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Volume 14, Issue 1

Insight

**Running and
Reclaiming Her Life
Myra's Successful
PT Journey**

**Meet Our Community
Healthcare Team**

Help for Arthritis Pain



We're here, for you.

FHN



MARK GRIDLEY, PRESIDENT AND CEO

High-Touch and High-Tech

As “your” locally operated and governed healthcare provider, FHN’s vision is “healthcare excellence for our communities.” That can mean a lot of things, from having an always-open Emergency Department at

FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport to caring for our area’s uninsured or underinsured population to bringing state-of-the-art technology home to improve how we care for patients across our entire geography.

We’re grateful and proud to be able to offer all of those things to our communities, but even more, we’re proud of all of our FHN team members who make this care possible. In this issue of INSIGHT, we’re focusing on some of our team members who provide the most “hands-on” care of all, our incredible Rehabilitation team. You’ll meet our new Certified Hand Therapist, and learn the story of how a Lanark woman is working hard, with our Physical Therapists’ help, to recover from a serious accident.

We’re also sharing the story of how radiation therapy helped relieve one man’s osteoarthritis pain, and how a treatment usually prescribed for wound healing helped another man recover from hearing loss. FHN Audiologist Anneliese Hartman, AuD, will share the many options – including over-the-counter choices – available to help those who are experiencing hearing loss.

You’ll also meet our Community Healthcare Center staff, find out how the FHN Foundation is helping to improve healthcare in your community, meet our Healthcare Scholarship winners, and welcome some familiar faces back to FHN to continue sharing their expertise.

We’re excited to see the weather warming up, and we look forward to seeing you as we take part in the many celebrations and festivals coming up this summer. We are thankful to be your partner in healthcare, and so proud to be a part of your community! ■



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 15 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.

Lanark Woman Regains Mobility after Chilling Accident

Even though Myra Archer Holland broke her sacrum, leg, ribs, and pelvis (in multiple places) – fractured her ankles and feet – and also tore her meniscus in both knees, damaged tendons in her hips, had a facial hematoma, head injuries, and a lot of soft tissue damage – she still says “I was extremely lucky.”

A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT BRINGS A CHALLENGING PROGNOSIS

Indeed, it could have been much worse. “I was in a freak UTV (Utility Task Vehicle) accident in August of 2022,” explains Myra. “The vehicle I was in tipped sideways in a field, and much of my body was twisted and trapped underneath. I briefly passed out, and when I woke up I had searing pain from the hips down. Luckily, one of my companions had done medic training in the army and he was able to move me from the field without damaging my spine. I could wiggle my toes, which provided me with hope I would not be paralyzed. But I knew it was serious. They called 9-1-1 and I was taken to the FHN ER, where imaging tests identified my long list of injuries.”

Myra stayed in the hospital for 16 days, and was almost completely bedridden. Miraculously, she did not need surgery. She credits Andrew Blint, MD* and George Lester, APRN, FNP-BC, RNFA* from FHN Orthopaedics, along with the nurses at FHN Memorial Hospital, for keeping her sane during this challenging time. “They were all incredible. So sweet and reassuring – they really saved my mental state when I found out it would probably take a year to get back to full activity. Along with the great therapists in rehab, they put together a plan to keep me focused on the future instead of my trauma.”

PHYSICAL THERAPY HELPS WITH STRENGTH AND STABILITY

This energetic woman was determined to regain her strength and get back to some semblance of normal. As a busy mom and business owner, she needed her mobility. Myra shares, “I run my own cleaning business and have four children ages 2, 5, 7, and 9. Our life was hectic before, and with me barely able to move, it was rough. My husband,

**This provider is not an employee or agent of FHN.*



FHN Physical Therapy teammates Maddie (left) and Ali target the best regimen to help Myra regain her strength. They incorporate weight training, core exercises, pelvic floor activities, and more. ▶

Myra couldn't run her cleaning business for many months because of her massive injuries. "It is a physically demanding job," she says, "but my therapy has made it possible for me to get back to work part-time and help provide for my family." ▶



Josh, took off work, and he had a big challenge to keep things going. I don't know what I would have done without his help, my faith in God, all the assistance and prayers I received from friends and family, and the expert care from the FHN Rehabilitation Team."

Myra actually looked forward to her therapy. "It became a sort of lifeline for me – a time to get out of the house and see improvement," she says. "My physical therapist, Maddie Pickard, DPT, and physical therapist assistant, Ali Wilken, have been so good, focusing on what I need at each stage. I remember the thrill of being able to

do leg lifts and bend my knees to the ground for the first time. In December of 2022, I got to the point where I could see significant progress. Now I am back to work housecleaning, though I can't do a full day yet. My knees feel stable, and I am optimistic!"

VERTIGO CAUSES NEW PROBLEMS

It didn't happen right away, but Myra also was plagued with vestibular (inner ear) problems as a result of her accident. "I got so dizzy and nauseated when I stood up or laid down, and it was really discouraging

after all I had been through. I was scared that something was wrong from my head injuries, but luckily, Dr. Reese (her FHN primary care provider), along with the Ear, Nose, and Throat and Audiology staff, diagnosed me quickly and said physical therapy could likely help this condition, too. They sent me to DeeAnn Heinrich, PT, and she has worked with me ever since. Her exercises and special head maneuvers are helping me regain my stability."

With hard work and the help of her FHN Rehabilitation Team, Myra has made tremendous progress.



I am so grateful to everyone at FHN who has helped me on this journey. I still have some pain and dizziness, but I have come a long way – it is really a 'night and day' difference. Now, I am on break from my PT and will be reassessed soon. I am exercising more and can even run and play frisbee a little – activities I really enjoy – and I hope to do a lot of hiking and other outdoor activities with my kids as soon as the weather gets nice.

Six months ago, I didn't know if I would ever get here. What a relief to feel like I have my life back."



Rehabilitation Services at FHN

Who can benefit from rehabilitation services? The answer might surprise you!

◀ FHN Director of Rehabilitation Services Jessica Currier, PT, MPT oversees a team of 40 licensed and credentialed professionals whose focus is to help their patients get the most out of life.

People who have suffered an injury like a broken leg or sprained elbow would probably be your first answer. People who have suffered an illness, whether it's a sudden and life-changing event like a stroke or longer-term like arthritis, might come to mind next.

Beyond that ... well, actually, pretty much **everyone** is a candidate for some sort of rehabilitation services at some point in their life. That's because **rehabilitation** covers a wide array of services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

"Our Rehabilitation Services team is 40 people strong, and we work with our patients at four separate locations: FHN Memorial Hospital and FHN Memorial Hospital Rehabilitation at Burchard Hills in Freeport, and at our FHN Family Healthcare Centers in Lena and Mount Carroll," says FHN Director of Rehabilitation Services Jessica Currier, PT, MPT.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

Anything that keeps you from having optimum mobility and motion in your daily tasks is an opportunity to experience the benefits of physical therapy, from pain to physical limitations or problems with your balance.

Our therapists work with patients of all ages to improve the everyday lives of people who have experienced a major medical trauma, like a stroke or heart attack, or a car or workplace accident or surgery.

FHN's physical therapy team also offers excellent non-surgical, drug-free treatment options for conditions like back pain and orthopaedic or sport-related injuries to degenerative bone conditions like osteoarthritis and diseases like Parkinson's or cerebral palsy.

"We also can help patients who are experiencing vertigo, jaw pain, pelvic pain or incontinence, acute or chronic pain, and those who need to work on their flexibility, strength, or balance," Jessica says.

FHN's rehabilitation experts work with patients of all ages and abilities, Jessica stresses. "Our skilled, caring professionals offer therapeutic exercise prescription, assorted modalities for pain and inflammation, manual therapy techniques and movement retraining to help people dealing with painful movement disorders or other neuromuscular dysfunctions experience their best level of mobility."

The FHN therapy teams also offer lymphedema care, pelvic rehab for pelvic pain and urinary incontinence in both males and females, personal training, vestibular rehab

for vertigo, LSVT BIG therapy for Parkinson's, rehab care for TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint Disorders), functional capacity evaluations (FCE), work conditioning, and ASTYM (targeted soft-tissue treatment that stimulates the body's healing response).

PEDIATRIC THERAPY

FHN's rehabilitation team includes therapists who have trained to work with children from birth to young adulthood.

"Our pediatric therapists work with you and your child to determine age-appropriate goals with a focus on improving everyday life at home through care tactics to stimulate improvement in identified areas," Jessica says.

Pediatric therapy is truly a partnership between the child, therapist, and the caregiver or caregiving team. Everyone works together to help the child make gains and achieve age-appropriate milestones, and reaching goals makes for a very special celebration, says Jessica.

"The first time a child achieves a developmental milestone, such as taking steps or riding a bike, and you see their smile and witness the excitement of the parent or caregiver, is simply priceless and extremely rewarding for all involved."



▲ Occupational Therapist Carla Fenna enjoys working with children in the dedicated Pediatric Rehab area at FHN Memorial Hospital.

STRIKING SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN

It's **IMAGINE-a-bowl**



IMAGINE-A-BOWL FOR PEDIATRIC REHAB

FHN is investing in room renovation, a new storage area, and new equipment to help our youngest patients in the Pediatric Rehab facilities at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport.

In support of this project, the FHN Foundation will present an IMAGINE-a-bowl evening of bowling **Thursday, April 27** at 4 Seasons Bowling Center, 1100 W. Galena Avenue in Freeport, to raise needed funds. Check-in will begin at 5 p.m. with the first ball thrown at 6 p.m.

Teams of 6 bowlers are encouraged to bring out their inner child and dress up for the evening; individuals may raise or donate the \$50 entry fee. Those who raise at least \$100 will receive a Striking Success for Children t-shirt, and individuals who raise \$250 or more will receive a Striking Success for Children t-shirt and sweatshirt. Please submit your donations to the Foundation by April 10 to receive your shirt(s) the night of the event.

For more information or to register, visit www.fhn.org/strikinguccess or contact the FHN Foundation at **815-599-6900** or cseal@fhn.org. If you cannot attend, but would like to support the cause, you may donate to the pediatric therapy department renovations at the link above.



HELPING HANDS ... and More

Certified Hand Therapist Audrey Mullen Provides Healing Treatment

With 27 bones and 29 joints in each hand, it is no wonder that Audrey Mullen is busy. As a Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) at FHN's Burchard Hills rehabilitation facility, she is one of only about 3 percent of Occupational Therapists who go on to get their CHT credentials. "In addition to a Master's degree, it takes 4,000 hours of clinical experience with a focus on custom splinting, a rigorous exam, and continuing education, so it is definitely a commitment," she shares.

Her days are busy. "Although my title is hand therapist, my specialty actually covers upper extremities, which includes everything from a patient's shoulder, near their neck, to the tips of their fingers. I treat all kinds of injuries: Tennis elbow, trigger finger, arthritis, carpal tunnel, and newer maladies like "trigger thumb," caused by texting and scrolling on cell phones," she explains. "I also see patients for less common conditions, like De Quervain tenosynovitis (dih-kwer-VAIN

ten-oh-sine-oh-VIE-tis), a painful ailment that affects the tendons on the thumb side of the wrist." Work (office, factory, agricultural), trauma, stroke, burns, sports, or any other number of circumstances can cause these varied ailments.

Audrey did an internship at FHN during her undergraduate studies, and first became interested in her specialty while working under a "phenomenal mentor" in Georgia. When she moved home to be closer to family in the Lanark area, she was thrilled to return to work at FHN. "I always wanted to come back to FHN, so I am delighted I got the chance. I team with two other fantastic Occupational Therapists and we all are dedicated to helping our patients achieve optimum health."

Indeed, Audrey has a special bond with her patients. "I absolutely love getting paired with someone at their 'worst moment' and helping them hit each milestone on their healing journey. It is awesome to be a part of their success."



She also enjoys the unique personalities she encounters. “I love working with stroke patients and have a good deal of experience with geriatric patients,” she says. “They are a really special group of people. I also appreciate the students who are injured during long sports seasons, but remain dedicated to their teams. Throughout my career, I have seen plenty of patients with complex injuries who are in need of extensive rehab that may seem daunting to them. But I am always up for a challenge and, thankfully, they are often amazed at how much they improve during therapy.”

Since Audrey relishes a challenge, she is happy to have so many options available to treat her patients. Ranging from manual therapy to ultrasound to electrical stimulation to the fabrication of custom splints and more, she is ready to employ whatever means necessary to reduce patients’ pain and improve their independence.

“We work to identify the triggers – from repetitive motion on an assembly line to using a can opener or a curling iron – and then find solutions that work for each individual. Through the process, we make progress ... together.”



▲ “Making a custom orthotic is one of my favorite things to do,” enthuses Audrey. Here, she designs a finger splint to perfectly support and protect a patient’s “pointer.” She says, “It is often an important part of our personalized therapy plan.” CHTs specialize in on-site splint fabrication.

◀ Audrey Mullen, OTR/L, CHT, is dedicated to each patient’s progress. Here, she monitors hand-strengthening exercises with Jeremy Thill, a consumer safety inspector who suffered a knife wound that severed a nerve and lacerated his flexor tendons. Jeremy says, “When I started therapy, I was in a lot of pain and could barely wiggle my fingers. Now I am close to making a complete fist. Audrey has helped me make incredible headway.”



Congratulations to Our Scholarship Winners!



▲ The winners of the 2022 FHN Healthcare Career and Diversity Scholarships are (left to right) Keegan Koester (Healthcare Career); Breanna Schneider (Healthcare Career); FHN Talent Acquisition Specialist Carol Boeke RN; FHN President and CEO Mark Gridley; Crystal Gonzalez (Diversity); and Joe Namio (Healthcare Career).

An outstanding group of students applied for our 2022 Healthcare scholarships and Diversity scholarship, and we’re proud to have awarded four scholarships to very deserving area students!

Each applicant wrote an essay about their career path along with how their strengths and personal goals could help support the healthcare needs of people in our service area. The top candidates were selected for face-to-face interviews.

After the interviews, three Healthcare Scholarship applicants were chosen to receive a \$1,000 scholarship and one Diversity applicant was chosen to receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

The 2022 Healthcare Career Scholarships winners are:

- **Keegan Koester** of Freeport, who is pursuing an occupational therapy degree at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa
- **Joe Namio** of Freeport, who is pursuing a nursing degree at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa
- **Breanna Schneider** of Shannon, who is pursuing a degree in nursing at Highland Community College in Freeport

The 2022 Diversity Scholarship winner is Crystal Gonzalez of Kirkland, who is pursuing a BSN degree through Walden University’s online program.

FHN awards Healthcare Career, Diversity, and Volunteer Resources scholarships each year, all of which are funded through donations to the FHN Foundation. The application period opens early each summer; for more information, visit [fhn.org/scholarships](https://www.fhn.org/scholarships).

View a video of this year’s scholarship presentation at <https://www.fhn.org/scholarships.asp>





Community Clinic Provides Healthcare Services to All in Need **'We Always Welcome New Patients'**

Freeport's Community Healthcare Center (often referred to as the Community Clinic), is a place where anyone can go for healthcare services. Indeed, if the staff there cannot provide necessary assistance, they will try to find a place that can. Partnering with the Stephenson County Health Department in a shared space, they cared for 723 different patients at over 1,700 visits in 2022.

Managed by FHN since 2006 – but a supported initiative long before then – the Community Health Center incorporates a proactive approach to healthcare that integrates all aspects of primary care with an additional emphasis on social issues and resource identification.

CLINIC STAFF IS STEADFAST

Libby Myers, DNP, APRN, FNP, has been the center's nurse practitioner for 16 years. "We have a strong commitment to treat our patients' health issues and help them navigate the system to get the best care available," she says. **"We work with insured, underinsured, and uninsured patients, so there is no one process to handle it all – we figure it out and help them understand their options. We try to meet the patients where they are."**

Perhaps the biggest problem solver on staff is Barb Hall, the first touchpoint that many patients have when they enter the building. A Patient Services Representative (PSR), health department liaison, and so much more, Barb is a huge asset

to the clinic, Libby says: "Barb never wavers in her desire to help people. She advocates for patients and shows a real community commitment that carries over into everything she does. I consider her an unsung hero and we are lucky to have her."

The medical staff also includes Josie Allsbaugh, RN; Carolyn Johnson, RN; and Tabatha Ellberg, CNA, who are also dedicated to the wide variety of patients they serve.

PATIENTS ARE DIVERSE

The clinic serves individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds from all over the county. Often, they have problems with transportation. Sometimes, they just need help with access to affordable lab services because of a high insurance deductible. Perhaps they require on-site services (for example, Libby visits a group home, going to their location to minimize upset for the residents and disruption at the clinic). Whatever the reason, patients are given care, compassion, and continuity.

Mike Perry, MD, former FHN CEO and longtime community clinic advocate, has been instrumental in assisting the initiative through the FHN Foundation, identifying opportunities for support and collaboration. He helps coordinate transportation and emphasizes the importance of nutritious food access. According to Libby, "Dr. Perry is committed to a robust community health program, and has



▲ Barb Hall greets patients at the Community Health Clinic and advocates for their care. Nurse Practitioner Libby Myers praises this Patient Services Representative as an unsung hero: “Barb never wavers in her desire to help people.”

◀ The patient care staff of the Community Clinic poses with their sign and phone number. “We always welcome new patients,” they emphasize. From left to right, Josie Allsbaugh, RN; Carolyn Johnson, RN; Patient Services Representative Barb Hall; Libby Myers, DNP; and Tabatha Ellberg, CNA.



▲ Nurse Practitioner Libby Myers consults with patient Nemesis Arroyo Garcia in an exam room at the Community Health Clinic. Nemesis says, “I always turn to Libby with all my healthcare needs.”

Contact the FHN Community Healthcare Center at **815-599-8414** if you have any questions about how they can assist you, your family, or a neighbor.

been diligent in using his ‘retirement’ to advocate for those in need. His background and knowledge are invaluable. We really appreciate all he does to expand and improve our services.”

SERVICES ARE ALWAYS IN DEMAND

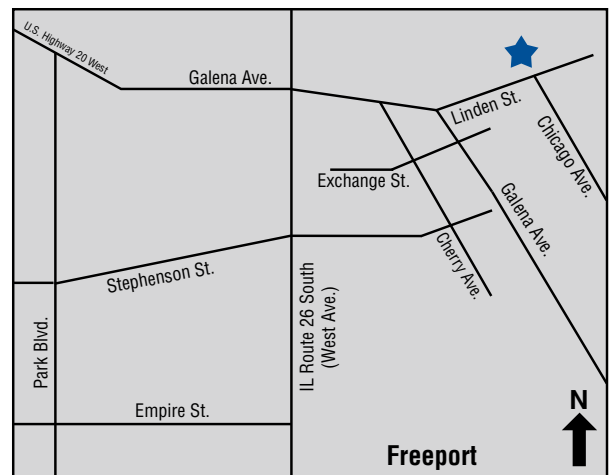
Those services are complemented by the capabilities of the Stephenson County Health Department. According to Administrator Craig Beintema, “Our partnership with FHN helps us impact so many lives for the better. We work together on a diverse array of initiatives that improve the overall well-being of our community. We are proud of the services we are able to offer because of this collaboration.”

In the end, the services are what matter most, and they extend beyond one-time medical appointments that diagnose an illness.

“We treat people with chronic conditions, we help families in dangerous environments, we provide education, we guide those struggling with social issues, we connect children with proper dental care, and the list goes on,” explains Libby. “But ultimately, we provide patients with so much more than a prescription. Together with the Health Department, we give them a strong support network ... and we always welcome new patients.”



FHN's Community Health Clinic shares space with the Stephenson County Health Department at **10 W. Linden Street** in Freeport.





MyFHN Patient Portal

**YOUR HEALTHCARE
INFORMATION IS JUST
A CLICK AWAY!**

MyFHN is our electronic patient portal, helping you manage your care experience as conveniently as possible. This free digital tool provides access to appointment information, health summaries, test results and more, all from a computer, tablet or smartphone.

Proxy access is also available with patient authorization. This allows a patient, guardian, or other designated individual to connect to the MyFHN account of a family member or friend.

To enroll, please scan the QR code and follow the prompts. If you need assistance, please ask a member of our staff, call the MyFHN support line at **815-599-6907**, or email MyFHN@fhn.org.



10 FHN We're here, for you.

LDRT Spells H-E-L-P for Arthritis Pain

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease that affects about **27 million** Americans, and limits the everyday activity of as many as 24 million of us. It's the leading cause of disability in the U.S., and about half of all adults in the United States will develop osteoarthritis in the knee by the time they reach 85, according to HealthGrades.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for arthritis. If you or someone you love has it, you know that the only treatment option is to manage pain and prevent or delay disability with gentle movement, therapy, and medications.

But sometimes, help can come from an unexpected place.

"Low Dose Radiation Therapy (LDRT) has been shown to improve mobility and lessen pain for about **70 percent** of the patients who are treated," says radiation oncologist Bobby Koneru, MD*, who cares for patients at the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport.

"The very low dose of radiation, basically an x-ray, can decrease the inflammation associated with OA, and we've seen patients who have seen improvement after just two weeks of treatment."

LDRT AT FHN

"We're among the first in the area to offer LDRT, which is non-invasive and painless," says Dr. Koneru. A course of treatment consists of six separate, non-consecutive radiation treatments administered at the Cancer Center.

"The appointment can last from 30 – 45 minutes, but the actual radiation treatment takes about 20 minutes from start to finish," he says. "There are no limitations to a patient's medications or activities during treatment, and potential side effects are mild, including temporary redness of the skin."

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

People over the age of 50 can benefit from radiation therapy as long as they have not received prior radiation therapy to the affected area. If pain and mobility haven't improved by 8 weeks after treatment, a second treatment course may be recommended.

The leading-edge treatment is covered by most insurance providers, including Medicare.

Bobby Koneru, MD



Statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and HealthGrades.com

**This provider is not an employee or agent of FHN.*

'Making a Fist Never Felt So Good'



▲ Dr. Koneru (left) and Jim Wenger are happy with the results of his low-dose radiation treatment. Six sessions can help reduce pain and stiffness and improve mobility for those challenged by osteoarthritis.

Jim Wenger has grappled with hand pain and stiffness for decades. When he found out he could try low-dose radiation treatments for osteoarthritis close to home at the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, he said, "Sign me up."

Talking with Bobby Koneru, MD, at a routine prostate cancer follow-up, Jim felt confident this approach would be worth pursuing. First, there was no charge to him – Medicare paid for everything. Second, he was impressed with the strong results seen in Europe for over 40 years, and decided the very low dose of radiation, combined with the low risk, was well worth the hope of improvement.

Eager for relief from the pain and stiffness caused by his arthritis, he went to his first appointment, where techs made a plastic form to protect the rest of his body and ensure proper positioning at all future appointments.

Jim Wenger gets ready for his low-dose radiation therapy (LDRT), using a customized mold to ensure precise positioning. Medicare covers this promising new approach, which improves pain in about 70 percent of patients with osteoarthritis. ►

It worked. "I already have less cramping, pain, and stiffness," he shares. "I can make a better fist and notice improvement when using silverware, since the ends of my fingers are less numb."

Jim says the actual procedure takes less than five minutes, and he is usually in and out of the building in 20 minutes. "It goes really fast," he shares.



If you'd like more information about LDRT at FHN, call the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at **815-599-7000**.

Hearing Help Can Let You Get the Most Out of Life

Hearing the sounds of your life – from the giggle of a grandchild to around-the-table chatter with friends or advice from your healthcare provider – should be effortless.

The FDA approval of some over-the-counter hearing aids late last year made getting help for minor hearing loss a lot easier – and less expensive. FHN's Audiology team is here to help.

"A comprehensive hearing assessment by a professional is the best way to start," says FHN Audiologist Anneliese Hartman, AuD.

"We work with people of all ages not just to fit a hearing aid but to figure out what is happening and come up with a treatment plan."

When it's necessary, Dr. Hartman works with her patients' healthcare providers, including ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) specialists and neurologists as well as primary care providers, to provide each patient the best listening experience. She also diagnoses and collaborates with



**FHN Audiologist
Anneliese Hartman, AuD**

FHN's ENT, neurology, and physical therapy teams to help patients who are experiencing balance disorders and dizziness.

OTC, WITH SUPPORT

"We are really excited about the options available now in over-the-counter amplification products," she says. "We wanted to offer a product that has been well-reviewed and tested to be beneficial, so we are working with Jabra Hearing Products."

"Jabra hearing devices are completely self-driven with a hearing screening performed through the devices and your phone. You decide how to adjust the device settings – right in the environments where you've identified some difficulty. And if you're having issues, we're here to help."

The Audiology team, located on the second floor of the FHN Specialty Care – Stephenson Street clinic, offers walk-in hours from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Mondays and from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. (Please call before you come in so we can be prepared to help.)

NEXT STEPS

If an OTC product isn't enough to serve a patient's needs, FHN's audiology team also offers state-of-the-art hearing technology in a range of affordable, mid-priced instruments.

"We work with Oticon and Resound, two of the top half-dozen major manufacturers," Dr. Hartman says.

"Their products have been thoroughly evaluated and well-reviewed, and offer a great array of style and color options. There's something to fit every hearing loss, personality – and budget."

The advanced technology of these hearing aids constantly - and automatically - adjusts to the most appropriate settings at all times. There's no need to fuss with tiny buttons or switches - good hearing becomes effortless, as it should be.

PREVENTING HEARING LOSS

As a certified instructor for the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC), Dr. Hartman also works with people to protect their hearing. She works with each patient to perform a comprehensive occupational hearing assessment and find the best hearing protection tailored to their personal and environmental needs. She performs DOT evaluations and offers custom-fit ear plugs for people in many different situations, from factory work to musicians on stage.

She also works with educational audiologists in area school districts to help identify and treat hearing problems before they can interfere with a child's education. ■

If you think you could benefit from a little hearing help, call the FHN audiology team at **815-599-7610**.

Sudden Hearing Loss Subsides with Treatment – Sam Says, ‘It’s Great to Hear Well Again!’



▲ Baileyville resident Sam Tucibat received hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOt) to treat sudden hearing loss at The Center for Wound Healing at FHN Memorial Hospital. HBOt enhances the body’s natural healing and strengthens the immune system. Sam’s team included Shawn Shianna, MD (left); Anneliese Hartman, AuD; Terri Groezinger, PA, WCC and Carrie Wright FNP-BC, director (right), both from The Center for Wound Healing; and many other medical professionals, all dedicated to helping him regain his hearing. “They were all great,” says Sam.

Sam Tucibat spent most of his summer “in a tube” – and it helped him recover from hearing loss.

The tube was a hyperbaric oxygen treatment (HBOt) chamber at The Center for Wound Healing at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport. “It was actually very restful,” he says.

“ALL OF A SUDDEN, I COULDN’T HEAR”

Waking up with impaired hearing, however, was anything but restful. It was disconcerting and “alarmingly sudden,” according to Sam. “I couldn’t hear from my right side, and immediately called Dr. Martinez (his FHN primary care provider). I was able to see him promptly, and thought that maybe he would find a wax buildup that could be easily remedied. But Dr. Martinez suspected something more.

He referred me to ENT Dr. Shawn Shianna, who got me in on the same day. My exam and tests showed Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss, which is idiopathic – there is no known cause, though research suggests a viral injury may be the culprit. Something just goes awry within the inner ear.”

Dr. Shianna teamed with FHN Audiologist Dr. Anneliese Hartman, AuD, who did a comprehensive audiological evaluation. They prescribed steroids as the first line of treatment, and Sam took those for two weeks with no improvement. Their next recommendation? Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOt), available at FHN’s Center for Wound Healing. This sophisticated equipment involves breathing 100 percent oxygen in a pressurized chamber to promote healing.

FORTY TREATMENTS IN A TUBE

“I did a round of 20 treatments, Monday through Friday for four weeks,” explains Sam. “I noticed improvement, so we did another round of 20. I spent a lot of my summer in that tube, since each session lasts 2½ hours, but it was worth every minute. It did the job.”

Sam appreciated getting treatment close by. “It is great to have such sophisticated equipment near your hometown,” says Sam. “If I had to travel for the HBOt, it would have been a much more difficult process.”

Sam actually used his ‘tube time’ to sleep and meditate, and didn’t feel claustrophobic inside the chamber. “Since the tube is transparent, I felt fine,” he explains. “Patients can

— Continued on page 14



▲ A music lover and self-described “old hippie,” Sam struggled to play his guitar and record songs when his hearing was impaired. Now, he is back to strumming the day away.

◀ Using sophisticated screening equipment, Dr. Anneliese Hartman tests Sam’s hearing sensitivity at different frequencies in the FHN Audiology Lab.

watch TV and talk to the medical assistants, and that helps, too.” He was very impressed with Jennifer Kerchner, RN, who helped him prepare for each treatment. He says, “She exemplified a great healthcare provider – professional, qualified, and compassionate.”

AUDIOLOGY PRECISELY TESTS HEARING CHANGES

Dr. Hartman was pleased to see improvement in follow-up hearing tests, done periodically throughout the process. Using equipment in FHN’s

state-of-the-art audiology lab, she could measure multiple variables in Sam’s hearing capabilities to monitor progress. “Thankfully, his profound hearing loss was improved by the HBOt to a more moderate level,” she shares. “I prescribed hearing aids to help make up the difference, and Sam has adapted very well.”

“I love my hearing aids!” exclaims Sam. “They are super high-tech – programmable, small, and comfortable. They can even be used like hearing buds to listen to music or a podcast ... pretty cool!”

The combination of HBOt and hearing aids has brought Sam’s life back to normal. “I was anxious and fearful about my hearing loss and disliked missing out on music and conversations,” he says. “But I felt confident once the FHN team coalesced around me. They anticipated my questions, explained everything thoroughly, and gave me plenty of time at each appointment. Now, I’ve stopped asking ‘What?’ all the time, which I know was frustrating for my family and friends. I am back to playing my guitar, able to hear in stereo. I am one of the lucky ones. I am very grateful to hear well again.” ■

We’re Pleased to Welcome Some Familiar Faces Back to FHN!



Prasad Kilaru, MD, FSCAI, FACC, has rejoined our Cardiology team at the FHN Specialty Care – Stephenson Street clinic in Freeport.

Dr. Kilaru cared for FHN patients for many years before leaving in 2019. He earned his medical degree from Rangaraya Medical College of Andhra University in

Kakinada, AP, India, and after a residency in internal medicine at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, he completed fellowships there in cardiology and endocrinology, and a fellowship in interventional cardiology at Tufts University – Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Mass.

He is a Fellow of the Society of Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions and of the American College of Cardiology.

Ravi Vyas, MD, FACG, FACP, has rejoined our Gastroenterology team at the FHN Specialty Care – Stephenson Street clinic in Freeport, coming back from his 2021 retirement after 35 years of caring for FHN patients. He earned his medical degree from Ravindra Nath Tagore Medical College in India, and completed his internship, internal medicine residency and a fellowship in gastroenterology at Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital in Chicago.

Dr. Vyas is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and of the American College of Gastroenterology.





From Al Evon FHN Foundation Director

As I look back on 2022, I cannot thank you enough for the impact you have made on health and wellness in our region. Your generosity and gifts are positively impacting care and safety for patients and their loved ones from northwestern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Here are just some of the accomplishments made possible through your generous donations in 2022:

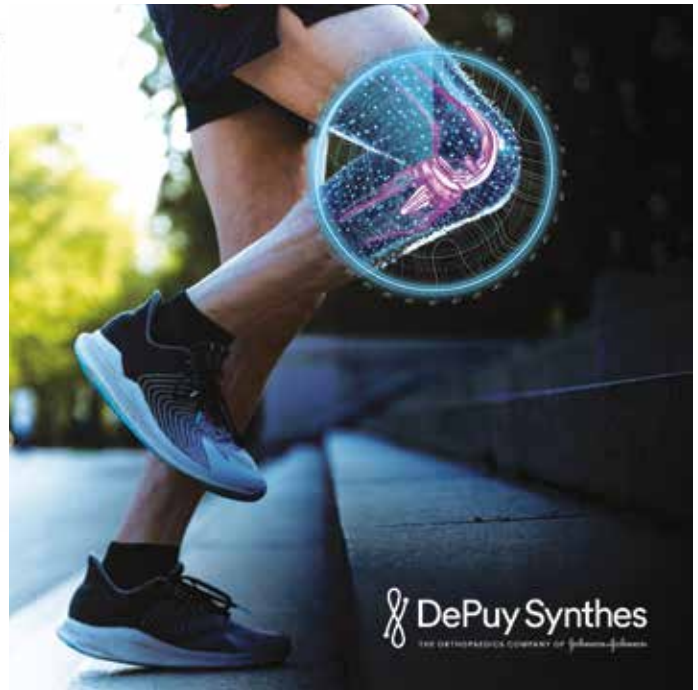


- Helped purchase new EKG machines for FHN facilities
- Assisted with the remodel of space in Burchard Hills to be used for Women's Health
- Purchased new beds and mattresses for the hospital
- Awarded more than \$23,000 in scholarships for nursing students
- Provided more than \$44,000 for education and training
- Purchased the VELYS™ Robotic-Assisted Solution and instrument sets
- Acquired new furniture for FHN Family Healthcare Centers in Lena and Highland View Drive in Freeport
- Funded new infusion chairs, a phlebotomy chair, and an upgraded nurse call system for the Cancer Center
- Assisted with pastoral and spiritual care for patients
- Provided direct assistance to patients

In all, **thanks to your partnership** and financial support, the FHN Foundation provided **more than \$1.6 million** in funds to help achieve FHN's vision of healthcare excellence for our communities. You are an integral part of making that vision a reality.

As we were working on the matching gift for the hospital beds and mattresses, one donor asked me whether the few dollars they were able to give would be significant compared to what others may be able to do. The question reminded me of a story about starfish I heard many years ago (original story by Loren Eisley):

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?" The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die." "Son," the man said, "don't you



▲ The VELYS™ Robotic-Assisted Total Knee Replacement Solution and instrument sets were purchased thanks to generous donations to the FHN Foundation.

realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!" After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said ...
"I made a difference for that one."

As you can see, the answer is that **all gifts matter!** Moreover, because the FHN Foundation does not take any overhead or administrative costs out of the gifts we receive, 100 percent of every dollar given goes to the purpose that the donor intended.

Thank you again for your partnership with the FHN Foundation in 2022. I look forward to continuing to make a difference with you in 2023.

2023 Foundation Special Events

- Striking Success for Children** • Thursday, April 27
- Grand Fonda Tour Against Cancer** • Saturday, June 24
- Food Fight Against Cancer** • Saturday, June 24
- Healthy Heart Hustle 5K** • Saturday, July 15
- Festival of Trees Gala** • Friday, November 17

Get more information at fhn.org/foundation.

Welcome to FHN's Wellness Calendar

There are several screenings planned at area assisted living facilities and member-only organizations. Please check with them to see if there are screenings planned. (This information was correct at the time of publication. Check www.fhn.org for additions or changes.)

Blood Pressure Screenings (All blood pressure screenings are open to the public)



DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tues. March 28 • Tues. April 25 • Tues. May 23 • Tues. June 27	1 – 4 p.m.	FACC 514 S. Chicago, Freeport
Sat. April 1 • Sat. May 6 • Sat. June 3 • Sat. July 1	9 – 11 a.m.	Gospel Outreach Food Pantry 211 W. Spring Street, Freeport
Tues. April 11 • Tues. May 9 • Tues. June 13	10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Liberty Estates 2170 Navajo Dr, Freeport
Wed. April 12 • Wed. May 10 • Wed. June 14	12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	St. John's Lutheran Church 625 Country Lane, Lena
Thurs. April 13 • Thurs. May 11 • Thurs. June 8	11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Salvation Army 106 W. Exchange Street, Freeport
Tues. April 18 • Tues. May 16 • Tues. June 20	3 – 5 p.m.	Joseph's Pantry 406 S. Adams, Freeport
Thurs. April 20 • Thurs. May 18 • Thurs. June 15	11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	New Jerusalem Soup Kitchen 4 E. Iroquois Street, Freeport
Sat. April 22 • Sat. May 13 • Sat. June 24	9 – 11 a.m.	Pearl City United Methodist Church 411 S. Main, Pearl City
Fri. April 28 • Fri. May 26 • Fri. June 23	11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Golden Meals 524 W. Stephenson Street, #4, Freeport

Vein Screenings

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Tues. April 18	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.	FHN Memorial Hospital 1045 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport	For an appointment, call 815-599-VEIN (8346).
Thurs. April 27	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.	FHN Memorial Hospital 1045 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport	For an appointment, call 815-599-VEIN (8346).

Special Screening Events

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Wed. April 26	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Freeport Public Library 100 E. Douglas Street, Freeport	Free kidney and diabetes screenings. Open to the public. Fasting not required. Urine sample will be required.
Thurs. April 27	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Elizabeth Community Building 402 West Street, Elizabeth	Jo Daviess County Senior Expo 2023. Blood pressure screenings available.
Fri. June 9	5:30 – 8 p.m.	YMCA of Northwest Illinois 2998 W. Pearl City Road, Freeport	FHN Family Health Fair and YMCA's 30th Annual Healthy Kids Day. Blood pressure screenings available.



JOIN OUR TEAM

- First-day benefits
- Educational assistance
- Career advancement programs

fhn.org/careers

Insight



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