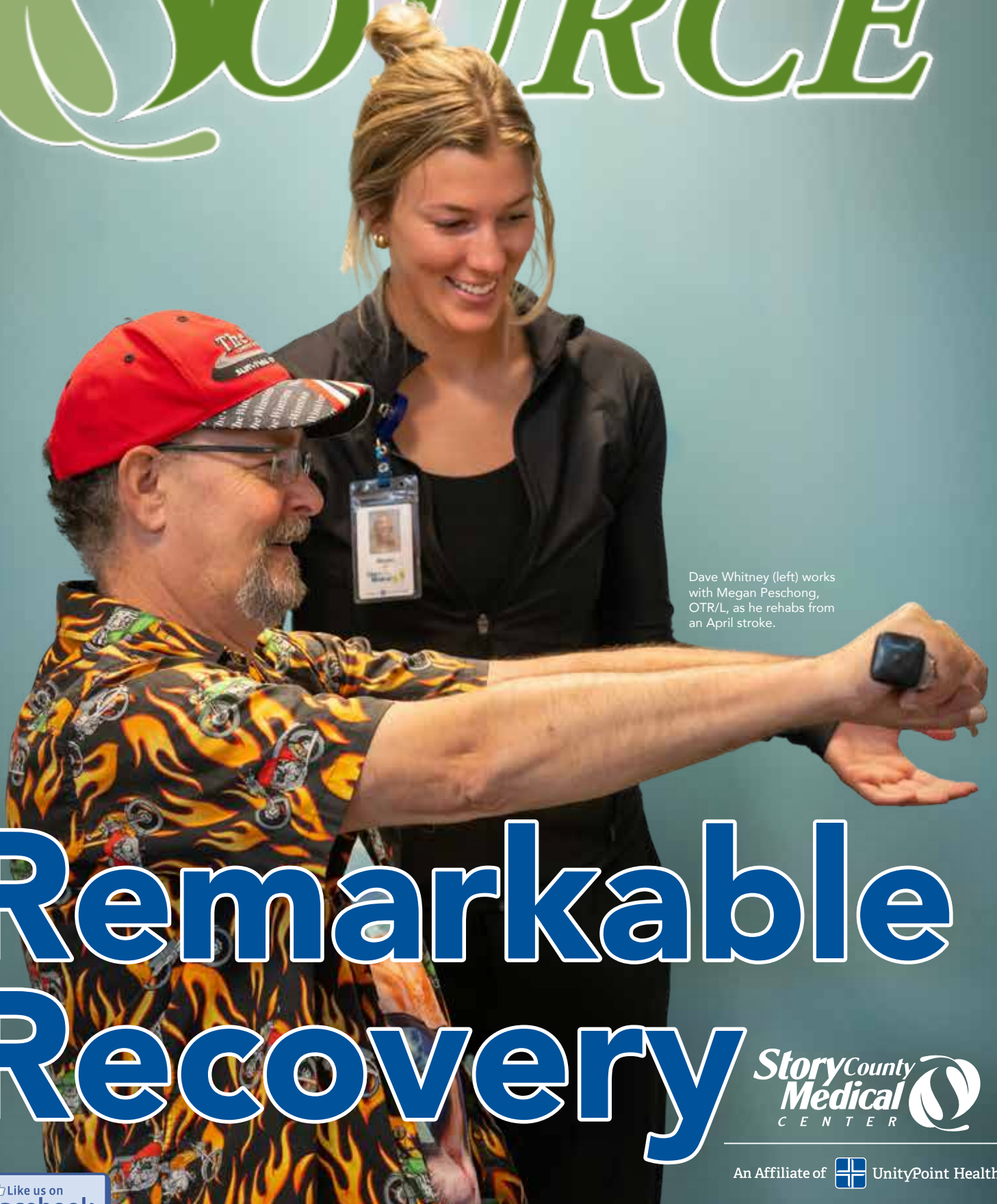


Story Medical SOURCE



Dave Whitney (left) works with Megan Peschong, OTR/L, as he rehabs from an April stroke.

Remarkable Recovery



An Affiliate of  UnityPoint Health



FALL/WINTER 2024

Welcome to Source

As we close out another eventful year at Story Medical, we are excited to share the incredible strides being made across our campus and in the community. This issue of *Source* brings together stories of growth, innovation, and community care that reflect our commitment to delivering high quality, compassionate care close to home.



Nate Thompson
Story Medical CEO

From Dave Whitney's remarkable recovery story following a stroke, to the exciting grand opening of our new Senior Care facility and the patient-centered update to our Surgical Services department, this edition highlights how we continue to meet the needs of our community. We are proud to introduce new services, improve existing ones, and

move forward with a vision of delivering compassionate, high-quality care for all our patients.

We are also proud of the way our team serves those who come to us in need of care. In this issue, we highlight the impact of two outstanding team members in particular. Both MaryJane Hunt, who was recently named the 2024 Outstanding Nurse Executive, and Tina

Hornung, who was our DAISY Award winner in 2024, exemplify what it means to provide the Best Experience Every Time.

As always, we thank you for putting your trust in the programs, services and providers of Story Medical.

Together, we are building a brighter, healthier future. for Story County.

Story Medical Source



FALL/WINTER 2024

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ABOUT STORY MEDICAL SOURCE

Story Medical Source is a publication of Story County Medical Center. If you have questions or story ideas, please submit them at storymedical.org/contact.



Story Medical Clinics in Nevada and Maxwell are now offering flu, RSV, and COVID-19 vaccines for the 2024 season by appointment.

Please schedule as soon as possible by calling the clinic or using MyUnityPoint to book online!



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Nevada, Iowa 50201
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403 First Street
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STORY MEDICAL CLINIC - AMES
Natural Health
431 South Duff Avenue, Ste. B
Ames, Iowa 50010
(515) 232-2979

Enhanced Surgical Suite Boosts Efficiency and Patient Privacy

With the aim of enhancing comfort, quality and efficiency for both patients and staff, Story Medical has completed a comprehensive remodel of its operating room (OR) facilities.

The remodel has placed an emphasis on improving patient privacy and comfort. The pre- and post-op bays, which previously used curtains for separation, are now individual rooms. This change provides greater privacy for patients as they are admitted and discharged and offers a little more space in each bay.

Another significant upgrade is the installation of a dedicated HVAC system for the OR. Previously, the OR shared an HVAC unit with the lab, creating a sometimes-uncomfortable environment for staff, especially during hot weather. This required regular manual adjustments to maintain a constant temperature in the room.

The decontamination area has also received a significant facelift, including the addition of a steam sterilizer capable of



handling nine pans of surgical tools simultaneously. This upgrade is particularly beneficial for total joint replacement surgeries, as it allows all items needed for one replacement to be sterilized in a single load, enhancing efficiency and reducing turnaround time.

The remodel is not just about enhancing facilities; it's about improving the overall experience for patients and staff alike.

"These improvements are a testament to our dedication to investing in facilities that enable us to deliver high-quality care locally," says Cathy Haley, Director of the Story Medical Outpatient Clinic and Surgical Services. "We are committed to ensuring that our patients receive the best possible care in the best possible environment."

For more information about the Outpatient Clinic and Surgical Services at Story Medical, please visit www.storymedical.org/surgery.



Story Medical Puts New Ambulance in Service

The Emergency Services team at Story Medical introduced a new set of wheels this fall. The new ambulance, pictured at left, replaced an older model and offers a variety of new features designed to make out-of-hospital care more efficient.

The ambulance service is part of Story Medical's Emergency Department, which offers emergency care around the clock at the medical center. Story Medical offers the only hospital-based helipad in Story County, ensuring swift transfer for advanced care when needed.

Story Medical verified as a Community Level Trauma Care Facility and offer immediate access to critical services including Laboratory and Radiology (including CT scanning) available around the clock.



Remarkable Recovery

Dave Whitney leans on care team at Story Medical to make incredible recovery in wake of stroke

When Dave Whitney went to bed on April Fool's Day, nothing seemed amiss. When he woke the next morning his life had changed dramatically.

Dave suffered a stroke in his sleep, a shocking discovery for a man who, at 61, had never been on any maintenance medication. He had no symptoms and even his last physical a couple years prior showed a blood pressure most men his age range would take in a heart beat.

Without Warning

But none of that mattered as his neighbor rushed him to the Emergency Room at Story Medical.

"Nothing had changed in my eating habits or my lifestyle," Dave says. "I had worked my whole life and considered myself

to be as healthy as anyone else."

Truly, the stroke struck without warning. Upon his arrival at Story Medical, Dave was immediately assessed and stabilized.

"I was kind of in a fog, but I know they had like five or six people checking on me," Dave recalls, emphasizing the prompt and thorough care he received. "The medical team was quick to act, performing scans and giving me medication to manage my blood pressure which was very high."

Once stabilized, Dave was admitted to the Inpatient Unit at Story Medical. His two-week stay was unexpected but crucial in building a solid foundation for his recovery.

"For me to be there two weeks, I think I was pretty bad off," he admits. "But despite how bad it was, my experience was exceptional. All the people there were fantastic."

In addition to 24/7 care on the Inpatient Unit, Dave was able to begin his rehabilitation while still in the hospital. By the third day, Dave was already participating in therapy sessions facilitated by 21st Century Rehab.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF STROKE

The acronym **FAST** is a quick guide to recognizing the symptoms of a stroke, where each letter represents a specific area to check:

- **Face:** Check for drooping on one side of the face. Ask the person to smile to see if one side of the face hangs downward.
- **Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward, or is one arm unable to rise?
- **Speech:** Listen for slurred or strange speech. Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence and see if they can do so accurately.
- **Time:** If you observe any of these signs, call emergency services immediately. Quick action is crucial in treating stroke effectively.

Focused on Regaining Independence

Rehabilitation was no easy feat; Dave spent the initial days largely confined to his bed, grappling with the loss of function on his left side. In the hours and days after the stroke, his left upper extremity was flaccid—meaning he had no movement.

Even with the knowledge it was going to be a long rehabilitation, he was not discouraged.

“Dave has always had an optimistic, positive attitude even when he was first admitted to the hospital,” says Tara Marler, COTA, 21st Century Rehab, who has worked with him since his inpatient stay. “He was aware of his deficits and even in facing them he remained upbeat. From the first day, he has always been motivated for therapy and takes pride in being the hardest working person in the room.”

Dave says he made sure to celebrate even the smallest accomplishments throughout his rehabilitation.

“The left side almost immediately started getting just a little bit better,” he says, highlighting the gradual but positive progression in his recovery. “My therapy sessions were tough, but very rewarding. It wasn’t long before I could walk a short distance without a cane.”

Taking the Next Step

Now a few months removed from the unexpected hospital stay, Dave is continuing his recovery. He continues to attend physical therapy sessions at 21st Century Rehab, focusing on regaining strength and mobility.

“I’m still going for occupational therapy, working on my left hand and my shoulder,” he says. “I am so thankful for the comprehensive care I get from the team at 21st Century Rehab and Story Medical.”

Marler adds that Dave has played a huge role in his rehabilitation.

“To be honest, I can not remember there being a time when Dave was angry, upset, or discouraged during therapy,” Marler says. “We had discussions about length of recovery and he always stayed motivated. He is a great role model for other patients going through hardships.”

Through his journey with inpatient and outpatient

“The fact that I was able to stay close to home, instead of going to a larger city, was a huge weight off my shoulders.”

—Dave Whitney

therapies, Dave has gone from that flaccid left upper extremity to being able to manage buttons and fasteners, open containers, get his seat belt on and “peck at the keyboard” when using his computer at home.

Comprehensive Care, Close to Home

Reflecting on his treatment and recovery, Dave expresses immense gratitude for the proximity of such high-quality care.

“The fact that I was able to stay close to home, instead of going to a larger city, was a huge weight off my shoulders,” Dave says. “A lot of people think it is an advantage to be at a big hospital in a big city. I look at it the other way. Being at a smaller hospital meant that I got a lot more attention. That was important to me.”

“And one other thing,” Dave adds with a smile. “It may sound cliché, but the food there was great. I wouldn’t recommend it as a vacation spot, but all in all, I had a very pleasant stay, and I appreciate the kind of care I was provided.”



New Senior Care Opens Doors

New facility, located adjacent to Story Medical, offers variety of amenities

This month, Story Medical will welcome residents to its brand-new Senior Care facility—a state-of-the-art, 59,000-square-foot center designed to meet the growing needs of seniors in Story County and surrounding communities. With private rooms and a host of other modern features, the new facility marks a major step forward in the way senior care is delivered at Story Medical.

The move to this new facility is part of a long-term commitment by Story Medical to provide high-quality, compassionate care to residents. Since 1969, Story Medical Senior Care has been a vital part of the community, offering around-the-clock care for older adults. However, the former

facility, while beloved, was in need of replacement to meet the needs of the modern healthcare environment.

“Opening this new facility represents the culmination of years of vision and hard work,” says Melissa Opperman, Senior Care Administrator at Story Medical Senior Care. “It is the result of the dedication of our Board of Trustees, our leadership team, and our staff, all of whom have worked tirelessly to ensure that our seniors receive the best care in an environment that truly feels like home.”

Creating a Homelike Environment

One of the most exciting aspects of the new Senior Care facility is its focus on creating a more homelike environment for residents. Unlike traditional nursing homes, where the layout can often feel institutional, Story Medical’s new facility has been designed with comfort and familiarity in mind. Residents will enjoy 60 spacious private rooms, residential style porch entries, and family gathering spaces where they can connect with loved ones.

“We’re moving away from the idea of a clinical, sterile environment,” explains Ashley Wilson, Director of Nursing at Story Medical Senior Care. “From the porch entries to the enclosed gardens, every aspect of this new facility is intended to make residents feel like they’re living in a home, not just a care center. The small aesthetic touches—like communal dining areas and family gathering spaces—will make a big difference in the daily lives of our residents.”

In addition to providing a warm and welcoming environment, the new facility will offer a range of amenities designed to enhance residents’ quality of life. These include therapy rooms, enclosed gardens for each household and more. All of these features are designed to help residents remain active, mentally engaged, and socially connected—key components of successful aging.

Focus on Efficiency and Comprehensive Care

While the new facility places a strong emphasis on creating a homelike atmosphere, it has also been designed with operational efficiency in mind. The facility will be located adjacent to Story County Medical Center, which includes the hospital and clinic facilities, allowing for seamless coordination of services.

“Having our Senior Care facility on the same campus as our medical center is a game-changer,” says Opperman. “Our residents typically require more frequent medical care than older adults in independent living environments. Now, they’ll have easy, immediate access to the full range of services Story Medical offers, from primary care to specialized treatments. It reduces the barriers and the stress of arranging

transportation, offering peace of mind for both residents and their families.”

Having Senior Care located so close to other Story Medical services ensures the facility will also benefit from shared resources, enhancing overall efficiency. This allows the medical center to streamline operations, focus on delivering top-notch care, and reduce logistical challenges that can arise when coordinating services across multiple locations.

Community-Driven Vision

The decision to build the new Senior Care facility was largely shaped by feedback from the community. Story Medical’s leadership team and Board of Trustees listened closely to the needs of seniors and their families, ensuring that the new facility would reflect the highest standards of care.

“We take great pride in this project,” says Nate Thompson, Story Medical CEO. “Our community is at the heart of everything we do, and this facility is no different. It was important to us to create a place where seniors feel cared for, valued, and connected to their loved ones. This facility is a direct reflection of the feedback we’ve received and our ongoing mission to provide comprehensive, compassionate care locally.”

The facility will offer specialized care options including physical therapy and rehabilitation services through on-site therapy rooms. The goal is to create a continuum of care that ensures residents can receive all the services they need in one place.

Designed for Future Generations

The new Story Medical Senior Care is also designed with the future in mind. As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the demand for senior care services is

expected to increase.

Story Medical is committed to ensuring it has the capacity to meet these growing needs.

“With this new facility, we’re positioning ourselves to not only meet the needs of our current population but also to be prepared for the future,” says Opperman. “We are building a facility that can accommodate increased demand without sacrificing the personalized, high-quality care we’ve always provided.”

This forward-thinking approach is part of what makes the new Senior Care facility so unique. In addition to serving the local population, Story Medical is looking into expanding its services, including becoming a VA-certified facility to serve veterans in the area.

A Legacy of Compassionate Care

Story Medical has been serving the senior population in Nevada since the opening of its long-term care unit in 1969. Over the decades, the hospital has expanded its services to meet the changing needs of the community.

This new Senior Care facility represents the next step in that legacy—a commitment to ensuring that seniors in Story County and beyond receive the care and attention they deserve.

“We have a long history of providing exceptional care to seniors in this community,” says Thompson. “This project represents a significant investment in our future and ensures that we can continue to provide these vital services locally, long into the future. We’re proud to offer a place where seniors can thrive and live with dignity, surrounded by caring professionals.”

To learn more about our new facility or to inquire about current availability, please call Story Medical Senior Care at (515) 382-7019.



A Trusted Partner

When Alex and Katie Deyoe decided to move their young family back to Nevada, finding reliable healthcare for their children was paramount—especially for young son William, who was born with a lung condition. After considering all options in the area, they made the choice to establish care with Dr. Audra Poterucha at Story Medical Clinic in Nevada. They were confident Dr. Poterucha could deliver the high-quality healthcare they needed from a clinic that featured a family-friendly vibe.

Alex, originally from Nevada, recalls his mother's positive experience with Story Medical. He says that played a role in the decision to establish care at Story Medical.

"My mom switched to Story Medical in recent years and told us how happy she was with the care she received there," Alex says. "Considering her experience and that fact that it was right here in Nevada, it seemed like a good avenue for us."

Serving the Whole Family

The Deyoe's move to Nevada coincided with the arrival of William, who was born with a congenital lung defect requiring extra medical attention. This magnified the importance of the family having convenient access to comprehensive care. In all

respects, the Deyoes needed a healthcare provider that could handle the complexities of William's condition while also caring for their three-year-old daughter, Rylee.

Alex and Katie say the choice to go with Story Medical quickly proved to be the right one. From the seamless transfer of medical records to managing the appointment schedules of two young parents, the clinic handled everything with a level of care and efficiency that impressed them both.

"They were quick to accommodate us, making sure William was seen just two days after being born," Katie says, highlighting the responsive and proactive nature of the clinic. And that was just the beginning. Dr. Poterucha and her team's approach to family healthcare has been both a comfort and a relief for the Deyoes.

"It's been really easy to make appointments, and the MyChart app helps us to more easily manage our schedules," Katie says. "The fact that everyone there from Dr. Poterucha to the registration staff is focused on service is impressive. Even on short notice, their ability to provide swift care, like when William had an ear infection, only contributes to the trust we have in them."

Effectively Managing Complex Care

The clinic's handling of regular visits to manage William's condition further exemplifies the care team's commitment to delivering integrated care.

"If Dr. Poterucha has any questions, she reaches out directly to the specialists. The communication has been excellent," says Katie, who says Story Medical's affiliation with UnityPoint Health has been a bonus, ensuring they have access to the same specialists they saw prior to moving to Nevada.

Personalized Care, Community Focus

Alex says growing up in Nevada he has long been aware of the clinic's reputation for serving the community with great care. Dr. Poterucha's personal connection to the family—she was in high school at the same time as Alex—



and her professional expertise have made her indispensable to the Deyoes.

"Having a provider like Dr. Poterucha, who knows this town and truly cares about her patients, makes us feel like we're more than just another case; we're part of a community," Alex says. "Throughout the clinic, the providers have been here for years, and that makes a difference. It definitely puts us at ease knowing we have experienced professionals looking after us."

Now settled into Nevada, the Deyoes say the stress they once felt about finding an adequate care option to meet their unique needs is gone.

"Moving back and finding such reliable care right away has been fantastic," Alex says. "It's made a huge difference in our lives, especially given the complexities with William, and the fact that Rylee is entering her toddler years."

As for Katie, the peace of mind that comes with having a trustworthy healthcare provider nearby is invaluable. "Just knowing that everyone from the doctors to the front desk is there for us makes all the difference," she says.

You Can't Outgrow Our Care

At Story Medical Clinic we are proud to provide services for all ages. The benefits of care delivered by our team in Nevada and Maxwell include:

Family-Centric Focus

At Story Medical Clinics in Nevada and Maxwell, the dedicated family practice providers understand the nuances of pediatric and adult healthcare needs. Services for kids include initial newborn visits, well-child checks with immunizations, and walk-in availability through the Kids Clinic for acute care.

Seamless Specialist Referrals

A significant advantage for patients at Story Medical Clinic is the seamless referral system to specialists. "We have established strong relationships with specialists across major healthcare

centers, ensuring that our patients receive the best possible care without restrictions," Dr. Poterucha adds. This network is particularly beneficial for complex pediatric cases, as seen with the Deyoes, ensuring comprehensive care continuity from primary to specialized services.

Diverse Care for New Mothers

The clinic also offers specialized services for new mothers, including breastfeeding education and contraception management. "Our goal is to provide holistic care that addresses all aspects of health, both physical and emotional, for new mothers," explains Dr. Poterucha.



Support Beyond the Clinic

Story Medical Clinic extends its care beyond traditional medical services. Providers engage in local school functions, provide on-site medical consultations at athletic events, and participate actively in community health education.

For more information or to schedule an appointment call the Nevada Clinic at (515) 382-5413 or the Maxwell Clinic at (515) 387-8815.

Hornung Honored with DAISY Award

During National Nurses Week in May, Tina Hornung, RN, was honored with the prestigious DAISY Award, an international recognition program that celebrates the exceptional care provided by nurses every day.

The DAISY Award at Story Medical is presented annually in partnership with Purdue University Global. In nominating her for the award, Tina's colleagues and patients noted her unwavering dedication and compassionate approach to nursing.

Tina is the Infection Control/Employee Health Nurse at Story Medical, playing a pivotal role in maintaining patient safety and staff well-being.

"What I love most about Story Medical is the sense of community and teamwork," Tina says. "Everyone here is dedicated to making a difference for our patients and our community. It truly feels like being part of a welcoming and impactful team."

In addition to the DAISY Award, Story Medical offered recognition to several nurses and other care providers for exceptional service at the ceremony. Those honored included:

- **Outstanding Leader:** Mandy Schiefert, RN
- **Partner of Nursing:** Jerrod McCormick, CRT
- **Nurse Proud (Strength):** Christina Goodlaxson, RN



- **Nurse Proud (Excellence):** Andrew Lucchesi, RN
- **Nurse Proud (Compassion):** Trixie Barger, RN
- **Nurse Proud (Teamwork):** Ann Squier, RN

"It is important for us to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding contributions of our care providers," says MaryJane Hunt, Vice President of Patient Care at Story Medical. "Recognizing exceptional caregivers not only highlights their dedication but also inspires a culture of excellence throughout our medical center. Each caregiver honored exemplifies the core values of compassionate, patient-centered care that Story Medical strives to uphold. Congratulations to all the recipients of this well-deserved recognition."

Nurse Leader Recognized for Excellence

MaryJane Hunt, Chief Nursing Officer at Story County Medical Center, was honored with the 2024 Outstanding Nurse Executive Award from the Iowa Organization for Nursing Leadership (IONL) this past October. This award recognizes exceptional nurse executives who demonstrate outstanding achievement in nursing leadership across the state of Iowa.

Since joining Story Medical in May 2020, Hunt's impact has been felt across the organization, from enhancing relationships with key stakeholders to improving clinical quality outcomes and patient experience indicators. Her leadership has helped drive a cultural shift at Story Medical, placing a renewed focus on nursing excellence.

"MaryJane joined us at one of the most challenging times in recent history," says Nate Thompson, Story Medical CEO. "She stepped into her role just as the COVID pandemic began. Her leadership and vision have been nothing short of



inspirational. Her ability to connect with our team and drive needed cultural changes has made a lasting impact. She is an exceptional nurse leader, and we are proud to have her on our team."

During her tenure, Hunt has introduced numerous initiatives aimed at improving staff engagement and patient care. She re-established the DAISY Award program at Story Medical to recognize extraordinary nurses, started the Nursing Council, and championed the Patient and Family Advisory Council. Hunt's focus on staff recognition has fostered a

culture of appreciation and professional development within the nursing team.

Hunt is also known for her compassion and hands-on leadership. From helping a colleague whose home was impacted by a tornado, to supporting front line nursing staff during times of high patient demand, her empathy and commitment to the well-being of others has been evident in all that she does.

"MaryJane brings a unique ability to balance the regulatory and business needs of the organization with the realities of patient care," Thompson says. "Her leadership style, centered on kindness, generosity, and integrity, has made us all better at what we do. I've learned a great deal from her, and we are incredibly fortunate she leads our nursing team."

The IONL, an affiliate of the Iowa Hospital Association, annually recognizes a nurse executive who demonstrates outstanding leadership and a commitment to excellence in patient care and nursing services.

Scholarships Awarded to Caregivers of Tomorrow

The Story County Medical Center Foundation is proud to announce the recipients of its 2024 scholarships, awarding a total of \$3,000 to three exceptional high school seniors committed to pursuing careers in healthcare. This year marks a milestone for the Foundation, with a record number of outstanding applicants and, for the first time, the awarding of three \$1,000 scholarships.

The Foundation, known for its longstanding dedication to investing in the future of the healthcare workforce, continues to support aspiring leaders, doctors, medical assistants, technicians, and nurses through its annual scholarship program. Recognizing its responsibility as a healthcare organization, the Story County Medical Center aims to foster and educate future healthcare professionals.

Each scholarship recipient has demonstrated a strong commitment to pursuing post-secondary education in a health-related field and has shown exceptional service, leadership, and achievement both in their schools and communities. The Foundation is confident that these individuals will make significant contributions to the healthcare industry in the future.

The recipients of this year's scholarships are:

- **Lynze Geerdes**, Nevada High School, who will attend Iowa State University to major in Dietetics.
- **Olivia Axmear**, Nevada High School, who plans to attend the University of Dubuque to major in Human Health Science while also playing golf for the university.



In the left photo is Jaclyn Gessner of Roland-Story. In the right photo (left to right) are Foundation Board Vice President Tricia Crain, Lynze Geerdes and Olivia Axmear.

- **Jaclyn Gessner**, Roland-Story High School, who will attend the University of Iowa to study Human Physiology. Jaclyn plans to continue her education after earning her bachelor's degree to obtain a master's degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics.

The Story County Medical Center Foundation congratulates these deserving recipients and wishes them success in their academic and professional pursuits. Their passion for healthcare and commitment to making a difference will undoubtedly contribute to a brighter future in the field.

Year-End is Almost Upon Us

As the end of the year approaches, it's the perfect time to consider making a charitable gift to the Story Medical Endowment Foundation. Your contributions directly support our mission and every gift, no matter the size, makes a meaningful impact—helping us invest in new technology, enhance patient care, and expand community outreach programs.

By making a year-end donation, you not only help improve healthcare in our region but may also benefit from potential tax deductions.

Join us in ensuring that Story Medical continues to thrive as a local healthcare leader for years to come. Together, we can create a healthier future for our community.

To learn more about making a tax-deductible gift to the Story Medical Foundation, call Liz Zuercher at (515) 382-7728.



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Shane Higgins, PA-C
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