396.31 will help our mammography program! *Photo at right includes Valerie Marble and Allison McChesney with NCH mammography and Katie Allen Wagner, Foundation Executive Director (with baby Kyla), accepting the donation at Norton Bomgaars.* ●●●



Other Celebrations

Learning from our medical staff

It seems we always have students shadowing our providers! Zeina Zayat attends the KU School of Medicine in Wichita (class of 2022) and will next move on to a residency in Family Medicine. She's pictured with our three doctors - Dr. Neill, Dr. McKellar and Dr. Gaede! *Photo included below.*



Dr. Maurer retires

Dr. Glenda Maurer retired from NCH at the end of 2021, and we thank her for her more than 24 years of service! Thanks to staff and community members who joined us Jan. 6th at the Heaton Building to celebrate Dr. Maurer! Happy Retirement! *Photo included above.*

Other Celebrations

Holiday party offers recognition for service

NCH honored staff who reached service milestones at the annual holiday party. Those recognized reached milestones in 2020 and 2021. Congrats to all! Here are the honorees:

- 5 Years: Katie Wagner, Jean Carmichael, Natalie Esslinger, Josie Logemann and Karen VanSike
- 6 Years: Claudette Graham and Carolyn Long
- 10 Years: Christen Skrdlant, Jonna Inman and Whitney Criqui
- 11 Years: Charli Enfield and Allison McChesney
- 20 Years: Shawnee Branek and Nikki Wright
- 21 Years: Lana Jones and Jennifer Schoenberger
- 25 Years: Charla Sprigg
- 36 Years: Ruth Mizell
- 40 Years: Cheryl Mann

Photos are included below and at right.



Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

Workplace stress management: Interpersonal demands

Workplace stress management typically focuses on the aftereffects of challenging tasks. The interpersonal demands of others around us are often overlooked. They're also stressful. Due to everything that results from having to hear thinly veiled insults and gossip to dealing with those who manipulate, bully, chronically complain, or even lie, withhold information, and miscommunicate, interpersonal stress may require more than a jog around the block to shake it off. Detachment, maintaining boundaries, self-discipline, assertiveness, ignoring negativity and avoiding manipulation are teachable soft skills. They can help you remain unaffected by this form of stress, perhaps entirely. Talk to a counselor to learn how to better control your emotions, how to stay focused on solutions and when to disengage from "people dynamics" at work that can make you feel drained at the end of the day.

Source: EMPAC Employee Newsletter ●●●

Off-load worry for improved performance

Write down your worries and concerns on paper, and you may have more mental capacity to engage in other tasks requiring your attention—and do so with increased efficiency. That's the discovery of researchers at the University of Michigan, where it was observed that those who wrote down their worries and concerns (engaging in a "mind dump") actually freed up brain capacity that was weighed down by the stress and anxiety associated with personal and workplace troubles. Will it work for you? Try it.

Source: EMPAC Employee Newsletter ●●●

Tips for supporting your teen

Start with a conversation

Ask your teen how they're doing—and take his or her feelings seriously. The pandemic may have cancelled or impacted routines and events that may have been significant to your child, from in-person school and sports seasons to birthday parties and out-of-town tournaments. Acknowledge what they might have lost, tell them that it's OK to not be feeling great right now, and understand that there may be uncertainty and anxiety about returning to "normal" soon.

Explore options for telehealth counseling

Look for organizations—like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)—that can connect you with resources, or connect with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The Sanvello app can be a convenient way to help reduce possible symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression.

Move toward a healthier schedule

Encourage daily routines, and keep in mind that being active each day can have a big impact on mental health. So can sleep. One study of teens found that not getting enough sleep was linked to a 62 percent increased risk of depressed mood.

Evaluate screen time

Technology may be an essential way young people connect socially. Time spent on phone calls, texts, video chats and social media platforms can add up, so it's a good idea to make sure their screen time isn't negatively impacting their sleep schedule, daily routines or well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that increased online activity may put children at increased risk for online harms, such as online sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, online risk-taking behavior and exposure to potentially harmful content.

Be mindful of potential substance use

A study done in Canada showed teen alcohol use was up during the pandemic—and that teens are drinking with their friends while they connect on social media.

- Half of all mental health conditions start by age 14
- Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for ages 15-19
- Many mental health conditions first appear before age 24

Source: United Healthcare Website ●●●

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

NCH Wellness Program

Employees recently expressed that wellness incentives were something important they wanted from NCH. Take a little time, and get signed in to the new United Healthcare website at www.myuhc.com. Get registered and explore all of the information on the UHC website, including wellness program resources! ●●●

The screenshot shows the United Healthcare website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, Find Care & Costs, Claims & Accounts, Coverage & Benefits, Pharmacies & Prescriptions, and Health Resources. Below this is a 'Health & Wellness' section featuring the 'RALLY' logo and a description: 'A new health benefit for UnitedHealthcare members: simple, fun, and personalized health recommendations.' It includes a 'Get Started Now' button. Below the Rally section is a 'Programs' section with three cards: 'Help Whenever You Need It' (Employee Assistance Program), 'Quit Smoking' (with coaches and tools), and 'Lose Weight with a Coach' (Real Appeal coach). Each card has a corresponding icon and a 'Get Started' or 'Let's Go' button. A small 'How is your visit?' poll is visible in the bottom right corner of the programs section.

NCH Matching Benefit

Employees shared a desire for NCH to consider matching funds in a deferred compensation 403b plan. Although this specific suggestion was not implemented, NCH did approve the first-ever matching benefit in employee HSA accounts starting with up to a \$20 per paycheck contribution. These alternative matching funds benefited four times more employees as would have received the benefit in a 403b account based on current enrollments. Enrolling in a high-deductible health plan saved employee premium dollars that they can deposit in an HSA account instead. This employee contribution and the new NCH matching contribution can continue to grow each year when the employee has a low out-of-pocket medical expenses. The unused dollars can be saved and used in the retirement years. Enrolling in this plan provides the employee the opportunity to receive and keep his or her money dollar for dollar, since the money put in the HSA account is tax deferred. This is a great way to start another nest egg for your retirement years. ●●●

Next NCH Blood Drive: Wednesday, April 13, 2022

A special thanks goes out to the employees who were able to donate blood at the community drive that was hosted right after our scheduled date in January. Staffing shortage of medical personnel not only affects hospitals. The American Red Cross is experiencing the same limited resources as we have seen by the last blood drive being cancelled during a national blood shortage crisis. ●●●

CEO Corner

From the desk of Brian Kirk, Chief Executive Officer

Lots of good and positive things happening at Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic!

As an organization, we are embarking on a plan to be Hardwiring Excellence that will help us make our facility the best place to work, receive health care and practice medicine as outlined by Quint Studer. At last count, more than 600 hospitals across the United States have adopted this management program and philosophy. It fits almost perfectly into our mission to meet the evolving health care needs of our region and provide an exceptional staff and patient experience to empower health and wellness at any stage of life.

Hospitals across the nation are successfully improving employee satisfaction, patient satisfaction, and medical staff satisfaction, and we are eager to emulate those achievements. We are pleased to announce two new additions to our team: Rebecca Kahrs, APRN, and Dr. Doak Doolittle. Rebecca hails from Nebraska and will provide additional coverage in our Emergency Room, so that our existing team can receive some relief and focus a little more on our clinic capacity. Dr. Doolittle is joining us as an independent, solo-practice, general surgeon. He is available for emergency, clinic and scheduled surgical services. We are planning

to start out with once-a-week clinic and surgical availability and ramping up as volumes increase. This will enable us to provide more services at home, which previously had to be transferred to other hospitals.

Our Board of Trustees just approved new software, InterQual, that our medical staff can use to assist with admission criteria and capturing requisite information. This solution is widely recognized as the best practice available. In addition, we are working on a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and have selected Cerner as the best choice. Our anticipated go-live date for the new EMR is September 19, 2022, and we plan to interface the new admit criteria software so that our providers can work at peak efficiency and performance.

We are excited to be collaborating with our nursing staff to eliminate agency nurses from our hospital. We have implemented a new compensation package for our team to incentivize them to help cover our critical needs and shortage areas. Concurrently, we are working toward a collaborative patient-centered team approach to ensure appropriate and adequate staffing levels. We are pleased to announce that Kellie Belleau and Mel Dewitt have stepped up to help us lead these initiatives as our new Interim Director of Nursing and nurse scheduler. They are off to a great start. Let's continue to contribute and collaborate to make Norton County Hospital the best we possibly can. ●●●



Employee Milestones

December

Pam Miller	19 years
Christen Skrdlant	2 years, plus 8 prior years
Morgan Griffey	9 years
Carol Richmeier	8 years
Jeanette Haskett	3 years, plus 4 prior years
Connor Alexander	1 year
Kaitlyn Baird	1 year
Sandy Seems	1 year

January

Kellen Jacobs	8 years
Jean Carmichael	6 years
Marla Kuhn	5 years, plus 6 prior years
Valerie Marble	5 years
Marissa Schamberger	3 years
Jordan Gemboys	1 year, plus 1 prior year
Yvette Taylor	2 years

February

Jordan Brown	13 years
Jessie Dougherty	10 years
Natalie Esslinger	6 years
Melody DeWitt	5 years
Heather Saville	5 years
Kay Fahlbusch	1 year
Ken Fisher	1 year
McKenna Fortin	1 year
Matt Rushton	1 year
Cassie Stanley	1 year, plus 2 prior years

Congratulations to all!

Engage the Community

STEMM Day at Norton Community High School

Jimmy Sauter, CRNA at Norton County Hospital, talked about his career in medicine at Norton Community High School in February! He was one of the featured speakers at STEMM Day with STEMM FIRE Foundation! *Photo included at right.* ●●●

Stepping On begins Feb. 14

Norton County Hospital is offering the next Stepping On Workshop! This workshop is for any individual 65 years and older, and it is being hosted every Monday starting Feb. 14 through Mar. 28 from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Norton County Hospital Conference Room. The intent of the workshop is to empower seniors with the tools and resources to prevent falls. It is a free class that NCH is excited to offer! *Photo included below.* ●●●



Donating to a great cause

Thanks to all staff who donated food to the Lions Club Christmas baskets! The food was collected at the annual holiday party. In the fall, our team also collected for the student pantry at Northern Valley. We are proud to support our Norton County communities! *Photos below.*



Join the Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)

This council will be a mix of hospital employees and community members. There will be monthly meetings to discuss any issues and come up with the best solution that will be beneficial for patients as well as staff. PFAC's mission is to create a culture where patients and families of the hospital and clinic are empowered to communicate with staff in a collaborative effort to promote education and change. If you are interested, visit the PFAC page on the NCH website, or contact Valerie Marble or Allison McChesney!