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Insight

Getting to Know You: Primary Care at FHN

Pulmonary
Rehab Team:
'They Made
it Fun'

2021 Festival
of Trees
Calendar of
Events



We're here, for you.

FHN

We Continue to Persevere and Celebrate Together

Well, it certainly has been another interesting, challenging, and unprecedented year. We have all learned about our ability to manage ongoing difficulty and new challenges. Here at

FHN, we've learned a great deal about how to continue to provide high-quality locally focused healthcare in the midst of a global pandemic. We have been and continue to be resilient, innovative, and resolute as we have navigated the constantly shifting trials of 2021 and unknowns of 2022.

One thing that remains unchanged for all of us is the importance of partnering with a primary care provider to be certain you have the best healthcare experience possible. In this issue of INSIGHT, you will meet two of our outstanding and talented family practitioners who understand the importance of working with their patients to enlist the services of specialists and other services to keep them as healthy as possible. You will also find great stories featuring our Quality Team, Certified Nursing Leaders and a number of area residents who have been very happy with the quality of care that they've received at FHN.

Our upcoming Festival of Trees events this year will again be designed to ensure that all who participate can stay safe while enjoying the festive season. To that end, our Gala will once again be virtual and I'm looking forward to the fun, safe, and exciting entertainment we will bring into your home. This year, the proceeds from the Gala will help

FHN renovate infrastructure at FHN Memorial Hospital. For example, the oldest wing of the facility is approaching 100 years old and while functional and safe, updates are needed to make space for patients, mainly in circumstances like the current pandemic when the number of patients can expand quickly. I am very glad that some of our other traditional Festival of Trees events – like the lighting of the Community Holiday Tree, the Community Festival of Trees at the Freeport Public Library, and the Holiday Family Movie Series at Classic Cinemas Lindo Theatre in Freeport – are back this year after being canceled last year because of the pandemic. While not all the events are back, we're happy to be sharing these great holiday traditions, all of which will be observing pandemic safety precautions for attendees. Please check our events calendar at fhn.org/festivaloftrees for details and updates.

While we as a community navigate the ever-changing challenges presented by COVID-19, we will keep you informed about all things related to the pandemic close to home. We'll also continue to share stories about how our dedicated team cares for you, your family and friends, and our communities as well as communicating about the great things ahead for FHN. As we enter this season of gratitude, please thank a healthcare worker for the amazing work they continue to do for every person, every time and with empathy. As always, we are continually filled with gratitude for the privilege of being your healthcare partner – continue to stay safe, and thank you for choosing FHN!



THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM OF
TALENTED STAFF COMMITTED
TO DELIVERING HEALTHCARE
EXCELLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

FHN is an award-winning regional healthcare system committed to the health and well-being of the people of northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Organized in 1995, non-profit FHN is comprised of FHN Memorial Hospital, the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, and 13 family healthcare centers in 5 counties spanning northwest Illinois offering primary and specialty medical care, hospice, and outpatient mental health services. For more information about us please visit www.fhn.org.

Note: Photographs taken during the pandemic have followed proper safety protocols.

Center for Wound Healing at FHN is a 'Godsend' for Stockton Woman

Mary Lynn Trost was eager to get her surgical staples out – all 50 of them – after having a successful hysterectomy for Stage 1A uterine and ovarian cancer at UW Madison hospital. Unfortunately, her incision reopened almost immediately after her stitches were removed, right in the doctor's office. It was a deflating and depressing moment for Mary Lynn.

She shares, "It was hard to process and I think I was in a little bit of shock. Here I thought I was healing, and this was a major setback. I mean, my incision was 5" wide, 10" long, and deep enough that my whole hand fit inside. It was scary and it hurt. They packed the wound with gauze and referred me to a home health or wound clinic. Lucky for me, FHN's wound healing center is close to home and they fit me in the very next day. It was a godsend."

Quick Treatment and Fast Progress

The multidisciplinary specialists at the Center for Wound Healing at FHN Memorial Hospital went right to work getting Mary Lynn set up with an aggressive plan to address her issues, which required her to come for treatment three times a week for seven weeks. The team uses state-of-the-art wound care strategies, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOt)

and advanced clinical approaches to achieve some of the best healing rates and fastest healing times in the nation. In Mary Lynn's case, they incorporated the latest in wound care products, dressings, and antibiotics to heal her infections, close the incision, and get her on the road to recovery.

Specifically, Mary Lynn's wounds were re-dressed at each appointment, and when she reached a certain level of healing, a wound vacuum system was employed that promotes new skin growth. "It helped me to heal from "the inside out," explains Mary Lynn, "bringing good cells to the surface and maximizing skin restoration."

Innovation and Compassion Provide the Right Balance

Mary Lynn has great respect and appreciation for the Center's staff. "I can't get over how well I am healing, and the team here celebrates every milestone with me," she declares. "The nurses – Ericka, Cassie, and Ketia – are like my cheerleading section. For them, it is like Christmas morning to see people progressing – it is very rewarding. They thoroughly understand complicated wound care, and they put a very human touch on each procedure as well."

Mary Lynn continues, "My nurse practitioner, Carrie Wright, has been fantastic. She communicates every detail of my care and helps me understand complex problems. She even checked on me when she was on vacation, texting the nurses to make sure everything was proceeding well. She truly cares."

◀ Mary Lynn Trost poses with Carrie Wright, FNP-BC, and one of her nurses, Cassie, from The Center for Wound Healing at FHN Memorial Hospital. "They were wonderful cheerleaders," declares Mary Lynn, "always rooting for my success."

Ready to Get Back to 'Normal'

Not quite "graduated" yet, Mary Lynn is healing faster than anticipated and is now getting collagen treatments two times a week as she inches closer to finishing her therapy. "I am almost done, and I am very ready to move forward!" she exclaims.

▼ "It's the thrill of the hunt," says Mary Lynn, who enjoys shopping at area resale stores. "I don't need a thing, but I'm always looking for a bargain." Here, she shares one of her favorite "finds."

Thank you to Twice as Nice Home for welcoming us into their store for photography.



"I am grateful to the wound center staff for guiding me at each appointment," she shares, "and for celebrating my good progress. Everyone has been so kind, so encouraging, and so accommodating. They bent over backwards to work with my schedule and make a difficult situation not so bad. But I am very ready to put this behind me. I love to search for treasures at thrift stores and resale shops and enjoy serving customers at my home hair salon. I want to sit at a campfire and laugh with my friends, and of course spend time making memories with my children and grandchildren. None of that would be possible without this great group of professionals from the wound center. I will always remember their skill and compassion."



Two Newer Family Doctors say Primary Care is 'All about Relationships'



▲ Dr. Johnson is thrilled to practice medicine near his hometown of Winnebago – close enough to wave a greeting to his grandparents, Dennis and Sharron Cunningham!

When people tell you to “go to the doctor,” they are most likely referring to a primary care physician, or “family doctor.” It is good advice, because a primary care physician teaches you ways to stay healthy, treats you when you are sick, and helps you get more advanced care when you need it.

In fact, a primary care physician is essential to helping you achieve your best health. Their involvement can actually help you prevent disease by identifying and addressing risk factors. And, if you have health conditions, they can help you coordinate and manage chronic disease care for longevity and a better quality of life.

TALKING WITH TWO PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

Drew Johnson, MD, a new primary care physician at FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport, thinks being a ‘small-town people person’ helps him be a better provider and build strong relationships with his patients.

He shares, “Growing up in Winnebago, I knew people for years and had the opportunity to form many close alliances. That kind of foundation makes it simpler for me to put people at ease, gain their trust, and form strong bonds over many years. By knowing patients’ backgrounds and personal histories, we can identify their priorities and set goals. That leads to giving them options so they can choose the best solutions for themselves and their families. Options are good!”

Kathleen Ehlbeck, DO, from FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive in Freeport, agrees. “I feel that the value of primary care lies in relationship building. The thing that I love most about being a family medicine physician is the privilege of forming connections with whole families, which can span over decades. It is such an honor to care for babies and children, their parents and grandparents, and sometimes even their extended families.”

This continuity of care – the idea of working together on your health over time – is a core component of primary care. Dr. Ehlbeck continues, “Being there to support people through the phases and seasons of their lives is really important to me and is one of the reasons that I decided to return to my hometown of Freeport when I completed my training.”

A BROAD SPECTRUM OF CARE

Some people may surmise that working at a community hospital means services are quite limited. But Dr. Johnson has been pleased with the spectrum of care FHN provides to his patients. “I am really happy with the capabilities here at FHN, and how well the health system covers our surrounding areas – we have eight regional offices in all. As someone committed to serving rural areas, I was initially surprised to hear all that FHN has to offer – it is impressive.”

He continues, “FHN provides patients with a broad array of options to keep them close to home, from a diagnostics and treatment perspective to comprehensive specialty care to therapy services. And of course, when we



Getting to know his patients – and working with them to form healthcare goals tailored to their unique situation – is important to Dr. Drew Johnson. Here, he discusses patient care with Nancy TerHark, RN and Lori Lawler, CMA.

Dr. Ehlbeck appreciates the experienced team at FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive, where she serves patients from birth to end-of-life. She works closely with Cindy Marsh, CMA, who poses with her here.



Cindy Marsh, CMA



Kathleen Ehlbeck, DO

need to, we refer patients to other facilities based on their specific situation ... which we often know quite well based on our long-term relationships. It comes full circle.”

DIVERSITY OF PATIENTS AND CONDITIONS MAKES EACH DAY UNIQUE

Of course, primary care physicians see patients with many different conditions, and that is also part of the discipline’s appeal. According to Dr. Ehlbeck, “I never know quite what I might encounter each day. I enjoy that variety. It is gratifying to support people through the challenges they face and celebrate with them in the joyful moments. It goes both ways.”

The variety also appeals to Dr. Johnson, who appreciates being able to use his training to treat a broad array

of maladies, like skin procedures that don’t require a dermatologist’s care. “I enjoy the challenge of treating all kinds of conditions and partnering with all kinds of people. This field gives me the opportunity to be a one-stop resource for many patients, and I am committed to meeting my patients where they are at – I want them to be themselves and work together to improve their health.”

COLLABORATION A KEY TOOL FOR SUCCESS

Along with relationships, variety, and continuity of care, both Dr. Ehlbeck and Dr. Johnson look forward to the teamwork so important in their field. Dr. Ehlbeck shares, “I feel so blessed to be part of the professional, talented, and experienced team at Highland View Drive. We take a collaborative approach to care for the patients in our group, and the exchange of knowledge

and professional opinion between us is very valuable. Long-term providers like Dr. Jelinek, Dr. Miller, Dr. Pedersen, and Dr. Bennett are wonderful role models.”

Dr. Johnson benefitted from that kind of partnership in his previous practice in Lubbock, Texas. “I had great mentors in my education and career, and look forward to that same kind of experience at FHN. I’ve had a warm welcome, and am excited to treat patients here – maybe even some familiar faces from Winnebago!”

Both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Ehlbeck are welcoming new patients. If you don’t have a current relationship with a primary care provider, now may be just the right time for you to make that first step – call 1-815-599-7060 for a consultation today!

COVID-19 'Long Hauler' Benefits from Pulmonary Rehab



▲ After suffering with COVID-19 and its aftermath, Brad is happy for “grill and chill” time with his family. “I am grateful it wasn’t worse,” he shares.

Brad Rothermel’s family calls him “the moon baby,” since he was born July 20, 1969, when U.S. astronauts first landed on the moon. But his “lunar lineage” didn’t give him any breaks when he caught COVID-19 just after their clan’s Thanksgiving gathering last year. According to Brad, “It latched on to me and didn’t let go. I wondered if I would ever quit coughing. I felt awful for months and it is still giving me grief. Before I was sick, I thought COVID would be no big deal – like getting the flu – but it was way worse.”

Diagnosed with COVID pneumonia, his physician recommended cardiopulmonary rehab to help Brad deal with some of his debilitating side effects. Brad shares, “I was super weak and had fallen 10 times in my house. My legs were wobbly, I had breathing issues, and I was struggling with vertigo. The doctor wanted me to go to rehab to work primarily on my strength and lung capacity. Although I go to the doctor in Winnebago and he referred me to Rockford, I asked if I could come to FHN instead. I am so glad I did.”

Class had many COVID patients

Brad’s rehab class included other COVID patients also struggling to return to their pre-pandemic condition. FHN Exercise Physiologist Molly Breningstall says these patients

often suffer from long-term lung disorders. “We do a lot of pulmonary conditioning to help get people back on track. We increase the speed and incline of the treadmill, up the poundage of the hand weights, and carefully monitor each patient’s progress. Brad’s lung capacity improved during rehab and helped him feel more confident in going out and about again.”

“I feel stronger and steadier now,” Brad declares, “and my blood pressure is perhaps the best of my life. I lost 30 lbs., thanks to FHN’s nutritional counseling, so that helps, too. We had interesting guest speakers, watched educational videos, and shared tips with each other on what was working for us. It was almost like a support group of sorts, because we were all in a similar situation. I made some new friends!”

Rehab staff was 'professional and personable'

He continues, “The therapists carefully tracked my progress, which kept me motivated to keep going. They were professional, and incredibly personable, too. Believe it or not, they made it really fun. The patients got to pick out exercise music, and I introduced some of the younger folks to Cheap Trick tunes – can you believe they hadn’t heard of Cheap Trick?! It helped me out so much – both my physical health and my mental health.”

Now, Brad continues to battle post-COVID syndrome. He still struggles with fatigue, cannot taste or smell like before, and has problems focusing, but he is happy to feel stronger and more like himself. Most of all, he is committed to making incremental improvements that enhance his quality of life. “I really appreciate Molly, Krista, LeAnne, Angela, Ryan, and all the rehab staff who helped me in my battle to overcome these lingering COVID side effects. They are all so smart, so nice, and so encouraging. They helped me prove to myself that I could do it. I am going to keep fighting, using everything they taught me.”

Brad Rothermel benefitted from attending pulmonary rehab sessions three times a week for three months at FHN. He and many of his classmates were struggling with side effects tied to COVID-19.

Here, he reviews his progress folder with Krista Montgomery, BSN, RN, who worked with him throughout his sessions.



Showcasing Our Clinical Nurse Leaders

In 2013, some of our nurses furthered their education and careers in FHN's Clinical Nurse Leader program. The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) is an advanced generalist degree focusing on improving quality and safety outcomes for patients or patient populations requiring each nurse to complete a master's degree in the science of nursing and a certification exam.

These leaders work to **SERVE**, an acronym for **Safe** Quality Patient Outcomes; **Evidence**-Based Care; **Respect**, Dignity and Compassion for all; **Value** and Wise Stewardship of resources; and **Expectation**, Encouragement and Support for our communities and patients. FHN's Clinical Nurse Leaders strive in different roles to promote quality outcomes in their designated areas.

Meet our Clinical Nurse Leaders

Megan Christensen

As FHN's Diabetes Quality Coordinator, Megan Christensen MSN, RN, CNL educates and supports diabetic patients, teaching them how to best manage their health. "I believe in supporting patients whenever they need us," Megan says. "But building their confidence and giving them the tools to be their own health coach are the most rewarding aspects of my career." Megan has cared for FHN patients for 13 years in the Medical-Surgical department, the Emergency Department, as a Remote Monitoring Program Coordinator, and as an educator in our Total Joint Club (for patients who have had joint replacements).

Laura Mack

Laura Mack MSN, RN, CNL is a Remote Monitoring Program Coordinator and part of the congestive

heart failure education team, supporting hospitalized patients with new or chronic heart failure. Her support continues after the patient goes home through the Remote Monitoring Program. "CNLs are focused on quality and safety. We work at the point of care as well as during care transitions, both of which directly affect the patient. Anyone could get lost in the complex healthcare environment, so I work to SERVE our patients and families in navigating the healthcare system as it relates to their chronic diseases," she says. Laura has cared for FHN patients for 29 years, always as an important part of our heart care team, from the inpatient telemetry unit to cardiac diagnostics, rehabilitation, and the cardiac catheterization Lab.

Beth McLain

FHN Complex Care Manager Beth McLain MSN, RN, CNL works with patients to help them manage chronic conditions and stay out of the hospital. She has cared for patients for 29 years in both the Medical-Surgical and Internal Medicine departments. As a member of the Complex Care team, which helps people dealing with multiple chronic illnesses who could benefit with support from a wide variety of community services, Beth says, "I am proud that I have made a positive impact in lowering readmission

rates for our patients. I address social determinants of care that can cause health barriers – like challenges in a home living situation – to allow patients to focus on their own health and wellbeing. I work with providers and team members, and can be an advocate for our patients when they do not have a voice." Beth also mentors new Complex Case Managers.

Tracy Love

FHN Emergency Department Clinical Nurse Leader and Stroke and Sepsis Program Coordinator Tracy Love MSN, RN, CNL has cared for FHN patients for 21 years in roles ranging from Student Nurse Technician to Nursing Supervisor and Clinical Documentation Specialist. She has also served on the skilled nursing team, medical/surgical team, Intensive Care Unit team and float pool. Tracy is the chair of both the Illinois State Stroke Advisory Subcommittee and the Region 1 Stroke Advisory Committee. "I was drawn to the CNL role because it gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge and learn new skills to improve my overall practice. I SERVE our patients through attention to details for their care, help our community members improve their health and wellbeing, and provide the best services possible in our rural setting."



From left: Beth McLain, Laura Mack, ▶
Tracy Love, Megan Christensen



McPeek Family Seeks Natural Childbirth Experience

Rachael McPeek wanted a natural childbirth. With the help of the Women's Healthcare team at FHN, she received the education and support she needed to accomplish her goal, while facilitating a safe and memorable pregnancy, labor, and delivery experience.

She and her husband agreed on a natural approach right from the start. Pregnant with their first child, Rachael explained her intentions to FHN nurse practitioner Danielle Siedschlag, WHNP-BC, at their first appointment. Her plan? To focus on a birthing experience without interventions: no epidural, no pain meds, and no induction.

LISTENING IS A STRENGTH

"I don't think interventions are inherently bad," explains Rachael, "but my personal inclination was just to avoid them. I really wanted a natural experience for us and for our baby. I met with all the FHN OB providers during my pregnancy – nurse practitioners Danielle and Sara, Dr. Martin, and Dr. Sessler – and they were all supportive. We discussed our plan in detail, and there was total buy-in. They gave me quality prenatal care, were great communicators, and best of all, they were good listeners."

◀ Lawrence Jacob McPeek arrived in this world the natural way, just as his parents had planned. Rachael was pleased with FHN's providers for their support and "good listening."

Rachael McPeek enjoys walking in their neighborhood with baby Jacob, who usually sleeps through the stroll. ▶

Rachael McPeek wanted a natural birth experience, and her FHN providers were committed to helping her safely pursue that goal. Here, she shares her new bundle with Sara Smith, WHNP-BC and Danielle Siedschlag, WHNP-BC. ▼



In addition to the frequent counsel of her providers, FHN offered several support tools to help Rachael prepare for her baby's arrival. "I used the FHN pregnancy book as a reference, browsed online resources, and benefitted from the FHN breastfeeding class taught by FHN lactation consultant Annette Geilenfeldt (IBCLC). That helped me prepare to nurse and gave me confidence that I could be successful."

FOLLOWING THE PLAN

When her water broke, Rachael entered the FHN Family Birthing Center with her plan well known to the staff, who worked with her throughout her birthing experience. "I did end up needing Pitocin to stimulate labor after my water broke, and I knew I had to stay flexible depending on how my labor proceeded. But other than that, everything went just as we wanted. My labor and delivery nurses, Sam and Robin, talked to me about non-medical pain relieving methods and helped facilitate comfortable positions and activities such as the 'labor ball' – an exercise-type piece of equipment that minimizes discomfort." This helpful tool also encourages cervical dilation and prepares the body for the baby's journey.

At the nursing shift change, Sam made sure any new staff members were well informed of Rachael's requests and the baby's progress, making the transition smooth and uneventful. Happily, baby Jacob was born almost entirely according to plan, and the McPeeks are now enjoying all the "firsts" of their new little bundle of joy.

“

WE ARE GRATEFUL for the care we received from FHN's OB team at the clinic and the hospital. Their attention to COVID and safety protocols, including strict visitation rules, made us feel safe and secure during a vulnerable time. Plus, they really had a coaching attitude that helped us prepare for our experience, avoid interventions, and enjoy the process. We had a plan and they helped make it come true! Now, our newborn son is here and we couldn't be happier.

”

Welcome to FHN!

Meet New FHN Foundation Director Al Evon



“Healthcare touches everyone in the community, whether it’s your own care or the care of a loved one,” says new FHN Foundation Director Al Evon.

Al joined the FHN Foundation team this fall, and has moved his family here from Minot N.D., where he served as Foundation Director for Trinity Health Foundation. He’s excited about making a difference in northwest Illinois.



When I looked at FHN, I saw a positive culture. The communities we serve really support FHN and in turn, FHN supports the communities, its team members, and their families. I wanted to be a part of that, because being part of that kind of positive culture makes your work more enjoyable and fulfilling.



He grew up in upstate New York, but chose Chicago and the Illinois Institute of Technology to pursue his bachelor’s degree and his Master’s of Public Administration. He met his wife at IIT – they’ve been married for 28 years, and have five daughters.

“I’ve walked through, and admired, Krape Park, and some of the other nature trails available in the area,” Al says. “Northwest Illinois is a beautiful area, and it will be good to be closer to my wife’s family here.”

Plus, he laughs, Freeport winters will probably be a little warmer than those he’s experienced in North Dakota!

He jumped right in to work on this year’s FHN Festival of Trees events. “Everyone I have met has been very nice. People are interested and engaged in the community, and in helping make sure we have the resources to provide the best healthcare.”

The role of the Foundation, he says, is to be the vehicle by which people can make a difference. “Donors are the heroes, the ones who are making an impact and helping to improve healthcare and save lives. We’re just here to help.”



Give & Receive

THERE’S NO BETTER WAY THAN TO MAKE A GIFT THAT HELPS OTHERS.

As we wrap up another year, take a moment and consider the gifts you would like to make. When you give to a qualified nonprofit organization like the FHN Foundation, you can make a difference in your community’s health and wellness and receive an income tax deduction.

For more information visit fhn.org/foundation.

◀ FHN’s Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship Program is a grateful recipient of Foundation funds, and appreciates the community’s support.

Grow Your Career at FHN – Where You Can Make a Difference

If you're a healthcare professional looking for a place to grow your career and make a real difference in providing care to all patients, FHN is the place for you. While FHN is the leading healthcare provider in the region providing high quality, state-of-the-art healthcare to 1,500 people every day, it's small enough to allow for a culture of cooperation and communication that makes each workday productive and fulfilling.

When you speak to current FHN Team members, a common theme runs through their comments: The culture matters. When teammates know one another and are dedicated to working together to improve patient care, job satisfaction is naturally higher. Our team member stories best illustrate why FHN is a great place to cultivate your career.



Michelle Kelly, MSN, RN, CMSRN

After working at FHN for three years as a professional registered nurse, Michelle Kelly left to work for another organization for a short time. In 2018, she returned to take a nursing leadership position as Operations Leader in Medical-Surgical/Pediatrics Departments in 2018. She's glad she came back.

"I really enjoy working in the family-friendly atmosphere here at FHN. You're not just another warm body here – people know your name. I feel like I make a positive difference in my role in the department. I'm so proud of the commitment to safe patient care, and the priority it is given at FHN."



Ashley Wire, RN, Urology

Ashley Wire began her career as a CNA in 2008. In 2015, she became an RN and currently provides patient care in Urology.

"What I really like about FHN is that it's small enough that you get to know not only coworkers in your area, but colleagues from all of the other departments that you work with. It makes for a great work environment and allows for better, more efficient patient care."



Erin Lamm, Medical Assistant

Erin Lamm has been a Certified Medical Assistant at FHN for 13 years. She enjoys working directly with patients and the flexibility provided as a part of FHN's commitment to a healthy work/life balance.

"A few years ago, I became a first-time mother, and with the support of my co-workers and administrators, I am able to fulfill all of my mom duties with my daughter. FHN has been so supportive of me."

Find Out How FHN Can Make Your Career Flourish

Stories like these are plentiful at FHN...stories where people found a workplace that is more professional, more flexible, and more rewarding than they ever dreamed. Maybe now is the right time for you to write a new chapter of your own story as a healthcare professional.

Interested? Find out more about how you can make a difference at FHN, or send someone else looking for a bright future in healthcare our way. Contact Carol Boeke, BSN, RN in FHN Human Resources at **815-599-6706** or **cboeke@fhn.org**. Or visit **www.fhn.org/careers** to see where you might best fit into the FHN team.

welcome

New Providers at FHN



SARAH BEAVES, MD

Board-certified pediatrician Sarah Beaves, MD has joined the healthcare team at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport.

Dr. Beaves holds a medical degree from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in

Iowa City, Iowa. She served her pediatric residency there at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

She has been caring for children as a pediatrician with Rockford Health System/Mercyhealth in Rockford since 1999. Dr. Beaves also has served as a board member of the Spectrum Progressive School of Rockford and the Charles N. Gorham Memorial Fund, and as a Cub Scout leader.

After graduating cum laude from Loras College in Dubuque with a bachelor's degree in biology, she spent a year as a nanny in France before beginning medical school. While in medical school, she volunteered as a cuddler in the hospital's NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit).

Dr. Beaves cares for patients from infancy to age 18. To make an appointment with Dr. Beaves, call the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills at 815-599-7755.



DREW JOHNSON, MD

FHN is pleased to welcome board-certified Family Medicine physician – and Winnebago native – Drew Johnson, MD to our Family Medicine team at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport.

Dr. Johnson earned his medical degree from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine in Lubbock, Texas. As part of the school's Family Medicine Accelerated Track, he completed his degree in three years.

He served his residency at Texas Tech Physicians in Lubbock, where he was named Chief Resident and "Resident of the Year" in his final year of the program.

Before medical school, he earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill. Dr. Johnson grew up in Winnebago, and is excited to be back home in northwest Illinois.

As a family medicine physician, Dr. Johnson can care for patients of any age, from infancy to old age. To make an appointment with Dr. Johnson, call the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills at 815-599-7170.

JULIANNE ROSS, FNP-BC

The Family Medicine team at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport also is happy to be welcoming board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner Julianne Ross, MS, FNP-BC.



Julianne earned her master's degree in nursing and completed her certification as a family nurse practitioner at Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, Ill. She holds a bachelor's degree from Rockford College in Rockford, Ill.

She has been caring for patients for more than 15 years at Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin, Ill. and Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford. Julianne has experience dealing with critical care and emergency department patients, and looks forward to working with patients to help them achieve their best health.

Julianne is welcoming patients of all ages at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport. To make an appointment with her, call 815-599-7170.



VALARIE PFOUTZ, MS, FNP-BC

Board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner Valarie Pfoutz, MS, FNP-BC has joined our Internal Medicine team at FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills in Freeport.

Valarie earned

her master's degree in nursing and completed her certification as a family nurse practitioner at Chamberlain University in Downers Grove, Ill. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago in Chicago and began her nursing career with an associate's degree from Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Ill. She also has earned an MBA from Walden University in Minneapolis.

She has cared for patients at CGH Medical Center in Sterling, Ill. and KSB Hospital in Dixon and has completed special training in caring for patients in the nursing home setting. She will see patients at area nursing homes as well as patients of all ages at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills. To make an appointment with Valarie, call 815-599-7740.

ZACHARY FULTON, MD

Board-certified Family Medicine physician Zachary Fulton has joined FHN's Hospitalist team. He cares for patients hospitalized at FHN Memorial Hospital. Yes, he does look familiar: Dr. Fulton cared for patients of all ages for 10 years as a physician at the FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive in Freeport.



Dr. Fulton earned his medical degree from the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford in Rockford, Ill. and served his residency at the University of Illinois – Chicago Methodist Medical Center in Peoria, Ill. He has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Bradley University in Peoria. ■



Supportive Care Team Presents on Reducing Hospital Readmissions

Members of FHN's Supportive Care Team were invited to participate in a poster presentation at the 2021 Vizient Connections Summit in November. They illustrated how community collaboration and frequent patient contact resulted in reduced hospital readmissions among patients in FHN's Integrated Care Transitions programs.

BEING ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN YOUR HEALTHCARE CAN HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY.
Use the acronym "SPEAK UP" to help you remember some tips to keep you involved in your healthcare: Visit www.fhn.org/SpeakUp for more information.

SPEAK UP™ ABOUT YOUR CARE

-  **S**PEAK UP ...
-  **P**AY ATTENTION ...
-  **E**DUCATE YOURSELF ...
-  **A**DVOCATES (FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS) CAN HELP ...
-  **K**NOW ABOUT YOUR NEW MEDICINE ...
-  **U**SE A QUALITY HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATION ...
-  **P**ARTICIPATE IN ALL DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR CARE ...



Everyone's a Part of the Team

FHN's Quality Team Helps Our Experts Work Better



▲ FHN's Quality Team: Back row: Jill Otte, Margie Kochsmier, Aby Breed, Shannon Driscoll, Deb Kent, Wendy Barr, Doreen Timm, Dr. Rebecca Pedersen, Makenzie Olsen. Front Row: Amy Fisher, Kelly Koch, Amanda Bradbury, Kristina Stadermann, Chelsea Colón.

Healthcare today is complex, fast-paced, and in a state of continual transformation. At FHN, we keep high-quality, safe patient care at the forefront of all that we do as a part of our mission to provide the best care possible to our patients. The dedicated team of professionals in the FHN Quality Department supports many activities that promote and continually strengthen patient care processes across the entire organization.

Our 14 Quality Team members collect and study data, talk to patients and their families, make sure FHN complies with regulatory standards, and work to develop processes and policies to strengthen patient care processes across the organization.

Though every healthcare organization has a Quality Assurance team, FHN's Quality Team is focused on being proactive instead of reactive, says FHN Clinical Quality Director Doreen Timm.

“

We strive to work at the elbows of our clinicians and alongside team members to drive their ideas for process improvement. We try to work with people and serve as a resource to help implement their ideas for how we can do things better.

”

– Doreen Timm

She notes two FHN team members have recently been recognized for contributing to the quality of patient care at FHN:



Gastroenterology Nurse Practitioner **J. Steve Harweger**, AGACNP-BC was recognized by the Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS)* as a Patient Safety Champion for identifying a subtle EKG change on a patient and collaborating with cardiology to ensure the patient was treated promptly. His dedication to the details of the patients he treats is outstanding, Doreen says.

Medical Technologist **Sarah Poffenberger** found a glitch in a manual paper workflow that could cause us to skip an important step and was able to coordinate with the team to provide the needed care to the obstetric patients. She collaborated with the Quality Team to develop

an electronic process to prevent any potential failure, and was recognized with FHN's Good Catch award.

Though Sarah and Steve aren't officially part of FHN's Quality Team, they are great examples of our organization's outlook on quality, according to Doreen:

"We have a collegial relationship with other FHN team members," she says. "We work with them to proactively improve processes. The person who uses a process every day in his or her job is the expert, and that person will know how to make that process better. We're here to help."

** MAPS is a federally certified Patient Safety Organization that helps healthcare organizations work toward their mission of improving patient safety and quality of care. It is a part of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association, and FHN is a member of both organizations. ■*



▼ Steve Harweger was recently presented with the Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) Patient Safety Champion Award. Pictured are (left to right) Chief Quality Officer Rebecca L. Pedersen, MD, CPE, FAAFP; Clinical Quality Director Doreen Timm; Steve Harweger, AGACNP-BC; Director Physician/Provider Services Meghan Cox; and Mark Gridley, FHN President and CEO.



FHN Limits Events to Keep You Safe

We're still limiting in-person events to help stop the spread of COVID-19. As the healthcare provider in your community, we feel it's just not safe to resume a full calendar of events.

Some of our small groups, like some prenatal classes, have resumed regular meetings (observing pandemic safety protocols) and we've adapted others, like our sibling class, to be virtual and stay that way.

We're proud to be offering a few limited pandemic-safe events like Rx Mobile Pantry Program pick-ups, flu and COVID-19 booster shot clinics. And of course, all of our facilities are open and safe to visit! Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines require everyone to wear a mask while inside any healthcare facility.

We've adapted our Festival of Trees to current IDPH guidelines, too – check out our schedule below for this year's fun family activities. And of course, keep an eye on our online calendar at www.fhn.org – it's the best place to keep up with what's happening!



2021 FHN Festival of Trees

We hope you will join us for one – or all – of this year's FHN Festival of Trees activities. We're following Illinois Department of Public Health pandemic safety protocols, so any in-person events may change based on those guidelines. (Visit our online calendar at www.fhn.org for more details.)

Community Holiday Tree Lighting Sunday, Nov. 21 • 5 p.m.

Join us outside the Stephenson Street entrance of the hospital for a free, fun sing-along and the lighting of Freeport's new holiday tree donated by Dr. and Mrs. Michael Perry!

Letters to Santa

Cards can be picked up and dropped off at the Freeport Library or at the red bins in the lobby at FHN Memorial Hospital, FHN Family Healthcare Center – Burchard Hills or FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive. (Download a form at www.fhn.org/festivaloftrees.) Return your cards by Dec. 13, so Santa has time to reply and send a holiday craft. Parents outside Freeport can take a photo or scan their child's letter and return it

to wecare@fhn.org. Parents, please complete the parent section on the letter to Santa card.

Holiday Family Movie Series

Freeport's Classic Cinemas Lindo Theatre (115 S. Chicago Avenue) is open for business, and we've arranged for some fun family movies! Seating is limited, and pandemic protocols, including mandatory masking, will be followed. Each ticket is \$4, and doors open at 9:30 a.m. Movies begin at 10 a.m. Children will receive a holiday surprise from FHN after the movie.

Nov. 27 – King Richard (PG-13)

Dec. 4 – Ghostbusters: Afterlife (PG-13)

Dec. 11 – Encanto (PG)

Dec. 18 – Spiderman: No Way Home (PG-13)

Bonus Movie: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Tuesday, Dec. 14 • 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Free-will offering and/or food drive contribution

FHN Festival of Trees Virtual BINGO Tuesday, November 30 • 6:30 p.m. Virtual Event

Join us on the web for virtual family BINGO fun with a chance to win prizes. Registration is required by Sunday, Nov. 28: Complete the registration form at www.fhn.org/festivaloftrees.

FHN Community Festival of Trees Nov. 29 – Dec. 23

Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas Street, Freeport

Enjoy holiday trees decorated by local service organizations, clubs and church groups competing for prizes. Vote for your favorite through Saturday, Dec. 11. Hosted by FHN and the Freeport Public Library.

Freeport Community Luminaria Night Sunday, Dec. 19 • Dusk

Stephenson St. and Lincoln Blvd.

Enjoy the beauty of the soft light of luminarias as FHN joins the residents around FHN Memorial Hospital in the annual lighting of the luminarias. Free.

Insight



We're here, for you.

Insight is published by **FHN**

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