

Employee Healthbeat

From the desk of Judy Wenzl, BSN, RN, infection prevention & employee health

Stress management techniques for health care staff

Health care workers have experienced an incredible amount of stress in recent weeks as they have continued to work during the coronavirus pandemic. Some ways to manage stress include:

- Walking
- Yoga and meditation
- Getting outdoors to enjoy the sunshine (gardening, grilling, playing yard games with family, etc.)
- Bubble baths
- Deep breathing and visualization
- Progressive muscle stretching and relaxation
- Basic lifestyle improvements (eat well-balanced meals, get plenty of sleep, etc.)

The wellbeing and emotional resilience of health care workers are key components of maintaining essential health care services during the pandemic. Check on one another! Monitoring and assessing mental health of health care personnel will be important, along with efforts to ensure their successful reintegration with work colleagues, should they themselves become infected with COVID-19. Both institutional supports and self-care strategies are important.

Fighting stress through preparedness

Health care workers are accustomed to participating in frequent formal and informal trainings. Additional organizational efforts during the COVID-19 outbreak should be ongoing and can provide a measure of stress reduction. Health care workers need training in:

- Specific details about transmission of the COVID-19 virus

- When and how to screen patients and, potentially, family members
- The use of personal protective equipment
- When to invoke quarantine and isolation
- Ethical decision-making about triage and surge capacity issues

To increase their sense of self-efficacy, workers may also want to take part in training and planning exercises that include:

- Practicing response roles
- Implementing all levels of quarantine
- Enforcing movement restrictions
- Managing limited resources
- Handling mass fatalities
- Understanding surge-related triage decision trees
- Conducting mental health screening
- Coping with high stress demands
- Preparing for the needs of their families if workers are required to be more engaged at work or quarantined

Staff in health care facilities may also want to meet with leaders to discuss the importance of stress management and psychosocial support for the workforce. Discussions could include the possibility of frontline stress control teams, appropriate work/rest schedules and support for the needs of providers' family members.

Stress in health care workers in the world of COVID-19

There are specific sources of stress for health care workers treating patients with the COVID-19 virus. These stressors include:

1. Need to employ strict biosecurity measures
 - Health care workers who are called upon to assist or treat those with COVID-19 may experience stress related to:
 - Physical strain of protective equipment (dehydration, heat, exhaustion)

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- Physical isolation (restrictions on touching others, even beyond working hours)
- Constant awareness and vigilance regarding infection control procedures
- Pressures regarding procedures that must be followed (lack of spontaneity)

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Stress management techniques for health care staff (from p. 1)

2. Risk of disease transmission
 - Infection control is a significant concern that can be exacerbated by:
 - Common flu and cold symptoms being mistaken for COVID-19
 - The extended symptom-free incubation period of COVID-19
 - A relatively higher mortality rate compared to influenza
 - The tension between public health priorities and the wishes of patients and their families regarding quarantine

3. Multiple medical and personal demands
 - The complexity of responding to COVID-19 may result in conflicting personal and professional demands, including:
 - Continued daily workload demands competing with COVID-19 preparation and treatment measures
 - A need to maintain high standards in the face of a low-frequency event within which official recommendations and policies change regularly
 - Possible separation from and concern about family members
 - Fears about infection and subsequent implications for self, patients and family
 - Inner conflict about competing needs and demands

4. Stigma
 - Health care workers can be affected by both internal and external stigma related to the COVID-19 virus and its impact, such as:
 - Others' fear of contact with those treating patients with COVID-19
 - Health care workers' self-stigma about voicing their needs and fears

Dealing with stress during the outbreak

A strong service-orientation, a lack of time, difficulties in acknowledging or recognizing their own needs, stigma and fear of being removed from their duties

during a crisis may prevent staff from requesting support if they are experiencing stress reactions. Given this, employers should be proactive in encouraging supportive care in an atmosphere free of stigma, coercion, and fear of negative consequences.

Self-care for health care workers can be complex and challenging, given that people in these roles may prioritize the needs of others over their own needs. Therefore, a self-care strategy should be multi-faceted and phased properly to support the sense of control and contribution of health care providers without making them feel unrealistically responsible for the lives of patients. For instance, during work shifts, providers should engage in these behaviors:

- Self-monitoring and pacing
- Regular check-ins with colleagues, family and friends
- Working in partnerships or in teams
- Brief relaxation/stress management breaks
- Regular peer consultation and supervision
- Time-outs for basic bodily care and refreshment
- Regularly seeking out accurate information and mentoring to assist in making decisions
- Keeping anxieties limited to actual threats
- Doing their best to maintain helpful self-talk and avoid overgeneralizing fears
- Focusing their efforts on what is within their power
- Acceptance of situations they cannot change
 - Fostering a spirit of fortitude, patience, tolerance and hope

At the same time, they should avoid:

- Working too long by themselves without checking in with colleagues
- Working "round the clock" with few breaks
- Feeling that they are not doing enough
- Excessive intake of sweets and caffeine
- Engaging in self-talk and attitudinal obstacles to self-care, such as:

- "It would be selfish to take time to rest."
- "Others are working around the clock, so should I."
- "The needs of survivors are more important than the needs of helpers."
- "I can contribute the most by working all the time."
- "Only I can do..."

Dealing with stress in the aftermath of the outbreak

After a period of caring for those with COVID-19—especially quarantined patients—a readjustment period is to be expected. Health care workers will need to commit to making personal reintegration a priority. This includes:

- Seeking out and sharing social support, which may need to occur virtually
- Checking in with other colleagues to discuss work experiences
- Increasing supervision, consultation and collegial support
- Scheduling time off work for gradual reintegration into personal life
- Preparing for worldview changes that may not be mirrored by others in one's life
- Avoiding negative coping strategies such as:
 - Use of alcohol, illicit drugs or excessive amounts of prescription drugs, which all interfere with sleep cycles and prolong recovery
 - Suddenly making big life changes
 - Negatively assessing their work contributions
 - Keeping too busy
 - Viewing helping others as more important than self-care
 - Not wanting to talk about work experiences with others

If stress persists for longer than two to three weeks and interferes with functioning, health care workers should consider participating in formal mental health treatment.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID_healthcare_workers.asp ●●●

In the Spotlight

Board of Trustees attend statewide training

The Norton County Hospital Board of Trustees attended the Kansas Hospital Association Critical Issues Summit in Wichita earlier this year. Thank you for your work to support our hospital! ●●●



Dietary pandemic stats

Our Dietary staff members are amazing! They made major adjustments to adhere to the safest practices at any given time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are a few stats during our strictest phase, when the kitchen was closed off to outsiders (other than Dietary staff) and we allowed no visitors in our facility. From April 10 to May 14, our Dietary department served:

- 73 Apples, Oranges or Bananas
- 343 Fruit Cups
- 183 Yogurt Parfaits
- 60 Breakfast Burritos
- 126 Chef Salads/Diced Chicken Salads
- 176 Side Salads
- 165 Veggie Cups
- 572 Bacon/Sausage Links
- 555 Scrambled Eggs Servings
- 546 English Muffins, Croissants, Biscuits or Bagels
- 166 Cinnamon Rolls, Peanut Butter Twists or Long Johns
- 857 Sandwiches (hot and cold)
- 171 Chip Bags
- 172 Fries Servings
- 261 Sodas
- 438 Baked Goodies

WOW is all we can say! Thank you, Dietary staff!



Employee of the Month, March 2020: Morgan Griffey, Radiology

Morgan's nomination read: "She is so very helpful. Any questions you have with radiology, she will find out and get back with you in a short period of time. She will notify you of things that are needed such as a prior auth or order, etc. Always has a pleasant tone to voice. Very helpful person, great asset to the Radiology department." Congrats to Morgan! ●●●



Employee of the Month, April 2020: Shannan Hempler, HR

Shannan's nomination read: "Shannan works tirelessly behind the scenes, keeping us paid, preparing the new timekeeping system, making sure everything works without a single hiccup. She does so much that we are all unaware of how hard she is working." Congrats to Shannan! ●●●



Employee of the Month, May 2020: Jeanne Pharis, Dietary

Jeanne's nomination read: "Jeanne is a dedicated employee and has worked at NCH for many, many years. She is always friendly and does an awesome job of preparing and cooking meals for the staff and patients at NCH. I feel that she is well deserving of this award." Congrats to Jeanne! ●●●

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

Resources from EMPAC

See the May 2020 Newsletter in its entirety at—Login: NCH
http://empac-eap.com/assets/uploads/newsletter-files/Front_Line_Employee_May_2020.pdf

More COVID-19 resources for staff: Reducing fear and anxiety

Uncertainty about what's going to happen with COVID-19 and its impact on everyone can have you feeling anxious and fearful. Whether you are concerned about your job or an elderly family member, getting food and supplies or even getting sick yourself—you have an important goal: combat this stress and stay calm. Here's how:

- 1) Practice self-care: Focus on what you can control. Get more sleep, read a new book, have a warm bath or take a walk somewhere quiet—whatever you do, now is the time to prioritize your well-being.
- 2) Limit social media use: Set limits on how often you use social media, especially if you're at home where it's tempting to check in more often. Don't let a constant stream of tweets, status updates and conflicting opinions overwhelm you.
- 3) Stay informed by reading only reliable sources, such as government websites, the WHO and the CDC. Other news sources may be less accurate, and they may cause feelings of panic and concern.
- 4) Talk it out: Acknowledge any stress or anxiety you're feeling right now, and ask others how they're coping. Talk to family and friends, and make sure you check in with how your kids are feeling.
- 5) Reach out to coworkers: Now is the time for coworkers to come together. Focus on maintaining positive morale at work, and if you're working remotely, set regular meetings.

Grief, loss and the pandemic

Those needing to attend or arrange funerals are facing extreme challenges because of social distancing and travel restrictions related to COVID-19. These circumstances can make grief and loss worse. Thoughtful and effective answers to almost every question imaginable about funeral services and COVID-19 can be found at www.rememberingalife.com, with new content posted by the National Funeral Directors Association. You will find the answers about communication, support, grief, overcoming long-distance challenges, funeral options, safe viewing processions, planning, leveraging technology, holding multiple small ceremonies and dozens of other issues.

Flip the script to fight negativity

Overcome negative self-talk more effectively by “flipping the script” and transforming the moment of negativity into positive energy. Examples: 1) Whether you stub your toe or are criticized on the job, be aware of the impulse to engage in negative self-talk. Instead, think “I could make myself feel worse or beat myself up about this, but I refuse. I'll focus on preventing a similar experience.” 2) If you're dieting, don't say, “I can't have cake.” This is self-punishing. Flip the script and say, “I don't want cake.” It's more empowering. 3) Be your own personal coach. After a mistake, rather than say, “I am not good at this,” flip the script, and consider how to do it better. If you don't know how, say, “If I did know how to do this better, what would I be doing?” Then try that! ●●●

What people really want to know about Economic Impact Payments

[IRS.gov](http://www.irs.gov) has answers to many questions people have about their Economic Impact Payment. Here are answers to some of the top questions people are asking about these payments.

Is this payment considered taxable income?

No, the payment is not income, and taxpayers will not owe tax on it. The payment will not reduce a taxpayer's refund or increase the amount they owe when they file their 2020 tax return next year. A payment also will not affect income for purposes of determining eligibility for federal government assistance or benefit programs.

Can people who receive a Form SSA-1099 or RRB-1099 use Get My Payment to check their payment status?

Yes, they will be able to use "Get My Payment" (<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>) to check the status of their payment after verifying their identity by answering the required security questions.

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Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

Blood drive June 11th

The next blood drive at Norton County Hospital is Thursday, June 11th. Donations from the NCH blood drive in January 2020 were sent to help patients at the below hospitals.

HCA-WESLEY MEDICAL CENTER
GOVE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER
VIA CHRISTI HOSPITAL-ST. FRANCIS
WESTERN PLAINS MEDICAL COMPLEX

Thanks to the many who gave blood and scheduled upcoming appointments over the past couple of weeks, the American Red Cross has been able to meet immediate patient needs. During this uncertain time, we encourage individuals to keep scheduled blood, platelet or AB Elite plasma donation appointments and to make new donation appointments for the weeks ahead to ensure a stable supply throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Donating blood products is essential to community health, and the need for blood products is constant. As part of our nation's critical infrastructure, healthy individuals can still donate in areas that have issued shelter in place declarations. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need.

There is no known end date in this fight against coronavirus and the Red Cross needs the help of blood and platelet donors and blood drive hosts to maintain a sufficient blood supply for weeks to come. In times of crisis, the Red Cross is fortunate to witness the best of humanity as people roll up a sleeve to help those in need. We greatly appreciate the generosity of the public to keep hospital shelves stocked during this uncertain time. ●●●

Lunch & Learn, June 3rd at 12 p.m., hosted by the Kansas Hospital Association

Please let Shannan know if you are interested in attending this "Psychology of Spending" workshop (details at right) so that an appropriate location can be determined. ●●●

Recent Milestones

Congratulations to these employees, and thank you for all that you do!

March:

Mary Boyce	28 years
Allison McChesney	10 years
Josie Logemann	4 years
Adam Jolly	2 years
Jay Alexander	1 year
Nancy Vap	1 year

April:

Charla Sprigg	24 years
Dan Dole	22 years
Jennifer Schoenberger	21 years
Jan Long	14 years
Gary Hembd	10 years
Julia Thompson	8 years
Megan Juenemann	6 years
Judy Wenzl	2 years

plus previous 11.75 years

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Psychology of Spending Workshop

Kansas Hospital Association Members
Wednesday June 3, 2002 Sessions at 12:00 PM

Join us at <https://www.gotomeet.me/HealthCareAssociates>
Raffle Prizes for attendees!



You went in planning to "just look" and walked out with \$500 worth of clothes.

How did that happen?? Find out what psychologists think and how to avoid impulse buys when you shop.



The Healthy Way to Bank® hacu.org

HACU 072018

In the News

From the desk of Katie Allen, communications and foundation

Norton County Hospital takes on the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way many businesses can operate. Like other businesses throughout Kansas, Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic have been working on procedures to gradually re-open more services and facilities following guidelines from federal and state government officials.

Policies and procedures have been developed and modified during this fluid situation. As of the release of this newsletter, Norton County has had two lab-confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. There are currently no active cases.

Since April 10, no visitors have been allowed in the hospital and clinic facilities; staff and patients seeking medical attention have been the only ones in most circumstances allowed in, as a safety measure to protect against potential spread of COVID-19. As of May 15, restrictions were lessened to include:

- All visitor and patient traffic is limited to the Outpatient Entrance and front Medical Clinic Entrance.
 - Those seeking emergency care still present through the ER door.
 - A screener will be at both the Outpatient and Medical Clinic entrance to screen patients and visitors.
 - One visitor at a time is permitted to be with a patient.
 - No visitors under 12 years of age.
 - Visiting hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Visitors visibly showing symptoms (such as cough, fever and shortness of breath) will not be allowed in the facilities.
 - Please avoid congregating and crowding; practice social distancing.
 - Patients with respiratory symptoms are required to wear a mask. Other patients and visitors are not required but are encouraged to wear their own mask to the hospital or clinic, per guidelines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state government leaders. Those who do not have their own mask but would like to wear one may be given a mask provided at the screening station. The hospital has a limited supply of protective equipment, which is why bringing one from home is the most desired option.
 - Staff who provide patient care will continue to wear a mask at all times.
- These details are subject to change at any time, particularly if the positive case counts of COVID-19 in the county or surrounding area increase. Please pay attention to and follow signs that are posted at the hospital and clinic facilities.

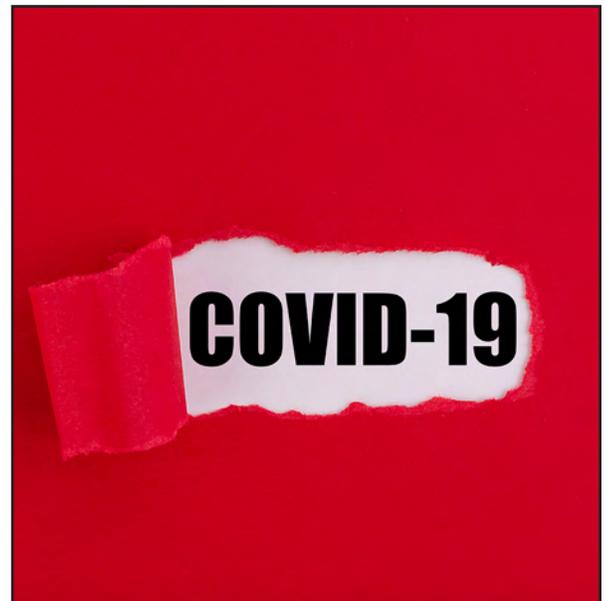
“It is fair to say that changes and challenges will be ongoing as we move forward blending all of our services with COVID precautions here at Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic,” said Gina Frack, CEO. “Please understand that just as we are lessening our restrictions based off a variety of factors, we may need to elevate back to higher restrictions again in the future. We use a number of ‘triggers’ to justify changes, all of which are based on internal and external factors and supported by current best practices from KDHE (Kansas Department of Health and Environment), CDC and other reputable sources. We will let the public know via a news release sent out locally, on our website, Facebook and Twitter as things change.”

Patients should know that the hospital and clinic are taking necessary measures to keep patients safe. Some health care needs cannot wait, and emergency services are available any time patients need them. Telehealth appointments remain an option in some cases at the Medical Clinic and Outpatient Clinic. Staff will work with patients on the best appointment option for them. The Medical Clinic is continuing to see well patients at the first part of the day and sick patients at the end of the day to continue reducing potential exposure to COVID-19 or other contagious diseases.

The hospital is also planning to open up more elective services, such as surgeries that have been on hold during the governor’s stay-at-home orders. The current plan is to first re-introduce general surgery at the end of May, followed by other scheduled surgical procedures. Patients will be contacted about re-scheduling their elective surgeries.

As a reminder, if going to Norton County Hospital facilities with respiratory symptoms, please call in advance. The hospital number is 785-877-3351 and clinic number is 785-877-3305. It’s important to continue to wash hands frequently, social distance in public and only travel if necessary. COVID-19 is still an ongoing pandemic.

Keep up-to-date on COVID-19 information from local, state and national sources at www.ntcohosp.com or on the COVID-19 page on The Beat. The Incident Command team has been in emergency operations since March 13, 2020. Many updates and changes have happened during this time, so the historical perspective of this pandemic can be viewed online as well. ●●●



Hospital Week 2020: “Where Health Comes First”

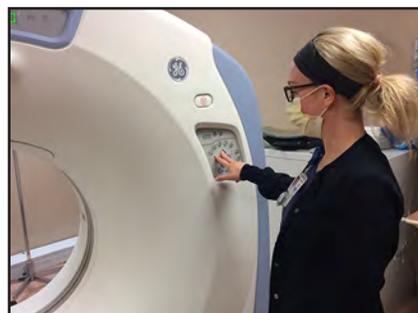
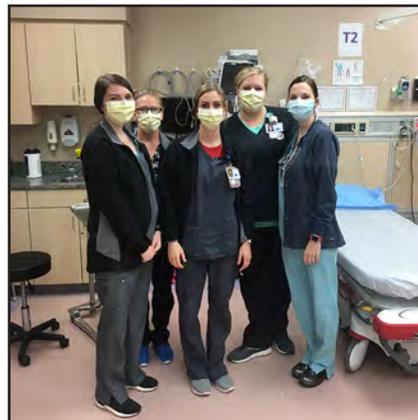
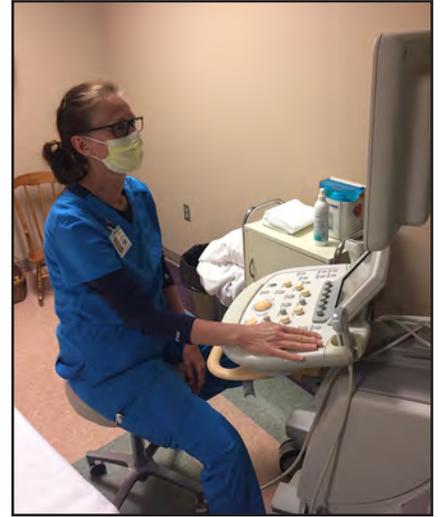
Hospitals in Kansas and across the U.S. celebrated National Hospital Week, May 10-16. The theme for National Hospital Week 2020 was “Where Health Comes First.” Due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the U.S. and world, there has never been a more important or appropriate time to honor our hospitals and the people who work in hospitals.

National Hospital Week, celebrated the first full week in May since 1921, highlights the importance of every hospital, health system and person involved in keeping our communities healthy. Now more than ever, this important week gives us all the opportunity to highlight our health care workers and the innovative ways they are supporting the needs of their community members during this pandemic.

Norton County Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital and Level IV trauma center, has the Norton Medical Clinic and has a foundation, the Norton Regional Health Foundation. The hospital and its clinic currently staff about 120 employees, including one physician, one nurse practitioner, one physician assistant and one nurse anesthetist. The hospital will welcome three additional physicians to the medical team in September 2020. The hospital is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year, and it offers many levels of inpatient care, a wide range of outpatient services and several visiting physician specialty clinics.

Not only do Kansas hospitals, like Norton County Hospital, keep communities healthy, strong and vibrant, hospitals also benefit the financial health of the state. In Kansas, hospitals employ more than 97,000 people or 4.8 percent of all job holders and generate \$7.1 billion in direct total income. Kansas hospitals support the creation of additional jobs in other business and industry and have a total employment impact of approximately 185,000 jobs. For every one dollar of income generated in the hospital sector, another 60 cents is generated in other businesses and industries in the state’s economy; thus, Kansas hospitals have an estimated total impact on income throughout all business and industry of \$11.4 billion. National Hospital Week as an opportunity to thank all of the dedicated individuals – physicians, nurses, therapists, engineers, food service workers, administrators and so many more – for their contributions.

Kansas Hospital Association information contributed to this report. KHA is a voluntary, nonprofit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 216 member facilities, of which 123 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA’s vision is “Optimal Health for Kansans.” ●●●



Meet the Team!

Norton County Hospital Human Resources is pleased to announce our new employees. Please say hello, and welcome them!

	<p>Bailey Ambrosier <i>Business Office – Temporary</i></p> <p>Rejoined NCH Team March 6, 2020</p> <p>Bailey grew up in Norton. She received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Kansas State University and a Master's degree in Biomedical Sciences from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences.</p> <p>She has two younger sisters who currently attend Kansas State University. Her mom is a 5th and 6th grade English teacher at Eisenhower Elementary. Her dad farms and ranches. Bailey loves reading, spending time at the lake, watching and participating in any sport, and her cocker spaniel, Decker.</p> <p>When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I previously worked at Norton County Hospital during the summer while I was in high school and college. I am helping out temporarily in the business office and will be attending physician assistant school at Wichita State University this summer."</p>
	<p>Erin "Michelle" Williams <i>Surgery Manager – Full Time</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team March 17, 2020 as a PRN RN. She became the full time Surgery Manager on May 11th.</p>
	<p>Breanna Ubersox <i>Medical Clinic – Certified Medical Assistant – Full Time</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team March 23, 2020</p> <p>Breanna grew up in a small town in Southwest Wisconsin, called Mineral Point. She attended Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) for all of her certifications including CNA, CMA and EMT.</p> <p>She grew up with a large family of seven; she is the middle of five kids. Breanna enjoys being outdoors, being with family and friends and volunteering as an EMT.</p> <p>When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I was looking for a new adventure and found the Clinic and EMS services were hiring. I took a leap of faith."</p>

	<p>Shannon Toll <i>Nursing – CNA – PRN</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team April 10, 2020</p> <p>Shannon grew up in Morland, Kansas, and graduated from Hill City High School in 2013. She received her Bachelor's degree in Health Administration & Management from Fort Hays State University. She is finishing her LPN this spring. She is engaged to Colton Corwin. Her mom works at Hoxie High School and her dad passed away in 2017 in a MVA.</p> <p>Shannon enjoys working on the farm, renovating their house and spending time with friends and family.</p> <p>When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "My farm is 25 miles south of Norton, and I like the hospital environment."</p>
	<p>Stacey VanKooten <i>Nursing – RN – PRN</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team April 21, 2020</p> <p>Stacey's husband is Blaine, and they have three kids, Chris (19), Allee (14) and Fletch (9).</p>
	<p>Tracy Ostmeyer <i>Respiratory Therapy – RRT – PRN</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team PRN April 27, 2020, and will become full time June 1st.</p>

Welcome!

	<p>Chanelle Andrew <i>Dietary – Full Time</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team February 17, 2020</p> <p>Chanelle grew up in eastern Kansas for part of her life, then moved to the Norton area in 2013. Her Dad is the pastor of a church. Her Mom has her own business. She has two older sisters and a brother-in-law.</p> <p>Chanelle loves music, cars and spending time outside.</p>
	<p>Kristen Leibhart <i>Nursing – CNA – Full Time Nights</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team February 17, 2020</p>
	<p>Neoshia Petersen <i>Patient Access Representative – Full Time</i></p> <p>Joined NCH Team March 2, 2020</p> <p>Neoshia grew up in Watonga, Oklahoma until 8th grade (so she is a Boomer Sooners fan); then she moved to Nebraska. She has worked 15 years in customer service positions.</p> <p>Neoshia has one daughter, Kaydance, who is 13. She is marrying her best friend, Joseph Bates, on December 1, 2020. She has two dogs, Mishka and Gena, and a hedgehog named Milo. She enjoys going to the gym and crocheting...and will crochet you almost anything.</p> <p>When asked why she chose to seek employment at NCH: "I wanted to join a family and help my community."</p>

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

More milestones (from p. 5)

- May
- Cheryl Mann 39 years
 - Jeanne Pharis 32 years
 - Haley Jones 11 years
 - Charli Enfield 10 years
 - Jonna Inman 9 years
 - Sierra Wahlmeier 8 years
 - Melisa Fowler 3 years
 - plus previous 6 years
 - Dennie Griffin 1 year
 - plus previous 1 year ●●●

Human Resources

From the desk of Shannan Hempler, human resources

What people really want to know about Economic Impact Payments (from p. 4)

If someone's bank account information has changed since they filed their last tax return, can they update it using "Get My Payment"?

To help protect against potential fraud, the tool also does not allow people to change direct deposit bank account information already on file with the IRS.

If the IRS issues a direct deposit based on the account information that the taxpayer provided on their tax return and the bank information is now invalid or the account has been closed, the bank will reject the deposit. The agency will then mail payment as soon as possible to the address they have on file. "Get My Payment" will be updated to reflect the date a payment will be mailed. It will take up to 14 days to receive the payment, standard mailing time.

Where can people get more information?

Taxpayers who are required to file a tax return, can go to "IRS Free File" (<https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free>) to file electronically. If they aren't required to file, they should go to the "Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info Here" (<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>) tool and submit their information to receive an Economic Impact Payment.

For the complete lists of FAQs, visit the "Economic Impact Payment Information Center" (<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center>) and the "Get My Payment" (<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment-frequently-asked-questions>) pages on the IRS website. The IRS encourages people to share this information with family and friends. ●●●

CEO Corner

From the desk of Gina Frack, administrator and CEO

It has been wonderful to get somewhat back to "normal" life in the last few weeks. Staff members who have been working remotely are back in the building with us, and smiling faces are more easily seen with fewer of us wearing masks during the entire work day. Activities of our personal lives are also finding ways to resume, but all of course a bit different.

Before I get into the details of the update, I want to say thank you to all staff for working through so many changes. Many had to completely change how they worked in their department and/or due to their department being slower they volunteered to help in other ways (e.g., as a door screener). It was great to see so many staff coming together in a team effort. It has felt a bit like building the plane as we were flying, but every policy and process we created we have been able to improve. Besides all the policies and processes, I'm sure many of you already have ideas in mind how a remodeled or new facility could be built in ways to improve function and safety. Often times our biggest struggles have come from our physical structure. I also want to say thank you in advance for all the changes likely to continue amidst the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19.

Lastly, anyone that was assigned an incident command position has definitely become more skilled at using the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS). All those extra hours of work were appreciated by everyone. As I write this, we are in our 75th operational period (24 hours = 1 period). It is important for everyone to know each decision made over the last few months has been with the following objectives in mind.

- Protect Healthcare Personnel
- Preserve the Healthcare Organization
- Minimize Disease Transmission
- Reduce Morbidity and Mortality

Enough about COVID-19 – Let's move onto other important topics! Below are some updates:

Rest assured all of our new doctors are joining us. They officially start Sept. 1, 2020. COVID-19 did not change any of those plans. They are just as excited to get here as we are to have them join us! Dr. Gaede's wife and children are already moved into their Norton home. Dr. Gaede will be joining them as soon as his residency is done in Springfield, Missouri. Dr. Neill, her husband Tate and their daughter Perri, along with Dr. McKellar, her husband Ian and son Sawyer, are all working on their land to get ready for their prefab homes to be delivered in the next few months. *Continued on p. 16*



Celebrations

Wear blue to recognize Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

"Wear Blue Day" was March 6th, and March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. According to the CDC, every year more than 140,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with this highly preventable disease, and more than 50,000 people die from it. Risk increases with age. More than 90 percent of colorectal cancers occur in people who are 50 years old or older. If you're 50 to 75 years old, get screened for colorectal cancer regularly. NCH offers general surgery for those needing to schedule their screening.



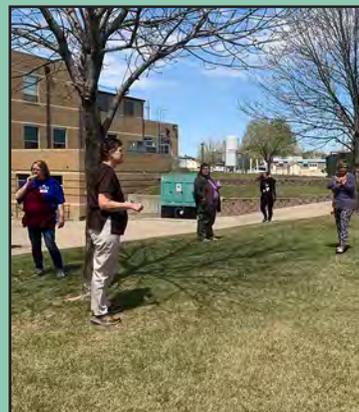
Working women of Norton County

Our own Brenda Dole was selected as a featured honoree in the Norton Telegram's annual "Working Women" feature! Brenda is a great Dietary department manager at NCH. Congrats to Brenda! We are thankful for all of our wonderful working women!



Ice cream social distancing

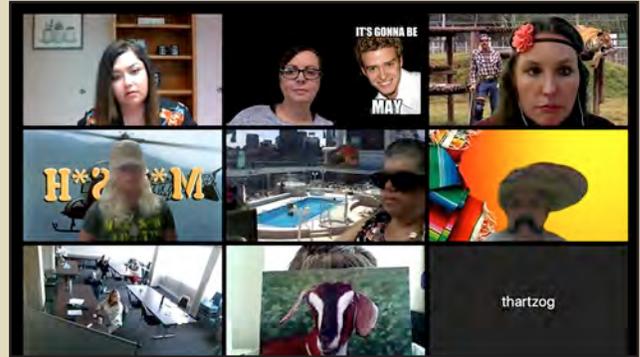
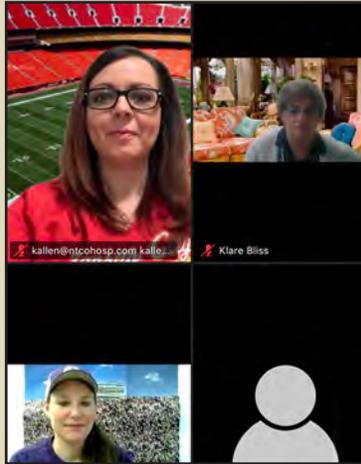
In April, our staff had a fun ice cream "social distancing" celebration on the hospital lawn! We took the day to celebrate our wonderful employees, soak up some sunshine and eat a yummy sweet treat.



Celebrations

Zoom "Theme Thursdays"

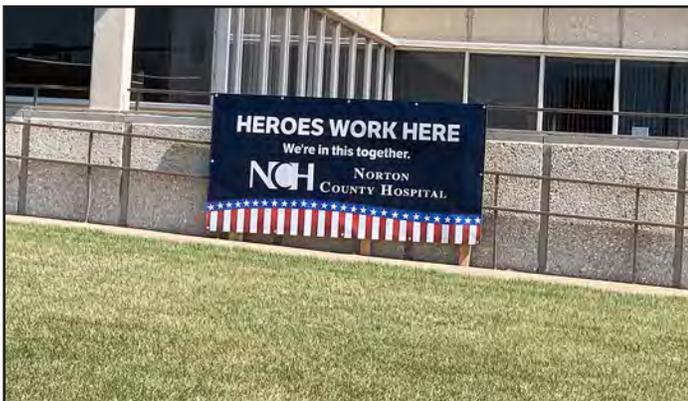
Most everyone has been getting more familiar with Zoom for meetings. It is for this reason, NCH started having "Theme Thursday" Zoom meetings! Each attendee would come up with the Zoom meeting background and/or costume of their choice. We had some pretty good ones!



Lab Week

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week was April 19-25, 2020! Lab Week is an annual celebration of medical laboratory professionals and pathologists who play a vital role in health care and patient advocacy!

Simply put, we would not be able to provide necessary health care services without our lab staff. They are a crucial part of our system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have faced many challenges and changes with testing, not only in performing the actual tests but also figuring out patient flow to keep others in our facility safe. The lab staff have worked constantly in making these changes successful. Thank you for all you do!



Nurses Week

Nurses Week and Hospital Week overlap for a few days in May. Nurses are at the heart of our health care system! Nursing touches so many other areas and departments of our hospital: Surgery, Labor & Delivery, Cardiac Rehab, Emergency, Infection Prevention, Employee Health, Utilization Review & Discharge Planning, Social Service, Risk Management, Pharmacy, Education, Emergency Preparedness, Trauma, Safety, Medical Clinic, Outpatient & Specialty Clinic...the list goes on! Thank you, nurses!



Our "Superheroes"

National Superhero Day was April 28th. We know our staff are superheroes every day! There are many other heroes in the community as well who are working the front lines during this pandemic. Thank you to all of our community heroes!

Celebrations

New general surgeon to offer specialty clinic

Norton County Hospital announced a new specialty clinic in March. Kelly Gabel, DO, FACO, is a general surgeon who will be coming to NCH monthly. Dr. Gabel is with Citizens Health in Colby, and will be performing a variety of surgeries, including endoscopy procedures, in Norton for the convenience of patients.

Dr. Gabel is originally from the St. Francis area and was motivated to return to the area after school. He and his wife, Dr. Sarah Gabel, both practice medicine in Colby. Dr. Gabel received his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences. He completed his residency in general surgery at Botsford Hospital in Michigan. He is Board Certified and Fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons.

Welcome, Dr. Gabel! He will be the second visiting general surgeon at NCH. Appointments with Dr. Gabel may be scheduled through Norton County Hospital's Specialty Clinic at 785-877-3351.



Sleep lab accreditation renewed

Norton County Hospital was proud to receive accreditation for our sleep lab through 2023! Sleep studies have been postponed due to COVID-19, but this is one of the many services provided at our hospital. We look forward to eventually getting all of our services back up and running to serve our patients. Congrats to our Respiratory Therapy department on this accreditation!

National Doctors' Day

Happy National Doctors' Day on March 30th! We are pleased to be adding three doctors on Sept. 1, 2020 (Dr. Gaede, Dr. McKellar and Dr. Neill).

NCH NORTON COUNTY HOSPITAL



Glenda Maurer, MD



Joshua Gaede, MD



Miranda McKellar, MD



Theresa Neill, MD



Jonna Inman, APRN



Kristin Vogel, PA-C



Gary Hembd, CRNA

Celebrations

Thankful for donations!

The community stepped up to help our hospital and clinic at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we continue to feel the support! Some of the donations have included:

3D printing comes into play: Norton County Hospital and Norton Medical Clinic received a donation of 3D printed mask straps that serve as ear protectors. These are adjustable to fit any person and can be worn with masks to hold the straps away from the ears to allow for better comfort, especially when masks are being worn multiple hours at a time. Also donated were 3D printed face shields. Eric Wagner (boyfriend of Katie Allen, Foundation and Communications director) made these 3D printed items and donated them.

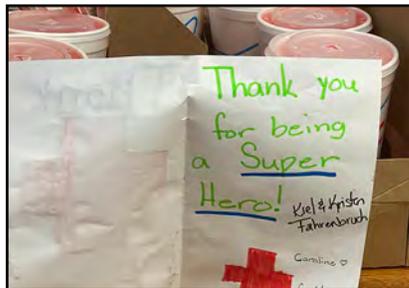
Yummy snacks keep us healthy and energized: Jamboree Foods sent snacks and drinks up for hospital and clinic staff! We appreciate Jamboree for so many reasons, as workers there are on the front lines as well. A thank you goes out to Pizza Hut (pizza and soda), Nex-Tech (Girl Scout cookies) and the Fahrenbruch family (Sonic drinks). Your thoughtfulness is so appreciated!

Masking, the new normal: Norton County Hospital received fabric masks from the Norton Correctional Facility and several others from our community (Gloria DeWitt, Joyce Tien, Pam Cuthbertson, Roberta Lively and Jean Ann Wilson). The hospital was also fortunate to receive some handmade masks and a nice note from a previous agency nurse, Sheri Connett, who worked at NCH. Heather Saville, Outpatient Clinic manager, made masks, including covers that would fit over N95s. Darlene Merrill donated cocheted mask extenders. Shannan Hempler, Human Resources director, and Jannell Matzek donated fabric and elastic for making masks. Thank you all!

Boosting supplies: A special thank you to Abby and Chase Rice (face shields), Dr. Dan Reimer (syringes and needles), Kowpoke (foam for face shields), and Norton County EMS and Colby Community College (masks and gloves). Necessary supplies have been hard to come by, and we are thankful to those who are willing to give what they can.

When you can't wash, sanitize: Hand sanitizer has become a popular commodity! It is neat to see how businesses, such as universities and even distilleries, have responded. Norton

County Hospital learned about an opportunity to get some hand sanitizer in Nebraska, thanks to the heads up from Tri Valley Health System. The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is producing hand sanitizer at the Nebraska Innovation Campus for health care facilities and essential businesses. Some of our visiting providers and board president Von Fahrenbruch stepped up to pick up sanitizer when needed. These efforts were appreciated! ●●●



Nursing staff may be dressed like this when patients arrive to the Emergency department with respiratory complaints. There's still a friendly smile under that mask... we promise!



Norton Kids' Café: Fueling Kids' Summer Energy!

When: June 1 to August 10, 2020

Meals served 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. on Mondays (kids may pick up meals for seven days each Monday)

Where: Norton First United Methodist Church, 805 W. Wilberforce (pick up is at the southwest corner)

Who: Any child 18 years of age and younger is welcome!



Volunteers who are interested in serving the meals may contact Mary Kay Woodyard 785-877-6293.

Any financial support also can help this program (to purchase fruit and snacks, supplies, etc.). Donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Live Well Norton and mail to:

*Live Well Norton, Norton Co.
Hospital, Attn: Katie Allen, PO Box
250, Norton, KS 67654*



Engage the Community

"Ask the Doc" video series

We asked our community members to submit their COVID-19 questions, and Dr. Glenda Maurer answered these questions in a video series! There are four installments of "Ask the Doc" on the Norton County Hospital and Clinics Facebook page. Thanks to the community members for their questions, and thanks to Dr. Maurer for her time in answering! ●●●



See you on the radio

Over the past several weeks, our staff have done a weekly COVID-19 report at our local radio station, KQNK. The Coffee Table segments air on Wednesdays. These segments are recorded on Facebook and may be watched later. Check out the Norton County Hospital and Clinics Facebook page, where these segments are shared from KQNK. Speakers have included Gina Frack, CEO; Katie Allen, Foundation and Communications director; Julia Thompson, BSN, RN; and Leslie Pfannenstiel, RN and Norton County Health Department administrator. ●●●

NCH Top 3: A weekly report

Starting in mid-April, Norton County Hospital started featuring a weekly "Top 3" related to COVID-19. These served as items of information that the public should know about the pandemic situation at a local level. You may view the "Top 3" editions on the Norton County Hospital and Clinics Facebook page. Once our facility lessened visiting and masking restrictions in mid-May, we stopped these weekly reports; however, we are prepped to bring them back if the COVID-19 situation changes in Norton County. ●●●

Foundation accepts new gifts to improve Norton County Hospital

The Norton Regional Health Foundation has been busy the past few months! Here are some highlights:

- A new scholarship will be available in the fall of 2021. It was made possible by a \$25,000 gift, and the scholarships awarded from this fund will be available to anyone pursuing a degree in the medical field. The current donor-driven scholarships are for nursing only, so this will open the scholarship opportunity to more areas of health care. Nursing students, as well as students in radiology, lab, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, etc. will be able to apply! Look for more details in the coming months.
- The Norton Regional Health Foundation received a grant for just more than \$6,000 to help fund an internal communication platform at NCH. This grant will likely help fund the TelemedIQ platform Gina mentioned in her column.
- Stepping On, a falls prevention program, will be funded by the Norton Regional Health Foundation and Norton County Community Foundation. Grants from these organizations will allow the program to purchase adjustable weights for the participants, snacks and other necessary materials. This program will greatly benefit our seniors!
- Lastly, check out the Foundation's annual report for 2019; the report theme is "Relishing Rural." The Foundation is committed to helping our local health care system, because we know it is vital to the sustainability of rural living. You can read this annual report online: http://www.ntcohosp.com/foundation/foundation_info.html

EMS Week

Norton County Hospital is honored to work with a great team at Norton County EMS! For EMS Week, hosted in May, we sent pizza and soda to the EMS staff. We look forward to continue building our working relationship with Norton County EMS! Thank you for being our health care partner!



Engage the Community

CEO Corner (from p. 9)

They are still finishing up their residency in Salina. You will likely see all of them around town more as summer progresses.

Lab will be getting a new chemistry analyzer! It will be the same brand (Roche) as what we had previously. This new machine will allow us growth for our future and reliability for years to come.

We will be providing TelemediQ to our staff. It is a cloud-based HIPAA-secure texting software. It also allows access to scheduling calendars for staff and providers, group messaging, on-call forwarding and much, much more. Legal is currently reviewing the contract. Once that can be finalized this will be rolling out soon!

Ni2 is a company we recently entered into an agreement to help us identify more areas to reduce costs and/or be more efficient with revenue capture. They focus on rural hospitals/clinics like ours. We have worked collaboratively on other projects with Kearney County Hospital, which has used this same company.

The Norton Regional Health Foundation recently applied on behalf of Live Well Norton (LWN) for the Blue Cross Blue Shield “Pathways” grant. This multi-year grant focuses on social determinants of health. These are the activities and environments of our daily lives that greatly impact our health as individuals and as a community/county. Our virtual site visit was on May 7th and went very well. The maximum amount of funding is \$500,000 over four years. We should know by the beginning of July 2020 if Norton County was selected as a site to be funded.

Budget – thanks to everyone who contributed information to Aaron for this important annual process. The draft budget will be ready to present to the NCH Board of Trustees at the regular June 2020 meeting.

Dr. Cody Rogers will be joining us over the summer and fall of 2020 as another fellow from the International Family Medicine Fellowship out of Via Christi. Many of our mission-minded doctors such as Dr. Reimer, Drs. Jennings, Dr. Hatton, Dr. Kim and Dr. McCoy have been former fellows of this great program. Dr. Rogers is already friends with Dr. Gaede, so fulfilling his required 400 hours of locum coverage with us already provides some familiar faces.

The Kansas Healthcare Collaborative announced recently that Norton County Hospital is being recognized for “Highest Achievement with Distinction” for efforts in the Hospital Improvement Innovation Network, or HIIN. This award is for achievements toward goals set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reduce hospital-acquired conditions and readmissions. More formal information to come later! NCH was only one of 14 hospitals given this award in the State of Kansas!

We will get back to our community engagement work of community meetings but need to be mindful of meeting types and number of attendees. In 2021, we will need to update the Community Health Needs Assessment, so with that process we will be engaging the community and partners as we did in 2018.

I’m sure I am missing some things, but this hits the biggest topics for now. As our weather gets warmer I hope everyone is taking some time to enjoy it and spend some time with family and friends! ●●●

Stop the Bleed and Trauma Month

In 1988, Ronald Reagan recognized the need for trauma awareness and made May National Trauma Awareness Month. Norton County Hospital has been a designated Level IV Trauma Center since 2012.

“Level IV Trauma Centers provide initial evaluation, stabilization and diagnostic capabilities but will likely have to transfer the patient to a trauma care center with a higher designation.” – *Kansas Department of Health and Environment*

Norton County Hospital works closely with higher-level trauma centers to provide rapid transport of our trauma patients to definitive care. Here are some other facts related to our trauma program and Stop the Bleed, which is offered through our hospital. May is also Stop the Bleed Month.

1. Agriculture ranks among the most hazardous industries. Farmers are at a high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries, and farming is one of the few industries in which family members (who often share the work and live on the premises) are also at risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries. An array of injuries can occur on the farm, some causing bleeding emergencies. NCH's Trauma and Injury Prevention Program offers Stop the Bleed courses led by five trained instructors. The courses are free to anyone who wants to learn how they can help someone in a bleeding emergency and save a life. In the 2.5 years Stop the Bleed has been offered, our instructors have conducted more than 20 classes, educated 194 people representing 18 different businesses/agencies, manufacturing companies, schools and organizations specific to Norton County. These individuals now have the knowledge and training to help save a life! Due to COVID-19, all Stop the Bleed courses are canceled, but if you have interest, call 785-877-3351 to speak with Julia Thompson, BSN, RN.

2. Unintentional falls among older adults are a leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injury in the U.S. and Kansas. Hospital costs associated with injuries sustained by falls account for a substantial share of health care dollars spent on injury-related care. NCH is working on several measures to prevent falls. Our staff have already implemented the Falling Less in Kansas toolkits and will soon offer Stepping On, an evidence-based workshop shown to reduce falls by as much as 31 percent. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our first Stepping On class was canceled, but we look forward to when we can offer the workshop! The Norton Regional Health Foundation and Norton County Community Foundation have provided grants totaling \$1,800 to help fund Stepping On.

