

# Story Medical Source



# Senior Care Taking Shape

Melissa Opperman (left), Senior Care Administrator, and Ashley Wilson, Senior Care Director of Nursing, outside the front entrance of the new Story Medical Senior Care, which is expected to open late in 2024.



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Visit us Online at [StoryMedical.org](http://StoryMedical.org)

# Welcome to Source

It's an exciting time at Story Medical as we are in the midst of several enhancements and expansions across our campus.

We are thrilled to share that significant improvements are underway, including expansions to our Emergency Department and Inpatient Unit. These enhancements will allow us to accommodate patients efficiently while providing the highest quality of care in a modern and comfortable environment.

In addition, we are proud to introduce a new space dedicated to inpatient therapy. This facility will offer specialized rehabilitation services, enabling our patients to recover and regain their strength with the support of our expert therapy team.



**Nate Thompson**  
Story Medical CEO

One of the most notable upgrades includes our updated operating room, designed to enhance patient comfort and privacy. This renovation reflects our commitment to ensuring a positive experience for every individual who walks through our doors.

Furthermore, we are excited to introduce Story Medical Senior Care (see the update on Page 6!).

This facility will help us continue to offer personalized services to meet the unique needs of older adults, ensuring they receive the attention and compassion they deserve.

The projects reflect our dedication to continuous improvement and innovation allowing us to better serve our patients and community. Thank you for your ongoing support as we make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

## Story Medical Source



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#### CONTACT US

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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](http://storymedical.org/contact).



# We're Hiring!

If you're looking for a career at an organization focused on delivering the Best Experience Every Time, we want to hear from you. We have a number of clinical and non-clinical positions open. Don't wait! Apply TODAY at [www.storymedical.org/careers](http://www.storymedical.org/careers).



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**STORY MEDICAL CENTER**  
640 South 19th Street  
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(515) 382-2111

**STORY MEDICAL CLINIC - NEVADA**  
640 South 19th Street, Ste. 100  
Nevada, Iowa 50201  
(515) 382-5413

**STORY MEDICAL CLINIC - MAXWELL**  
403 First Street  
Maxwell, Iowa 50161  
(515) 387-8815

**STORY MEDICAL CLINIC - AMES**  
*Natural Health*  
431 South Duff Avenue, Ste. B  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
(515) 232-2979

# Empowering Communities for Mental Health Resilience

In a significant stride toward enhancing mental health awareness and response capabilities, the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation awards \$25,000 grant to the Story Medical Center Foundation

With the help of funds granted by the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, Story Medical is expanding mental health education and training initiatives within Story County. The goal is to foster a more resilient and empathetic community.

This grant is part of the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation's Community of Health Grant programs, strategically designed to kindle innovation, strengthen nonprofit organizations, and initiate comprehensive health initiatives. The funds will play a pivotal role in expanding the reach of mental health education and support services.

Specifically, the grant will fund the training of instructors, equipping them with the skills to conduct Mental Health First Aid sessions across the community. The goal is to establish a sustainable network of trainers from diverse backgrounds who will contribute significantly to the expansion of mental health education in Story County, particularly in rural areas.

## The 'Backbone' of the Program

Certified instructors form the backbone of the program, teaching community members to recognize and respond to mental health and substance use-related crises.

These instructors are integral in tailoring discussions, providing a list of resources, and supporting learners throughout the process. With a national curriculum as their guide, instructors are empowered to teach Mental Health First Aid to diverse audiences within their communities.

This approach empowers community members to recognize and respond to mental health crises efficiently and effectively.

## An Innovative Approach

Mental Health First Aid, likened to CPR for mental health, imparts knowledge of risk factors, warning signs, and strategies for assisting individuals in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Certified instructors, accredited by the National Council for Mental Health Wellbeing, undergo training endorsed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.

The generous \$25,000 grant from the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation will cover registration fees, training materials, and any necessary travel expenses for those being trained. This strategic investment is poised to create a lasting impact,

**“We believe that investing in mental health education is crucial for building a resilient and empathetic community.”**

—Liz Zuercher, Story Medical Foundation



fostering a community where mental health education is not just a program but an integral part of building a resilient and supportive society.

## A Commitment to Building Resiliency

“Delta Dental of Iowa and our Foundation are committed to partnering with organizations that share our goal to create healthier communities by strengthening the health and smiles of all Iowans,” says Suzanne Heckenlaible, Executive Director of the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation. “We are proud to invest in the Story County Medical Center Foundation’s efforts to increase community awareness and understanding of mental health challenges as well as increase the number of community members able to recognize the symptoms, and respond with appropriate support and connection to resources when needed.”

Liz Zuercher, Coordinator of the Story Medical Center Foundation, emphasized the critical role of mental health education in building a resilient community, and says she envisions a community empowered to address mental health challenges effectively through the training of Mental Health First Aid instructors.

“We believe that investing in mental health education is crucial for building a resilient and empathetic community,” Zuercher says.

**To learn more about becoming a Mental Health First Aid instructor, contact Liz at 515-382-7728 or [lzuercher@storymedical.org](mailto:lzuercher@storymedical.org).**



Jena Weissenburger,  
ARNP, PMHNP-BC

# A Unique Perspective

Inspired by her personal mental health journey, Jena Weissenburger, ARNP, PMHNP-BC brings a unique perspective in helping patients meet challenges

It was in seventh grade that Jena Weissenburger, ARNP, PMHNP-BC, decided she was going to dedicate her career to helping those struggling with mental health. Today, she has realized the goal she created at such a young age, caring for patients as a member of the team at Central Iowa Psychological Services (CIPS).

Weissenburger works alongside CIPS provider Daniel Bench, MSN, PMHNP-BC, to provide medication management services at Story Medical Clinic - Nevada.

Weissenburger found that her personal experiences coping with severe inattention as a child gave her a valuable perspective that influenced her professional practices.

“I struggled,” she recalls. “It was so bad that there were times doing my schoolwork where I would read the same page five times and be in tears because I couldn’t remember anything. After trying for years to work with the school systems and figure out why I was having such a hard time, I finally saw a provider.”

It took a significant amount of time, along with some trial and error, before Weissenburger began to see some progress. The journey served as a driving force for her to explore more than just medication, including integrative medicine, and things like incorporating exercise, diet, herbs, and supplements in managing her condition.

The insight she gained continues to guide her practice today. At Story Medical, she primarily offers medication management services for those six years of age and older. Weissenburger takes special delight in working with school-aged children and credits her playful personality for helping her connect with kids.

“Being able to play with them while talking to them to try and get them to build that rapport is at the heart of my practice,” Weissenburger says.

She also has specialized training in serving women experiencing perinatal and postpartum depression and mood disorders.

With all her patients, she takes an approach that is holistic, recognizing that mental health care is not one-size-fits-all. She combines medication management with therapy, being careful to explore any options that might lead to a breakthrough for her patients, including nutrition, exercise, supplements and more.

In addition, Weissenburger says collaborative care is integral to her practice. She maintains close communication with primary care providers at Story Medical Clinic. At CIPS she works together with her peers to ensure patients are receiving the best care. Together the trio serving patients at Story Medical Clinic - Nevada is committed to ending the stigma around mental health services and helping patients get back to feeling good.

“About 50% of people take medication to address a mental health issue,” Weissenburger says. “That’s not unusual. In my practice, I want to help enhance who you are. I want you to have the better life, even while you may still be working on things. I want my patients to be comfortable and to feel like

**“In my practice, I want to help enhance who you are. I want you to have the better life, even while you may still be working on things. I want my patients to be comfortable and to feel like themselves.”**

—Jena Weissenburger, ARNP, PMHNP-BC

themselves.”

In helping her patients, Weissenburger says she finds a special kind of joy.

“Seeing people get better, seeing people stop struggling, whether it’s work, school, being a mom, being a dad, provides a tremendous sense of satisfaction.”

To make an appointment with a member of the Mental Health Services team please call Story Medical Clinic - Nevada at 515-382-5413.



**Daniel Bench, MSN, PMHNP-BC**  
Central Iowa Psychological Services

## Mental Health Services at Story Medical Clinic

Medication management serves an important role in mental healthcare. It can help those in crisis or manage long term conditions. While some clients can benefit from therapy alone, many need a combination of medication and therapy interventions.

Taking medication to help with mental health issues is a common practice. In fact, one in six Americans takes medication as part of their mental health plan. We partner with Central Iowa Psychological Services to support all aspects of client care, including prescribing and managing psychiatric and related symptom medications.

Using best practices, current research, and drawing on the insights of leaders in the field, our providers develop individual treatment plans for our clients, and often prescribed in conjunction with therapy for best outcomes.

We are currently accepting new mental health services patients. To make an appointment with Daniel Bench, MSN, PMHNP-BC, or Jena Weissenburger, ARNP, PMHNP-BC, please call Story Medical Clinic at (515) 382-5413.



# New Senior Care Coming Together

Warm winter keeps major new addition to Story Medical campus on schedule for opening later this year

As we prepare to open the new Story Medical Senior Care facility late in 2024, we sat down for a Q&A with Senior Care Administrator Melissa Opperman to learn more about what this project means for seniors in Story County.

**How is the project coming along and when is it scheduled to open?**

It is coming along nicely. The weather has cooperated since breaking ground, and we started taking employees over to tour in April. The goal is to be moved in by November 2024 before the holidays.

**Why was the timing right for Story Medical to open a new Senior Care?**

With a new facility, there's likely to be an increase in the overall capacity for senior care services in the region. This means more seniors can access the care they need without facing long waiting lists or overcrowding in existing facilities. We know the Baby Boomer generation is coming and we wanted to not only be able to meet the needs of our current population, but also future populations.



**Melissa Opperman**  
Senior Care Administrator

## How will this enhance care for seniors in the region?

New facilities often come equipped with the latest technology and amenities designed to enhance the comfort and well-being of seniors. This includes features like smart monitoring systems, accessible design, recreational areas, and therapy spaces. A new facility can also serve as a hub for community engagement and socialization among seniors. It will offer a range of activities, outings, and events designed to promote social interaction and combat feelings of isolation or loneliness.

## What are some of the features that will make Story Medical Senior Care unique in the region?

Many modern senior care facilities aim to provide integrated healthcare services, bringing together medical professionals, therapists, social workers, and other specialists under one roof.

This can streamline communication and coordination of care, leading to better outcomes for seniors. We are fortunate to be building right next to our hospital and clinic facilities so all services offered there will be more accessible for our residents.

## What types of residents will the new facility serve?

We will remain an intermediate care facility, which is what we currently are. We will have a smaller household to meet

the needs of residents who enjoy a more quiet, less active environment or for those who have special memory care needs, but for now the skilled services will remain at the hospital. We have had conversations with the VA and are hopeful we can become a VA certified facility in the future, and we will also continue to be a Medicaid certified facility.

## When will you begin taking reservations for the new facility?

We have already started a waiting list for our new facility. Our current residents will all move with us so we will only have a few open rooms available in the new facility.

If you are interested in putting your name on our waiting list or learning more information about our new facility, you can call (515) 382-7019 and our Resident Representative will be more than happy to help with your questions or can schedule an appointment for you to talk with someone on the nursing leadership team.

## Personally, what are you looking most forward to when the new facility opens?

I'm looking forward to seeing our residents thrive being in an environment that looks and feels more like home and to watch our employees focus more on social engagement and activities with the residents. The goal is for it to feel like home for our residents and for it to not feel like work for our employees.

# The NEW Story Medical Senior Care



**It's More than Senior Care. It's a Community.**

**The new Story Medical Senior Care will open late in 2024 adjacent to our Medical Center. The new 59,000 square foot facility includes:**

- 60 spacious private rooms
- Memory care support
- Home-like, inviting porch entries
- Family gathering spaces
- Enclosed gardens for each house
- Therapy room



**To learn more about our new facility or to reserve a room, please call Story Medical Senior Care at (515) 382-7019.**

# Pledge Puts Patients First

Story Medical joins effort to reduce abuse of prescription pain killers



Surgery has long been known as a gateway to long-term opioid painkiller use and dependence. Studies show approximately 9% of surgery patients who have never used an opioid become long-term users of opioids after being legally prescribed opioids after a surgery.

In an effort to curb the abuse of opioids, Story Medical has joined the Billion Pill Pledge. The program, launched by Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird in conjunction with Goldfinch Health, has a mission to reduce leftover opioids after surgery in the United States by 1 billion pills each year, thereby preventing those pills from being diverted to unauthorized use.

Through the Billion Pill Pledge program, Story Medical has enhanced its surgery protocols and optimized pain management around surgery. These industry-leading approaches are designed to enhance patients' preparation for surgery, better manage any surgery-related pain, and minimize opioid use both before and after surgery.



As a part of this program, patients receive a "Prepared for Surgery" care package prior to surgery. This box includes a number of items key to optimizing a patient's surgery experience, including an opioid disposal bottle, pre-surgery drink, ice packs and more.

Nurses from Goldfinch Health are supporting patients during the critical period before and after surgery to help increase the use of opioid-minimizing surgery protocols.

"The support provided by Goldfinch Health is critical to our success in optimizing patient care, especially when our resources are stretched," says Cathy Haley, RN, Director of Outpatient Clinic & Surgical Services at Story Medical. "This program means our patients have access to the resources they need to confidently prepare for and successfully recover from surgery."

Goldfinch Health is an Iowa City-based company dedicated to enhancing surgical outcomes, improving the surgery experience for patients, and reducing opioid use.

For more information about the Billion Pill Pledge, visit [www.billionpillpledge.com](http://www.billionpillpledge.com)



# Prioritizing Patient Experience

Story Medical is currently recruiting patients and family members to join our Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC) as we strive to enhance the patient experience and deliver the safest, highest quality of care possible. The PFAC serves as a formal vehicle for patients and families to provide valuable insights and feedback to improve our services at Story Medical.

## Purpose and Mission

The PFAC is dedicated to representing and evaluating patient and family perspectives to enhance the patient experience at Story Medical. We aim to foster effective partnerships between patients, families, and clinicians, strengthen and transform our culture toward patient and family-centered care, improve quality, patient safety, and health outcomes, and enhance relationships and investments in our community.

## Role of Council Members

Council members will share their unique perspectives to provide a deeper understanding of the healthcare experience from the patient and family viewpoint. By collaborating with hospital staff and other patient and family advisors, council members will help ensure that our services align with the



needs, values, and preferences of all patients, caregivers, and families.

## Meetings and Commitment

The PFAC will hold quarterly meetings, each lasting a maximum of 2 hours. We ask that members commit to a one-year term and attend a minimum of 3 meetings annually. Meetings provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion, brainstorming, and decision-making to drive positive change.

## Structure and Membership

The PFAC will consist of 10 to 15 members representing the diversity of Story County.

Up to 3 staff members may serve on the council to facilitate collaboration and communication. The council's structure may evolve over time to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity.

## How to Get Involved

If you are interested in becoming a member of the PFAC or have questions about the council, please reach out to our Patient Experience Specialist, Jessica Howe, at 515-382-7726 or via email at [jhowe@storymedical.org](mailto:jhowe@storymedical.org). You can also apply online at [storymedical.org/PFAC](http://storymedical.org/PFAC).

Your participation and feedback will play a crucial role in shaping the future of patient-centered care at Story Medical.

# Specialist Provides Cardiac Care

Story Medical partners with UnityPoint Health Des Moines Cardiology to offer diagnostics, office care and rehabilitation services focused on helping people recover from a recent hospitalization related to a heart condition. Story Medical offers care for those who have had:

- Heart attack
- Valve surgery
- Stable congestive heart failure
- A variety of other diagnoses

Cardiology care at Story Medical is provided by Padmanabhan Priyesh, MD, a

board-certified cardiologist. He began seeing patients in Nevada early in 2024.

Dr. Priyesh's clinical interests include caring for general cardiovascular care, lipids management, peripheral vascular disease, valvular heart disease, and vascular ultrasound.

Dr. Priyesh sees patients on a referral basis in the Outpatient Clinic at Story Medical in Nevada. Those with conditions they believe can benefit from Dr. Priyesh's expertise should visit with their primary care provider about being referred.



**Padmanabhan Priyesh, MD**  
Cardiology

To make an appointment with Dr. Priyesh, please call UnityPoint Des Moines Cardiology at (515) 263-2400 and request to be seen at Story Medical

# Preparing for Your Primary Care Visit

To get the most out of your appointment, it pays to be prepared. Whether you are new to town and want to establish a relationship with a family practice provider or are in need of a specialist, Story Medical offers convenient access to care.

## Tips for Visiting Your Healthcare Provider

Here are some tips to keep in mind the next time you visit one of the Story Medical Clinics:

- Be prepared. If you have questions, write them down in advance and ask your healthcare provider or his/her nurse.
- Make certain your provider participates with your health insurance plan. Going to a clinic who does not participate with your plan can be costly.
- If you're seeing the provider for the first time, be sure to have your medical records sent to his/her office (or to you) well ahead of your appointment.
- If you are on any medications, write them down and bring your list with you. It's okay to ask what your

procedure or treatment will cost. Cost issues are very important and should not be taken lightly by anyone.

- If you don't understand something, don't be afraid to ask for further explanation. You are ultimately responsible for understanding your medical options and making decisions about your health in consult with your provider.
- It's a good idea to have another family member with you when talking with your provider. Having another listener can relieve stress and ensuring nothing is missed.
- If you don't have a primary healthcare provider, it's always a good idea to establish care, even if you're not sick. You can ask your family and friends for referrals or call Story Medical Clinic in Nevada at (515) 382-5413 or Maxwell at (515) 387-8815 for a referral.

**If you have any questions or would like more information about visiting a Story Medical Clinic, please contact us at (515) 382-5413.**

# We Deliver the Best Experience Every Time

- Well baby exams (including newborns)
- Lactation support
- Well adult care/Medicare annual exams
- Kids Clinic from 8 to 9 a.m. weekdays
- Access to multiple specialties onsite
- Gynecologic care
- Immunizations
- Same day visits in our modern facility



Art Check, DO  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Adrian Palar, MD  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Timothy Leeds, MD  
*Nevada*  
Women's Health



Audra Poterucha, DO  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Kelly Check, DPM  
*Nevada*  
Podiatry



Shane Higgins, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Jyl Wonnell, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Rachel Frederick, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Michelle Jans, PA-C  
*Maxwell*  
Family Medicine



Valerie Stallbaumer, LAC, MSOM  
*Ames*  
Natural Health



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Easy-to-access care for the whole family just minutes away!

See all of our providers at [storymedical.org/providers](https://www.storymedical.org/providers)



# Your Support is Key to High Quality Healthcare

At Story Medical, we count ourselves fortunate to serve Nevada and the surrounding communities with advanced care, close to home. Our roots in the region are deep, and we are proud of the way our programs and services have evolved to better meet the needs of those who come to us for care.

But we haven't done it alone.

Many of the enhancements we have experienced in recent years—from the construction and expansion of our South Campus to an array of service additions—are the direct result of generous donors. When a need has arisen, individuals and businesses have stepped forward to ensure it is met.

We hope you will give thoughtful consideration to a gift to the Story Medical Endowment Foundation that will help us to continue to grow and serve more.

Here are a few ways you can make a gift in support of the patients, programs and services of Story Medical:

## Cash

Cash is as simple as it gets and offers you a tax deduction for the full value of the gift.

## Trusts

A charitable remainder trust or a charitable gift annuity provide you, or a beneficiary of your choice, with payments for life or a period of years. They then are transferred to the charity of your choice. If you use appreciated securities to fund the gift, you may be entitled to an income tax deduction based, in part, on the charitable portion of the securities' full value, in addition to eliminating up-front capital gains tax.

## Stock

You can claim a deduction when you give a gift of appreciated stocks—those stocks that are worth more now than when you

purchased them. You can claim a deduction for the full fair market value and eliminate any tax on the appreciation.

## Real Estate

Similar to securities, selling property that has gained in value will subject you to capital gains tax on the appreciation. If you donate your property, you can realize a tax savings.

## Gifts of Grain

For farm operators, gifting grain directly, rather than selling the grain and making a gift from the proceeds, may provide a significant tax savings. Contributing grain allows you to avoid the sale of the commodity as income, while the production costs may still be deductible.

## Insurance

For an insurance policy to qualify as a deductible gift, ownership must be transferred to the charity you intend to support. Most types of insurance policies offer a tax deduction on the lesser of the cost basis or the fair market value of the policy. One additional benefit is that premium payments on the policy are tax-deductible after you make the gift.

## For Those 70 1/2 and Older

If you are 70 1/2 years old or older, you can make a qualifying charitable distribution (QCD). A QCD allows you to donate up to \$100,000 per year directly to a qualified charity from your IRA and exclude it from income. QCDs require your contribution to go directly from your IRA to your chosen charitable organization.

**Please note that this information is not intended as legal or tax advice. Please consult an attorney or tax advisor for that advice.**

**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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Nevada, IA 50201

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# SPECIAL HOURS: FOR THE KIDS!

**Kids Clinic at Story Medical in Nevada & Maxwell  
Monday-Friday from 8 to 9 a.m.**

**If your child wakes up not feeling well, you don't have to wait all day for an appointment. We offer same-day appointments for infants to children up to 18 years. Call one of our clinics at the number below to make an appointment.**

**Nevada: (515) 382-5413 | Maxwell: (515) 387-8815**



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**Learn More About Story Medical Clinics at [StoryMedical.org/Clinics](http://StoryMedical.org/Clinics)**