

Health Happenings

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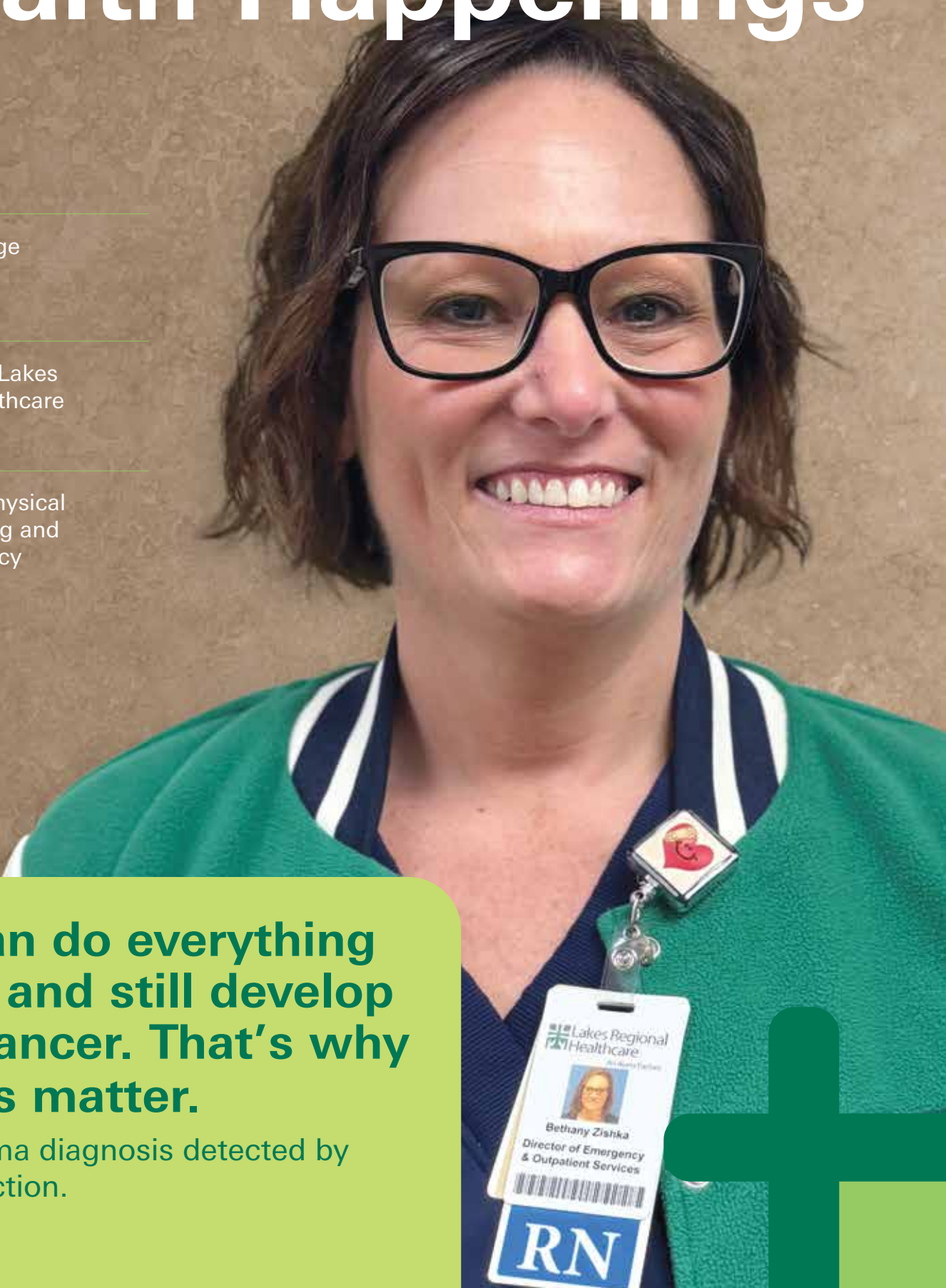
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**You can do everything
'right' and still develop
skin cancer. That's why
checks matter.**

A melanoma diagnosis detected by
early detection.
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Stay up to date on what's happening at Lakes Regional Healthcare by following us on social media! We also love it when people post messages to us – we're always looking for feedback on how to improve the care experience!

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Happy Spring!

Spring always makes me excited about growth and change! The landscape changes, our summer residents return, graduation celebrations, crops are being planted...we look forward to celebrating all of our work and investment of time.

We are feeling that same excitement at Lakes Regional Healthcare (LRH) that will come to culmination with our transition to a new electronic health record (EHR) system on June 1st of this year. The EPIC system is one of the most widely used platforms in healthcare across the country. For our community, the adoption of EPIC represents a meaningful step toward safer, more coordinated, and more efficient care. Our investment exceeds \$500,000 of capital as well as ongoing annual costs of \$450,000. The investment is significant but we believe will improve your experience and outcomes into the future.

One of the biggest benefits of EPIC is improved communication among healthcare providers. Whether you are visiting a primary care doctor, a specialist, or an emergency department, your information can be shared seamlessly across the system. This reduces duplication of tests, minimizes errors, and helps ensure that every provider is working with the most up-to-date information. This means fewer delays, better-informed decisions, and a smoother overall experience.

EPIC also empowers you to take a more active role in your health. Through patient portals, you can view medical records, schedule appointments, request prescription refills, and communicate directly with your care team. This level of access encourages engagement and helps you stay informed about your conditions and treatments, leading to better long-term outcomes.

Finally, the use of EPIC supports stronger public health efforts and data-driven improvements in care. By analyzing trends and outcomes across large populations, we can identify areas for improvement, respond more effectively to community health needs, and deliver higher-quality care overall. As our community continues to grow and evolve, tools like EPIC will play a vital role in ensuring that healthcare remains connected, efficient, and patient-centered.

In addition to our investments in technology, we are continuously looking for ways to expand the healthcare workforce. Part of that has been our Junior Volunteer

program which had a record number of applicants this year providing volunteer opportunities to over 35 high school and college students throughout the summer in our Emergency and Surgical Services departments. We have had many alumni from the programs pursue healthcare careers, severally of them returning to the Lakes area. We are grateful to our Foundation who has raised funds to provide scholarships for high school and college students interested in healthcare careers. Special thanks to our volunteers and those who have contributed to our Foundation.

I want to thank all of you who have chosen LRH to be your healthcare provider of choice. I am truly blessed to have a wonderful team of healthcare providers who care deeply about your families, friends, and neighbors.

As we always have opportunities to improve our services, I am happy to visit with you to discuss suggestions/ideas. I can be reached at jason.harrington@lakeshealth.org or via phone at (712) 336-8795.

Have a safe and healthy summer!

— **Jason C. Harrington, FACHE**
President & CEO



An Epic Change

Recently Made

ON MAY 30, Lakes Regional Healthcare and Lakes Regional Family Medicine will begin using a new electronic medical record called Epic. This will replace our current system, Meditech Expanse. Patients will also begin using a new patient portal called Avera MyChart.

Epic will become the single electronic medical record used across Avera and their partner locations. This allows care teams to access the same health information in one system and supports coordination of care across clinics, hospitals, and other care settings.

Epic is not just a medical record but a system that connects scheduling, test results, medications, and communication tools. Having these functions in one place helps care teams stay aligned and reduces the need for information to be entered into or shared across multiple systems.

With Epic, patients will use Avera MyChart instead of AveraChart. MyChart is a secure online portal that lets patients see their health information anytime from a computer, phone, or tablet.

Through Avera MyChart, patients can:

- View test results and visit summaries
- Message their care team
- See medications and immunizations
- Manage or schedule appointments online
- Access health information from different Avera locations in one place

This makes it easier for patients to stay informed and involved in their care.



The move to Epic will also bring new tools for patients, including:



ONLINE SCHEDULING

Patients will be able to schedule some appointments directly through MyChart, making it easier to find a time that works.



VIRTUAL CARE OPTIONS

Epic supports virtual visits and other digital care options, helping patients connect with providers without always needing to travel.



MOBILE ACCESS

The MyChart mobile app allows patients to check test results, message providers, and manage appointments from their phone.

Epic and Avera MyChart will launch at the same time. During the first few weeks, patients may notice staff spending more time on computers while learning the new system. This is normal when moving to a new record system.

Appointments and care will continue as scheduled. Our team will remain focused on providing safe, high-quality care.

Patients will receive information on how to create an Avera MyChart account before the system goes live. Staff will also be available to help patients sign up and answer questions.

Lakes Regional Healthcare will continue sharing updates about the transition through our website, social media pages, and information provided during clinic visits. Patients may also see reminders and educational materials in our facilities to help explain the new system and patient portal.

New State-of-the-Art MRI

to be Installed This Fall

LAKES REGIONAL HEALTHCARE is making a major investment in advanced diagnostic care with the installation of a new MRI scheduled for completion this fall.

The new 1.5 Tesla MRI will replace the hospital's current scanner, which has been in service since 2011. While the existing system has served the community well, advances in technology over the past 15 years mean patients and providers can now benefit from significantly improved imaging capabilities.

According to Lakes Regional Healthcare Imaging Manager Nicole Ingvall, the new scanner represents a substantial upgrade in image quality, speed, comfort, and overall patient experience.

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) uses a powerful magnet and radio waves, not radiation, to create detailed images of the body. Unlike CT scans, which are excellent for quick evaluations and acute conditions, MRI provides highly detailed images of soft tissues, ligaments, organs, and complex structures.



The new MRI will:

- Produce higher-resolution images
- Reduce scan times, in some cases by nearly half
- Improve patient comfort
- Potentially expand the types of procedures available locally





One of the exciting aspects of the new MRI is its expanded clinical capability. With the upgraded technology, Lakes Regional Healthcare will be offering more advanced procedures that currently require patients to travel, such as liver elastography. Lakes Regional Healthcare will also be exploring advanced imaging opportunities such as prostate imaging in the future.

The new system will maintain a “wide bore” design, which has an opening larger in diameter than traditional closed MRI systems, while still maintaining excellent image quality. Open MRIs can feel less confining but often sacrifice image resolution. Ingvall said the wide bore system strikes a balance, offering a more comfortable experience for most patients while still delivering the diagnostic clarity physicians require.

The new MRI includes innovative “air coil” technology. Traditional coils are rigid, cage-like components placed over the body part being imaged. Air coils are now an additional option. They are flexible and conform to a patient’s body shape like a blanket, improving comfort and image quality, especially for patients with limited mobility.

The project extends beyond the scanner itself. From now through September, the MRI suite will undergo a full renovation. Improvements will include:

- Updated finishes and lighting for a warmer, more inviting environment
- New cabinetry and improved storage for efficiency
- A new MRI injector system
- Enhanced technologist workspaces
- Refreshed patient changing areas and waiting spaces

Importantly, there will be no interruption in service. During construction, a mobile MRI unit will ensure patients continue receiving uninterrupted imaging care.

The total project investment is just over \$3.1 million.



Through a group purchasing agreement through Lakes Regional Healthcare’s partnership with Avera, competitive pricing and a four-year warranty were secured, maximizing long-term value for the community.

By fall, patients across the region will benefit from faster scans, improved comfort, advanced diagnostic capabilities, and expanded services, all close to home.

Help Enhance the MRI Experience: Support the New Viewing Patient System

As Lakes Regional Healthcare prepares to install its new MRI this fall, an additional opportunity exists to dramatically enhance the patient experience. Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation is seeking community support to fund a wireless in-bore viewing camera and projection system for the new scanner, which is an innovative technology designed to reduce anxiety, improve comfort, and help patients successfully complete their exams.

For many patients, MRI exams can feel intimidating. Concerns about claustrophobia, anxiety, and the need to remain still for extended periods are common. While the new MRI will significantly reduce scan times and feature a spacious wide-bore design, the addition of a projection system takes comfort to the next level.

The system works by projecting video directly inside the MRI bore, allowing patients to watch calming content, nature scenes, or even a favorite show or movie during their scan. The projector is mounted directly on the patient table, which means no bulky equipment, ceiling monitors, or complicated setup.

“It gives patients another way to get through the exam,” explains Lakes Regional Healthcare Imaging Manager Nicole Ingvall. “Whether it’s claustrophobia, pediatric patients, or someone who simply struggles to sit still, this provides reassurance and distraction.”

In addition to projecting video for patients, the system also includes a live camera feed that allows technologists to monitor patients in real time, enhancing safety and peace of mind.

This wireless projector system was released at the beginning of 2026 and represents the latest innovation in MRI patient comfort. Unlike older systems that require ceiling modifications or wheeled monitors, this design integrates seamlessly into the scanner without extensive construction adjustments.

Every contribution, large or small, brings this enhancement closer to reality.

The total cost of
the viewing system
is over \$60,000.



To make a donation or learn more, please complete the donation form on the following page or contact Lakes Regional Healthcare Director of Philanthropy Katy Carey at 712-339-6710 or Kathleen.carey@lakeshealth.org.



The viewing system offers several key advantages:

- Reduces anxiety and claustrophobia
- Helps pediatric patients remain calm
- Minimizes motion during scans
- Reduces the need for sedation or anesthesia
- Improves overall patient satisfaction



While the scanner and suite renovation are funded, the viewing system depends on philanthropic support. A gift to Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation for the MRI Viewing System will:

- Directly impact patient comfort
- Enhance the care experience for children and adults
- Support local access to advanced technology
- Keep high-quality healthcare close to home

Easy Ways to **GIVE**

We want to make giving as easy as possible for you. Here are some easy ways to give that will continue to help improve healthcare in the Iowa Great Lakes.



IN PERSON

Call Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation Executive Director Sonja Hamm or Director of Philanthropy Katy Carey to set up a time to meet personally.

Sonja Hamm, 712-336-8791
Sonja.hamm@lakeshealth.org

Katy Carey, 712-339-6710
Kathleen.carey@lakeshealth.org

BY MAIL

Complete the card below and mail it with your gift.

ONLINE

Visit www.averafoundation.org/donate-with-search or hover over the QR code shown here. Once at the site, select "Other" for the Avera facility, type "Lakes Regional Healthcare" in the "Other Avera Facility" box and make a donation in a matter of a couple minutes!



Yes, I Want to Make a Difference!

**We are deeply grateful for the support of our friends in the community.
Thank you for your gift to Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation.**

I would like to give a gift of: \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other: \$ _____

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Please check, as appropriate:

- Address change
- Name change
- I/we have included LRH Foundation in our will.
- I would like a personal phone call or visit.
- Send volunteer information.

If you prefer to remain anonymous, check this box.

Please make checks payable to Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation. Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.

PLEASE RETURN TO:

**Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation
Attention: Sonja Hamm
PO Box AB
Spirit Lake, IA 51360**



For more information on how your gifts make a difference or to make your gift online, please visit www.averafoundation.org/donate-with-search.

Other Ways to Make a Difference



Scholarship Endowment Fund

Make it possible for a local high school or college student to achieve their dream of having a career in healthcare. Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation's Scholarship Endowment Fund provides scholarships each year in hopes of having those students return to the Iowa Great Lakes to provide care to those who helped them.

Hospice Fund

This fund is utilized to support a service that cares for people who have a terminal illness. Hospice works with patients and their families to maintain quality of life and support the patient's loved ones during a difficult time.

Your gift to the Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation supports lifesaving services that hospital revenue alone cannot provide. Choose a project that is close to your heart and know you are **making a difference in the lives of others.**

Engraved Pavers

Engraved brick pavers and seat walls at Lakes Regional Healthcare's outdoor garden patio are available for purchase as a gift to Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation. Your gift would memorialize your loved one and positively impact others who receive care at Lakes Regional Healthcare. To learn more, contact Sonja Hamm at 712-336-8791 or sonja.hamm@lakeshealth.org.

Caring for Life Fund

This fund is utilized to support just-in-time support for our patients and their families. It is our "area of greatest need" fund and supports programs, services, and equipment in all areas of Lakes Regional Healthcare.

Another Successful



GRAPE

In February, Lakes Regional Healthcare Foundation hosted their annual Grape Escape event. It was held at the Roof Garden Ballroom, where people enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, wine, bourbon, a signature cocktail, dinner, a lively auction, and live jazz. The event sold out with 300 guests and raised over \$65,000 for the foundation.

Special thanks to the following sponsors for making the Grape Escape possible!

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ESCAPE

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SHOW SOME
love

Nominate a Team Member for a Daisy or Rose Award

Has a Lakes Regional Healthcare (LRH) nurse held your hand through a scary moment? Has someone in our Business Office gone out of their way to make sure you felt heard? If someone at LRH made a difference during your care, or the care of someone you love, now is the perfect time to say thank you in a meaningful way.

LRH recognizes outstanding staff each year through two special awards: the Daisy Award for nurses and the Rose Award for all non-nursing staff. Both awards honor team members who go above and beyond LRH's CARES standards, which are communication, attitude, responsiveness, and engagement.

Anyone can submit a nomination: patients, family members, visitors, volunteers, or fellow employees. All nominations are reviewed by an internal committee, and every nominee receives a copy of their nomination along with a personal note from hospital leadership, because

even if they aren't selected as a recipient, knowing they made a difference matters. All nominations are celebrated each month in the nominee's department.

Three Daisy and three Rose nominees are selected each year for the Daisy and Rose Awards. Those recipients are celebrated at a special ceremony during Hospital Week each May, joined by the people who nominated them and their own families. If someone at LRH made your experience a little easier or a lot better, take a moment to let them know, and let the whole community know, just how much they mean to you.

Nominating is quick and easy:

Daisy Award (nurses):

www.surveymonkey.com/r/lrhdaisyaward

Rose Award (all other staff):

www.surveymonkey.com/r/lrhroseaward





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FREE E-BOOK NOW**

to answer your pregnancy questions so you feel more comfortable and confident welcoming the new addition to your family. Just hover over the QR code below and click on the link that appears.



Planning to Have a Baby?

BECOMING A PARENT is an incredible little miracle – but it can also be stressful. We are providing this free, 28-page guide to quickly answer your pregnancy questions, from prenatal tests to car seat installation. In *Having a Baby: Your Complete Guide to Pregnancy*, you will discover the first signs of labor and how much fetal movement you can expect in each trimester. This downloadable e-book answers common questions from every stage of your pregnancy journey.

This complete guide to pregnancy covers:

- Tests and screenings you can expect
- How to perform daily activities, such as exercise, while you are pregnant
- How pregnancy will and won't impact your ability to work
- Which complications you should be alert for
- How to talk to your doctor about your pregnancy
- What to expect during delivery and childbirth
- ***Much more!***





A Birth Story:

Caleb



When Hartley, Iowa resident Emma Jonas became pregnant, she knew almost right away. She and her husband, John, had been trying, and when she started feeling sick even before her missed period, she had a feeling. A test confirmed it. They were expecting a baby.

Like many moms, her pregnancy had its ups and downs. The first trimester brought quite a bit of sickness. The second trimester felt easier, but by the end, things became more challenging again. Throughout her pregnancy, Emma prepared both physically and mentally. Around 20 weeks, she began seeing a pelvic floor physical therapist to help her body get ready for labor. She also listened to birth podcasts and educated herself on different scenarios so she could feel prepared for whatever might come.

Emma also carried an added concern. She has cerebral palsy and knew it might complicate delivery. "That was my biggest fear," she said.

At 39 weeks, she was induced. When the day finally arrived, the emotions hit all at once.

“

"I was really scared," Emma admitted. "I felt ready my whole pregnancy, but when it was actually time, it suddenly became very real. All the emotions just rushed in at once."

After 36 hours of labor and reaching six centimeters without further progress, Emma, her family, and her care team had an honest conversation. With support from Dr. Cunningham and her nurse Julie, she made the decision to proceed with a C-section.

When asked what helped her through the hardest moments, Emma did not hesitate. "Honestly, Julie," she said. "She was amazing. She talked me through everything. She was calm. She fought hard to try to help me have the labor I wanted. She was the voice of reason."



Emma's mom and her husband, John, were by her side the entire time, offering encouragement and distraction through the long hours.

Though she was emotional about needing a C-section, Emma says the support she received made all the difference. "The nurses were a huge support. They kept coming up with creative positions to help me progress. They were really knowledgeable, and they helped me emotionally, too."

When baby Caleb arrived, weighing eight pounds even, the moment felt surreal. "I was out of it," she laughed. "It was just like, wow. I just had a baby."

One thing that stands out most to Emma is that she had a choice in where she delivered, and she intentionally chose Lakes Regional Healthcare. "I'm really grateful that I chose this hospital," she said. "It's smaller, and I liked that. I had the same nurses the whole time. They really got to know us. My sisters delivered at bigger hospitals, and they didn't have that experience."

Emma had heard strong recommendations about Dr. Cunningham and appreciated his approach to care throughout her pregnancy. "He brings you your options, explains the risks and benefits, and then lets you decide. I felt in control," she said. "He didn't just tell me how it was going to be."

Even in the operating room, what began as nerves turned into relief. "I was super nervous going into the C-section," Emma said. "But then the doctors and I were cracking jokes, and this calm just washed over me."

Looking back, Emma describes her experience as friendly, supportive, and personal. She believes that is something special about delivering in a rural community hospital. "The nurses really tried to get to know us. They remembered things about us. It just felt really personal."

For other moms preparing for delivery, Emma offers simple advice. "Trust yourself. Trust your doctors. Trust your nurses. It will be what it will be, so just go with the flow and trust."

For Emma, that trust led her to choose local care and welcome baby Caleb into the world surrounded by a team she knew, a doctor she trusted, and nurses who felt like familiar faces. In a small community, that connection made all the difference.

Local Physicians That Deliver

These family medicine physicians provide obstetrical care at Lakes Regional Healthcare and can all be reached at 712-336-3750:



1. Zach Borus, MD, MPH
2. Craig Cunningham, MD
3. Christine Fricke, DO
4. Averill Fuhs, DO
5. Mike Kalkhoff, MD
6. Andrew Mueiting, DO
7. Whitney Nelson, DO
8. Steve Vander Leest, DO

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy:

How It Helps During and After Pregnancy

Pregnancy and childbirth are life-changing in the very best ways. But they're also physically demanding. Many women are surprised by issues that arise in pregnancy and after delivery, and even more surprised to learn that some symptoms they've been told are "normal" are actually treatable.

At Lakes Regional Healthcare, Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist Sarah Tunland, PT, DPT (pictured top right) specializes in helping women prepare for birth, recover after delivery, and regain confidence in their bodies. She has over 300 hours of continuing education beyond her doctorate and 13 years of experience treating pelvic health conditions. Tunland also recently completed additional training as a Prenatal and Postpartum Corrective Exercise Specialist, allowing her to provide highly specific guidance for pregnant and postpartum moms.

Preparing Your Body for Birth

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that support the bladder, uterus, and bowels. During pregnancy, these muscles experience increased demands due to hormone and physiological changes as baby grows. Pelvic floor physical therapy can help prepare the pelvis and pelvic floor for delivery, address back, hip, SI joint, or pubic bone pain, reduce urinary leakage, improve comfort during intercourse, and teach options for pushing and breathing mechanics. Even one or two sessions can provide education and exercises that make pregnancy more comfortable and birth recovery smoother. Plus, it's a great time to get a baseline regarding your pelvic floor health.



“

“One in three women will experience pelvic floor dysfunction after having a baby. It’s common, but that doesn’t mean it’s normal.”

— Sarah Tunglund, PT, DPT

A cesarean section, or C-section, is a major abdominal surgery. A C-section scar can create deeper adhesions that lead to lower abdominal pulling, pain with movement, pain with intercourse, abdominal weakness, pelvic floor dysfunction, and postural changes. Physical therapy can improve mobility, strengthen abdominal muscles, and support full recovery, even years after delivery.

“If you had knee surgery, you’d go to physical therapy afterwards,” Tunglund says. “A C-section should be no different.”

Tunglund says pelvic heaviness, leakage, or pelvic pain are “check engine lights” that your body may not be ready for certain exercises yet. Therapy can help determine how to reconnect your core and pelvic floor, which exercises address your specific deficits, when you can return to higher level exercises such as running or lifting, and how to prevent long-term problems.

The childbearing years are busy, but they are also the most beneficial time to prevent long-term issues. Addressing pelvic health early may reduce the risk of bladder leakage, prolapse, or chronic pain later in life.

If you’re pregnant, postpartum, or planning to become pregnant, consider adding pelvic floor physical therapy to your care routine. Depending on your insurance, you may be able to schedule an appointment with Dr. Tunglund directly by calling 712-338-2558 or obtain a simple referral from your provider. Either way, your body deserves expert care at every stage, and pelvic floor physical therapy should be part of that care.

Postpartum Recovery

Many women assume certain symptoms are just part of having a baby. In reality, they may be signs of pelvic floor dysfunction and can be treated. Common postpartum concerns include:

- Leaking urine with coughing, sneezing, or exercise
- Tailbone pain
- Pain with intercourse
- A feeling of pelvic heaviness
- Abdominal muscle separation known as diastasis recti
- C-section scar pain or pulling
- Difficulty returning to exercise



Nervous About Pelvic Physical Therapy?

Many women feel hesitant about pelvic floor therapy. Internal vaginal and rectal assessments are available but always optional. Patients are informed ahead of time about what to expect, and consent is completely in their control. The goal is comfort, education, and empowerment.

A Small Spot, A Life-Saving Check

When Bethany Zishka went in for her annual skin check, she didn't expect to hear the word melanoma. The spot in question, a small mole on the side of her nose, was something she'd had for years. It wasn't raised, didn't look irregular, and didn't draw attention. But over time, Bethany noticed it appeared slightly darker than before. During her routine visit, she pointed it out to her provider.

That decision may have saved her life. And one of the most surprising parts of Bethany's diagnosis is how unremarkable the mole appeared.

"I've had it for as long as I can remember," she said. "It was there when I was in high school." To the naked eye, it looked like a typical mole. It wasn't until Courtney Bolluyt, PA at Dakota Dermatology in Spirit Lake, examined it more closely using specialized tools that subtle differences in pigmentation became apparent.

Bethany, the Director of Outpatient Services at Lakes Regional Healthcare, was diagnosed with melanoma in situ in late January. Melanoma is the deadliest, most dangerous form of skin cancer because of its high capability to metastasize to other parts of the body, including vital organs. In situ means the cancer was confined to its original location and had not spread to the surrounding tissue, which is the earliest point, also known as stage zero. Just days after receiving the diagnosis, she underwent Mohs micrographic surgery by Dr. Kelly Jerstad, MD at Dakota Dermatology in Sioux Falls, South Dakota to remove the melanoma, ensure all margins were clear, and then closed with a bilobed flap. Within weeks, she was healing well. Now you'd hardly know what she went through.

Bethany's story is a powerful reminder that skin cancer doesn't always look dramatic or alarming, especially in its early stages. Changes can be subtle. Spots you've had for years can change quietly over time. That's why routine skin checks are so important.

Working closely with oncology patients in her career reinforced that mindset. She views skin checks much like mammograms or colonoscopies — preventive care that can catch serious issues early, when they're most treatable.

“

“When it's caught early, the treatment is much simpler. That superficial check is nothing. It could save your life.”

— Bethany Zishka



Signs of Melanoma: When a “Harmless Spot” Isn’t So Harmless

Bethany credits her early diagnosis to one simple habit:
ANNUAL SKIN EXAMS.

“I’ve been going every year,” she shared. “It’s not hard to do. Most people go in for annual checkups to refill medications or get other routine screenings. Skin checks should be part of that routine.”

Growing up on a farm and spending plenty of time outdoors, Bethany also wore sunscreen regularly. Still, she emphasizes that sunscreen alone doesn’t eliminate risk. “You can do everything ‘right’ and still develop skin cancer,” she said. “That’s why checks matter.”

According to the Iowa Cancer Registry and Iowa Cancer Consortium, melanoma is the third most common cancer diagnosis in Dickinson County, and we rank highest in melanoma cancer rates in the entire state. Although the reason is unclear, a higher population of people with fair skin and light hair, outdoor lifestyles and occupations such as farming, lake activities, and long summer days in the sun may be contributing factors. Even in a colder climate, sun exposure adds up over time.

Following her diagnosis, Bethany will now have skin exams every six months. Her advice to others is straightforward:






- ➔ **Wear sunscreen**
- ➔ **Get annual skin checks**
- ➔ **If something looks different or feels concerning, get it checked**

Bethany’s story is proof that early detection works, and that paying attention to even the smallest changes can make all the difference.

Many of us have freckles, moles, or spots we’ve had for years without thinking twice. Most skin changes are harmless. But occasionally, a spot that seems small or insignificant can signal something more serious.

Skin cancer, including melanoma, is one of the most common cancers in the United States, and Dickinson County has the highest incidence in all of Iowa. The good news is that when it’s found early, it is highly treatable.

A helpful guide for spotting concerning changes is the ABCDE rule:

-  **A ASYMMETRY:**
One half doesn’t match the other
-  **B BORDER:**
Edges are irregular, jagged, or blurred
-  **C COLOR:**
Multiple colors or uneven shading
-  **D DIAMETER:**
Larger than a pencil eraser
-  **E EVOLVING:**
Changes in size, shape, color, or sensation

It’s especially important to pay attention to new spots or changes to existing ones.

Other warning signs include:

- A sore that doesn’t heal
- Itching, bleeding, or crusting
- A spot that looks different from others on your skin

Melanoma can develop anywhere – even areas not exposed to the sun, such as the soles of the feet or under nails. It can also spread quickly if left untreated. However, when detected early, treatment is often simple and very effective. A quick skin exam could make a life-saving difference.

If a spot concerns you, trust that instinct. A medical provider can examine it and decide whether further evaluation is needed.



Pain Management Clinic

at Lakes Regional Healthcare

Pain has a way of quietly reshaping everyday life. It can limit movement, disrupt sleep, and make even simple tasks feel overwhelming. Whether it's a lingering back issue, joint discomfort, or nerve-related pain, many people find themselves searching for answers that go beyond temporary relief. With Lakes Regional Healthcare's (LRH) Pain Management Clinic, patients have access to a comprehensive approach to pain management – one that focuses not just on easing symptoms, but on restoring quality of life.

No two pain experiences are exactly alike, which is why the first step is understanding each patient's unique situation. Providers work closely with patients to identify the root cause of discomfort, often using imaging, physical assessments, and detailed conversations about daily activities and limitations. From there, a customized treatment plan is developed. This plan may include a combination of therapies and procedures designed to reduce pain, improve mobility, and help patients regain independence.

PHYSICAL OR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

For many patients, recovery begins with physical or occupational therapy. These services play a vital role in addressing pain caused by injury, overuse, or chronic conditions. Therapists at LRH focus on improving strength, flexibility, and movement patterns. By targeting the underlying causes of pain, such as muscle imbalances or joint stress, they help patients move more efficiently and with less discomfort. Just as importantly, therapy empowers patients with practical tools and exercises they can continue at home, giving them greater control over their long-term health.

What sets LRH apart is its collaborative approach. Pain management isn't handled by a single provider. It's a coordinated effort involving therapists, radiology specialists, surgical staff, and primary care providers. This team works together to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time.

Equally important is patient education. Understanding how pain develops and how to manage it can make a lasting difference. Patients leave not only with reduced pain, but with the knowledge and confidence to maintain their progress.

Living with pain doesn't have to be the norm. With the right combination of therapies and treatments, many people can return to the activities they enjoy and the routines that matter most.

EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION

In other instances, such as when pain originates in the spine and radiates into other parts of the body, epidural steroid injections may be recommended. This treatment delivers anti-inflammatory medication directly to the source of irritation in the spine. By reducing inflammation around affected nerves, epidurals can provide meaningful relief and allow patients to participate more fully in therapy and daily activities. For many, this targeted approach helps bridge the gap between conservative care and more invasive procedures.

JOINT INJECTION

Joint pain, from arthritis, injury, or wear and tear, can make movement difficult and uncomfortable. LRH also offers joint injections to reduce inflammation and improve function in areas such as the knees, hips, and shoulders. These injections are designed to provide localized relief, helping patients move with greater ease. For individuals hoping to delay or avoid surgery, joint injections can be an effective option for managing discomfort and staying active.

RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION

For patients dealing with persistent nerve-related pain, radiofrequency ablation (RFA) offers another solution. This minimally invasive procedure targets specific nerves that are sending pain signals to the brain. Using controlled heat generated by radio waves, RFA interrupts those signals, often providing relief that lasts for months. It's particularly helpful for individuals who have not found success with other treatments or who may not be candidates for surgery. By focusing directly on the source of pain, RFA can significantly improve comfort and day-to-day function.



For more information, talk to your healthcare provider or call LRH's Pain Management Clinic at 712-339-6723.

Congratulations, Dr. Keonin!

In March, Dr. Keonin, surgeon with Northwest Iowa Surgeons, completed his 1,000th daVinci robotic-assisted surgery here at Lakes Regional Healthcare!

Welcome, Dr. Mark Milleman!

Northwest Iowa Urology welcomes Dr. Mark Milleman, who brings more than 20 years of experience in urology to the community. He is relocating from Wisconsin as his two sons prepare to leave for college. Dr. Milleman is excited to return to northwest Iowa, a place that has always been close to his heart. "Spencer and Okoboji are my second home," he shared.

Dr. Milleman grew up in Ames, Iowa, and spent much of his childhood visiting family farms in the Spencer area and spending time at their place on West Lake. His grandparents and parents were from Spencer, and those early experiences created a strong connection to the region.

He earned his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in New York and his medical degree from the University of Iowa's Carver College of Medicine. He completed his urology residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee in 2005, followed by a fellowship in laparoscopy at Humboldt University Charité Hospital in Berlin, Germany.

Medicine runs deep in his family. His father practiced as a urologist in Ames, and his grandfather, George Fieselmann, served the Spencer community as a physician. Both were strong examples and mentors as he pursued his education and career in medicine.



Dr. Milleman guides his practice with a patient centered approach to care. "I practice medicine and treat patients how I would like to be treated, medically state of the art, ethically, empathetically, and timely, placing them and their desires first and foremost," he said. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family, attending his sons' tennis matches and activities, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors. He and his wife are proud parents of two boys, and as she often says, "Okoboji is my Disneyland."

Specialty Care,

Right Here at Home



QUALITY HEALTHCARE should be convenient and accessible for every patient. That's why Lakes Regional Healthcare's Outpatient Center, located on the northwest corner of the campus, has specialists come to the community to provide care locally.

The specialists represent a variety of specialties, including cardiology, oncology, nephrology, pulmonology, neurology, orthopedics, ear, nose and throat services, vascular care, gynecology, and more.

Specialists visit on different days throughout the month, and some see patients via telemedicine. Appointments are scheduled either through the specialty physician's home clinic or through the Outpatient Center. During these "outreach clinic" visits, patients receive checkups, follow up appointments, and testing with the same level

of care expected at a larger medical center, without leaving town.

"Our outreach clinics help bring specialty care closer to home for our patients," said Lakes Regional Healthcare Director of Outpatient Services Bethany Zishka. "It means less travel, less stress, and easier access to the care people need."

Lakes Regional Healthcare is proud to care for people in the Iowa Great Lakes community. Offering specialty care locally helps ensure patients receive high quality care in a setting they know and trust.

To learn more about outreach clinics or to schedule an appointment, contact Lakes Regional Healthcare's Outpatient Center at 712-336-8650.

Specialists at LRH's Outpatient Center

The following specialists provide care at Lakes Regional Healthcare's Outpatient Center:

Avera Hepatology
(telemedicine)

**Avera Medical Group
Infectious Disease**

Dr. Mark Diaz
Dr. Jennifer Hsu
Dr. Robert Kessler
Dr. Peter Lim
Dr. Dayana Malta
Dr. Fares Masannat
Dr. Jeward Nazir
Dr. Brian Pepito
Dr. Jose Suarez

**Avera Medical Group
Oncology & Hematology**
(telemedicine)

**Avera Medical
Group Pulmonology**

(telemedicine)
Dr. Dayna Groskreutz
Dr. Anthony Hericks

**Avera Medical Group
Spencer Gynecology**

Dr. Brian Wilson

Avera Nephrology
(telemedicine)
Dakota Vascular
Dr. Patrick Kelly

Iowa Foot & Ankle
Dr. Jean-Paul Haulard

Iowa Spine Care
Dr. Daniel McGuire

Midwest ENT & Allergy
Dr. Kenneth Scott

**North Central Heart
Cardiology/Vascular**
Lisa Doom-Anderson, CNP
Dr. Mark Fleming
Dr. Jeremy Scott
Dr. Bruce Watt

Northwest Iowa ENT
Dr. Josh Espelund

**Northwest Iowa
Surgeons**
Dr. Benjamin Branigan
Dr. Jefre Helmink
Dr. Jason Keonin
Dr. Jaren Ricker
Dr. Patrick Slattery

Northwest Iowa Urology
Dr. Charlotte Caligiuri

Is It Normal Aging or Something More?

AS WE AGE, change is inevitable. Our hair turns gray, joints may feel stiffer, and we might not move quite as fast as we once did. But how do you know when a change is simply part of normal aging or when it might be a sign of something that deserves medical attention?

The short answer is that normal aging tends to be gradual and manageable, while health concerns often show up as noticeable changes that interfere with daily life.

Many adults notice mild forgetfulness, such as occasionally misplacing keys or needing more time to recall names. You may feel sore after activity, need reading glasses, or tire more easily than you did years ago. These changes happen slowly and don't typically stop you from doing the things you enjoy.

Some changes are **not a normal part of aging** and should be discussed with your healthcare provider, including:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily activities or worsens quickly
- Frequent falls, dizziness, or loss of balance
- New or worsening confusion
- Sudden changes in vision, speech, or strength
- Extreme fatigue that doesn't improve with rest
- Ongoing pain that limits mobility or independence

These symptoms don't always mean something serious, but they are important signals that your body may need extra support.

Many conditions, from vitamin deficiencies to heart problems or neurological issues, are easier to treat when caught early. Waiting too long can make recovery harder and reduce treatment options.

Unfortunately, some people delay care because they assume, "this is just what getting older feels like." Others worry they're making a fuss over nothing. In reality, healthcare providers welcome these conversations and often encourage them.

If you notice changes in yourself, or if family members express concern, it's worth scheduling a visit with your primary care provider. Sometimes loved ones notice subtle shifts before we do.

Growing older doesn't mean giving up independence, energy, or enjoyment of life. Paying attention to changes and speaking up early can help you stay active, safe, and confident for years to come.

Leakage and Pressure Aren't Just "Part of Getting Older"

Many women quietly accept bladder leakage, pelvic pressure, or discomfort, especially during intercourse, as inevitable parts of aging. But common does not mean normal, and you don't have to live with it.

Pelvic floor dysfunction is the broader term for specific pelvic conditions including pelvic organ prolapse, stress incontinence, and more. Pelvic floor dysfunction is common. In fact, one in three women experience stress incontinence, which is leaking urine while coughing, sneezing, or lifting. Another pelvic floor dysfunction is urge incontinence or not making it to the bathroom in time. Pelvic organ prolapse, another pelvic floor dysfunction, is a feeling of heaviness or tissue bulging and affects many women, especially after childbirth and during and after menopause. Hormonal changes, muscle loss, and the physical demands of childbirth all contribute to pelvic changes over time. These conditions are widespread, but fortunately, they are treatable.

You may benefit from an evaluation if you experience:

- Leaking urine with activity
- Strong urgency or frequent urination (more than 7-8 times per day)
- Constipation or stool leakage
- Pelvic heaviness or pressure
- Pain with intercourse
- Tailbone or pelvic pain

Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Prolapse occurs when pelvic organs shift downward due to weakened support structures. Treatment options exist on a spectrum. Pelvic floor physical therapy is often the first and most conservative, and least invasive, step. It improves muscle coordination, strength, and pressure management within the abdomen and pelvis. Pessary devices, fit by a physician, can also be an option after or concurrent with pelvic physical therapy. Surgery is done in more advanced cases. Even if surgery is necessary, pelvic physical therapy improves outcomes before and after the procedure.

Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence is one of the top reasons women go into nursing homes, often because families struggle to manage it at home. "If bladder control is the only reason someone can't stay independent, that's a big deal," Tunglund says. "We should address it early before a lot of time and money is spent needlessly."

Pelvic Floor Dysfunction Prevention

Many women come to therapy not because they have severe symptoms, but because they want to prevent future issues. If your mother, sister, or friend experienced significant leakage or prolapse, early strengthening, hands-on techniques, and education may help you avoid the same path.

Pelvic floor physical therapy is part of standard physical therapy and is typically covered by insurance. Depending on your coverage, you may be able to schedule an appointment with Tunglund directly by calling 712-338-2558 or request a referral from your provider. Either way, take the first step today. Aging should mean living well – not living with preventable problems.



At Lakes Regional Healthcare, Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist Sarah Tunglund, PT, DPT helps women address pelvic health concerns conservatively, often avoiding more invasive treatments such as surgery. Tunglund provides physical therapy for orthopedic patients and those with pelvic floor concerns out of Lakes Regional Healthcare's Milford location. She has had extensive education and experience in the specialization of pelvic

floor physical therapy including more than 300 hours of continuing education beyond her doctorate and 13 years of experience treating pelvic health conditions. She also recently completed additional training as a Prenatal and Postpartum Corrective Exercise Specialist, allowing her to provide highly specific guidance for pregnant and postpartum moms. Approximately half of her caseload focuses on women's health.

Healthier Eating

Through Small Changes, NOT Dieting

Many people have tried a strict diet to lose weight or improve their health, only to leave them feeling frustrated when it fails or they cannot stick with it. The truth is, lasting health comes from habits, not deprivation. Highly restrictive eating plans can slow metabolism, increase cravings, and make food feel stressful. Over time, this cycle can harm both physical and emotional health.

Instead of focusing on what to cut out, consider what to add:

3 balanced meals per day, no skipping

Meals should contain a protein, whole grain or fruit, and vegetables. Eating regular, balanced meals improves the quality of your daily food choices, balances your circadian rhythm and hormones, improves energy, stabilizes mood, and diminishes the cravings of snacks and less nutritious foods.

More vegetables at meals

Vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients. Every different vegetable color has unique health benefits. Additionally, the fiber and water content increase how full you feel at meals.



Lean proteins

Protein foods are packed with muscle building and immune promoting benefits. Protein foods take longer to digest so they keep us satisfied for longer. Beef, pork, fish, and chicken are all great protein sources, but don't forget about dairy, eggs, and the plant proteins of beans, nuts, and seeds.

More water

Hunger can disguise itself as thirst because we do get a little liquid every time we eat. Additionally, that special beverage you crave every afternoon could be the signal that you are just thirsty, not related to the special beverage. Go for still water or carbonated water without any chemical additives or sweeteners.

Whole grains

Whole grains have all three parts of the grain, which provide fiber, energy, plus vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and even a little protein. Refined grains cannot boast these health promoting qualities, and sadly many people avoid grains thinking they are all the same. Whole grains give us sustained energy with their slow digesting starches and fiber. Whole grains include whole wheat bread and pasta, steel-cut oats, brown or wild rice, quinoa, bulgur, farro, and cornmeal.



If eating has felt like a lifelong struggle, you're not alone. And help is available. Sustainable change is possible, one small step at a time. For more information, talk to your health provider or call Lakes Regional Healthcare Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Beth Samuelson at 712-336-8785.

Realistic Tips

For Eating Healthy on a Budget

Eating well doesn't have to mean spending more. With a little planning, healthy choices can fit almost any budget. Here are realistic tips:



Create a simple meal plan and shopping list.

Planning reduces impulse purchases and food waste. To make your grocery bill go further, check the local grocery store sales in the Lakes News Shopper each week and build some of your meals around what's on sale. If something is on sale a lot, consider purchasing more and freezing it to use in the future.



Join and use community gardens.

Dickinson County Community Gardens is located near the Lakes Area Senior Center in Spirit Lake and costs \$50 per family or \$40 per individual to join. As a member, you're asked to put in an hour or more of labor each week. In return, you'll get fresh, organic vegetables, including tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, onions, green beans, melons, squash, radishes, and more. **To learn more, call or text Carol Larson at 712-330-4140.**

Choose affordable, nutritious staples such as:

- Beans, lentils, and eggs
- Frozen fruits and vegetables
- Oats, rice, and whole-grain pasta

Prepare larger meals.

You can save leftovers to save both time and money.

Don't shop hungry.

It sounds simple, but it makes a difference. Hungry shoppers are more likely to overspend on less nutritious options.

Focus on progress, not pressure.

Healthy eating isn't about expensive superfoods. It's about consistency. Small changes add up, especially for families.

**Supporting your health should feel achievable, not stressful.
Affordable, nourishing food choices are within reach.**

Volunteers Provide Valuable Service

Volunteering has been part of our history since before the first patient received care and is still an integral part of the organization. For over 60 years, Lakes Regional Healthcare volunteers have assisted patients and staff in various ways, such as escorting and transporting patients throughout the facility, providing companionship to patients, delivering patient meal trays to cancer patients as they receive chemotherapy, and assisting Gift Shop customers.

We currently have approximately 50 volunteers that give of their time and talents based on their availability and desires. Depending on the area, volunteer shifts are three or four hours long. Some volunteers work every week and others work once a month. Some take the winter off, and some take the summer off.



Volunteer opportunities include:

Gift Shop Volunteer

Gift Shop volunteers are the frontline staff that greet and assist customers, ring up their purchases, and straighten up and restock shelves. Shifts are weekdays between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm and 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm.

West Entrance Volunteer

West Entrance volunteers greet patients and visitors as they enter the hospital and help escort and direct patients to various locations within the organization, including occasionally transporting patients via wheelchair. Shifts are weekdays from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm and 12:00 pm until 4:00 pm.

East Entrance Volunteer

Similar to the West Entrance volunteers, the East Entrance volunteers greet patients and visitors as they enter the hospital's east side. Shifts are weekdays from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm and 12:00 pm until 4:00 pm.

Hospice Volunteers

Hospice volunteers provide companionship, read, write letters, run errands, prepare meals, do housework or yard work, provide respite care for hospice patients and relief for their caregivers, and do clerical duties for the hospice program.

There are also volunteers that donate their time and talents from home by sewing teddy bears for pediatric patients in our ER and knitting baby caps for newborns in our Birth Center.

If you're interested in volunteering, apply online at www.lakeshealth.org/volunteer or call 712-336-8799.



What Our Patients Say

“I felt I had exceptional care. I would highly recommend your facility. I really enjoyed the nursing staff.”

“This Spirit Lake hospital is amazing and we are so fortunate. Thank you!”

“I have been to many hospitals. This was by far the nicest, cleanest, and beautiful facility that I have been in. No one wants to be in a hospital, but if you have to, this is the hospital you want to be in.”

“I was well informed and cared for by the whole staff which made my experience one that I can relate to anyone who asks about it. Best care that I have received from any other hospital that I have been a patient of.”

“This was an emergency situation which was out of town! I was nervous about going to this hospital but the overall care was outstanding!”

“The care I received at LRH was amazing. I stayed in there only one night and I had outstanding care the entire time after my emergency surgery. Everyone was knowledgeable, efficient, and experienced. They were also extremely kind at a time when I could’ve had a horrible experience because of the details of my accident instead. I had a wonderful experience. I highly recommend my surgeon and this hospital.”

“I requested to have my surgery done at this hospital (from Colorado) because I knew I would get the best, utmost care.”

Healthcare When You Need It

We are fortunate to have several ways to receive healthcare in the Iowa Great Lakes. However, it is important to know where to go for your injury or illness that is the best for your health and your finances. Here are some tips to help you out:

QuickCare Clinic

Lakes Regional Family Medicine
2301 Hwy 71 South, Spirit Lake
712-336-3750
Monday-Thursday, 1-5 pm
Saturday, 8 am – noon

Non-Emergent, Acute Health Concerns

- Minor burns and cuts
- Cold or flu symptoms
- Earache
- Allergies
- Nausea

Lakes Regional Family Medicine

2301 Hwy 71 South, Spirit Lake
712-336-3750
Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Chronic and Routine Health Concerns

- Diabetic management
- Heart health and management
- Obstetrical care
- Well child care
- History and physical examinations
- Establishing care with a new provider

Lakes Regional Healthcare ER

2301 Hwy 71 South, Spirit Lake
712-336-3750
Available 24 hours/day, every day

Emergent Health Concerns

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Major burns/cuts
- Complications from pregnancy
- Poisoning or drug overdose
- Stroke-like symptoms
- Suicidal thoughts