

the compass

Connecting You to Every Point of True North

July 2019 | Munson Healthcare System News

Providing Amazing Care

Learn how our nursing assistants are making a difference every day. See page 6.

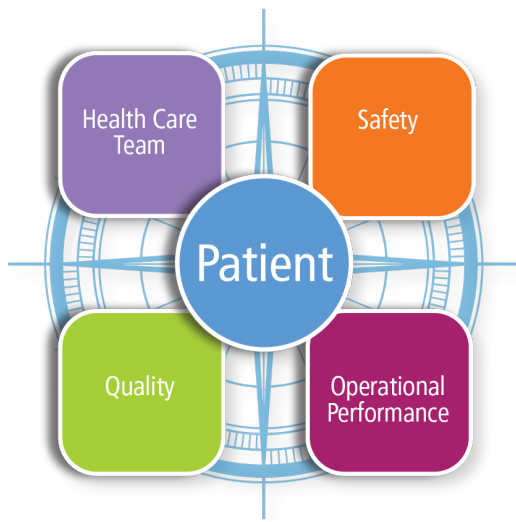


RaeAnne Rohn, NA, and Courtney Jones, NA, provide for the bedside needs of patients at Otsego Memorial Hospital.

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A Note from Ed Ness

President and CEO, Munson Healthcare

True North

True North drives everything we do. It is the compass that guides us to make the right decisions, aligns our daily work with our goals, and inspires us to do our best for our patients and each other.

Mission

Munson Healthcare and its partners will work together to provide superior quality care and promote community health.

Vision

Working together, we will be the first choice for care within the communities we serve.

Our Values

Accountability

We are accountable to our patients and each other for our decisions.

Respect

We respect everyone, everywhere, every day.

Stewardship

We carefully use resources entrusted to us.

Compassion

We show compassion and understanding in all of our encounters with others.

Teamwork

We approach all of our work with a spirit of collaboration.

Safety

We make safe work practices a top priority every day.

Last month we completed a very important initiative for Munson Healthcare, our 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. This assessment, conducted every three years, helps us identify significant issues in our communities.

In the past, as a health care provider, we have always been there for patients when they walk through our doors seeking help. But Munson Healthcare has evolved into so much more and as the largest health care provider in northern Michigan, we need to reach beyond the doors of our hospitals, go out into our communities, and offer support to our patients when and where they need it the most.

Whether it's helping someone overcome a life-threatening addiction, supporting a person who's struggling with mental health issues, or ensuring that a family's basic needs are met so they have a chance to live a good life, we have a responsibility to support our communities in so many different ways. Together with our community partners, we can truly improve our patients' lives, both inside and outside the walls of our hospitals. To learn more about the results of our Community Health Needs Assessment, turn to page 5.

Also in this issue, we are recognizing an important milestone for Charlevoix Hospital: 100 years of service to their community. There is so much pride surrounding this celebration as this hospital embarks

on the next century of care. And like every hospital in our system, the Health Care Team in Charlevoix has a strong bond with its community and understands what a privilege it is to care for their patients. Turn to page 4 to see how this team is involving their community — their family — in the celebration and giving people opportunities to improve their health.

On page 9, we feature another story about someone in our Munson Healthcare family. Aaron Jenkins, an MHC Corporate Finance employee, and his wife were overjoyed to welcome their new baby, Keenan, into this world. Then, shortly after his birth, the unthinkable happened. Keenan stopped breathing — but a team of providers at Munson Medical Center saved him. To say we improved this family's life is true but the impact we made is much more significant. Because of the care they received, their lives were forever changed for the better.

Stories like this happen all across our system, whether we're helping people make small improvements or providing life-saving care. And every one of these stories reminds us why we come to work every day and do the wonderful work we do.



Back in the Conversation

It's not always easy to admit when a part of our body slows down or isn't working quite right. But for Trish Fiebing, the decline in her hearing happened so slowly that she didn't make the connection. All she knew was that she was missing out.

It started approximately 10 years ago when the now 76-year-old Traverse City resident was still working and attending many meetings as a volunteer coordinator. "The only thing I noticed initially was that I was really having to force my hearing to catch what was being said," said the avid volunteer.

For years, Trish attempted to fix the problem by sitting in a more optimal spot. She blamed her inability to hear — and the confusion that came with it — on the meeting environment. But as her hearing worsened, Trish was straining to hear critical moments with her family as well. "I missed a lot at family dinners," she said.

Thankfully, Trish's sons encouraged her to have her hearing checked at **William and Leni Carls Hearing Clinic** on MMC's campus. The audiology team who treated Fiebing says this is very common. "Often times it's a family member that will get them in the door," explained audiologist Deb Hale, MA, CCC-A. "The patient doesn't notice that they've been missing some things and that's pretty common with hearing loss."

Hale, who's been an audiologist for 25 years, works alongside nine fellow team members and helps people from ages 0–100+ recover hearing

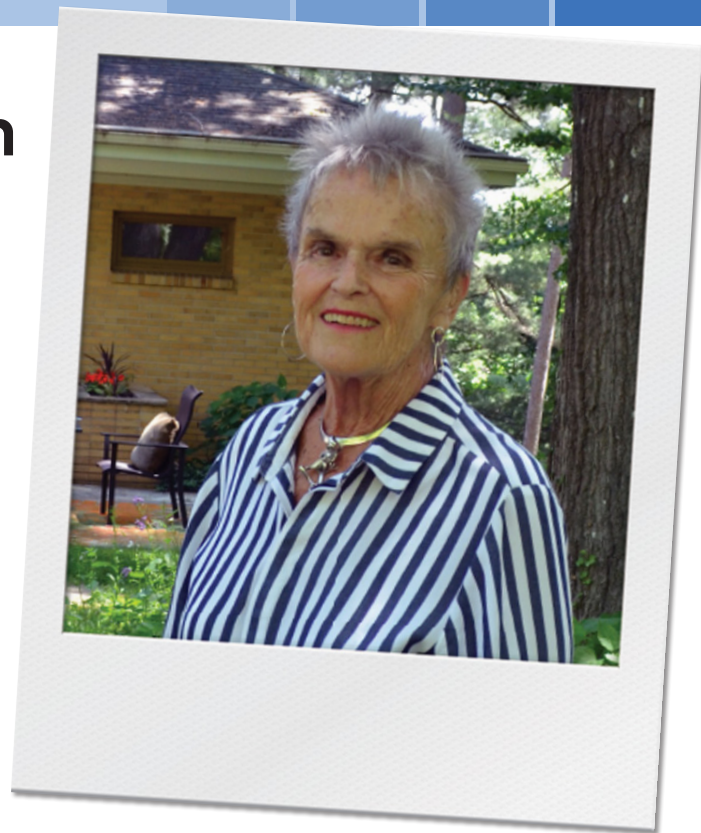
loss. "People don't always understand how it impacts their daily routines and quality of life," she said.

During Fiebing's first appointment, she discovered what had been causing her so much frustration for the past decade. With the aid of some hearing equipment Trish could suddenly hear.

Then Trish was fitted with her hearing aids: a pair of buds, designed to blend in with her skin tone, that nestle right inside her ear. "I just wanted to run home so my sons could see that I could hear. It was so exciting!" she says. "It was such a surprise how much I had been missing for way too long."

These words are music to the ears of Hale and her team. "Whether it's hearing the television or grandchildren, it's satisfying to know that you're helping someone hear better and hopefully be a part of things that they may not have been before," Hale said.

Today, Trish is as vibrant as ever. When she's not sitting in her yard enjoying the sweet sound of birds, talking with her grandkids, or enjoying television (at a much lower volume, she says) with her husband, Greg, she's doing the other things so near and dear to her.



Audiology patient, Trish Fiebing

“Whether it's hearing the television or grandchildren, it's satisfying to know that you're helping someone hear better.”

—Deb Hale,
William and Leni Carls Hearing
Clinic, Audiologist

"Meetings are totally different. I'm more comfortable and relaxed and I don't have to worry about where I sit," she says. "On the phone it makes a big difference. And talking in a room or at the dinner table. I don't miss everything. People ask me why I wear my hearing aids all the time. And I think 'Why wouldn't I?'"

Hearing it all...
simply *amazing.*

Share your *amazing* story!

Do you have an amazing story to tell about how you helped a patient get back to their everyday life?

Go to munsonhealthcare.org/amazingstory to share the details.



Michele M. enjoys an active lifestyle in Charlevoix. She credits Charlevoix Hospital's 100 Wellness Wishes program with helping her stay on track with her exercise routine.

100 Wellness Wishes: Charlevoix Resident Finds Connection, Makes Healthy Changes

Michele M. felt determined to make healthier life choices this spring, but the 66-year-old also recognized she could use a little help to reach her goal.

"It's not enough to just know you should exercise," said Michele, who retired in Charlevoix after living and working downstate. "Understanding how it works and having a plan gives you a framework to actually do it."

An exercise plan, along with lots of encouragement, is exactly what she got as one of about 70 people so far to participate in **Charlevoix Hospital's 100 Wellness Wishes program**. Charlevoix Hospital is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and the Health Care Team is granting 100 Wellness Wishes to community members as part of the centennial celebration.

"My wish was for a consultation with an exercise specialist," Michele said. "I knew I needed to exercise more, but my own attempts were rather 'hit-or-miss.' A professional could recommend exercises suited to my needs and abilities."

She learned about the 100 Wellness Wishes program while visiting Charlevoix Hospital's Wellness Workshop. Earlier this year she had taken advantage of the workshop's low-cost health screening. She also took yoga and chair strength-training classes there.

"At the end of the screening, the nurse offered a 100 Wellness Wishes card to me, and I just signed up. I heard back from them the next day," she said. As part of her wish, Michele met with Julie Voci, who works in community education for Charlevoix Hospital, for a fitness evaluation and exercise prescription.

"I received an exercise program and goals tailored to my capabilities. Julie reviewed my health screening, asked me questions, and explained the reasons for each type of exercise," Michele said. "She took care to design a program that suited my interests and personality. It was especially helpful that she demonstrated some of the routines. She also provided me with excellent written resources that spelled everything out for me."

Voci also helped her with one particular problem: how to measure her target heart rate. "Due to medication, I can't count my heart beat to determine exertion, and she showed me another way," she said. "Julie also conveyed a positive upbeat attitude. She made me believe I can do this — I feel much better now that I've started on routines that I know benefit my health. Even in the first few weeks I'd say my quality of life has improved."

Michele, an avid gardener, is now following an exercise plan that includes cardio workouts — walking and swimming in the community pool — three to four times a week. She also uses exercise bands for strength training. And an extra bonus? When Voci learned of Michele's love of line-dancing, she put her in touch with a local club. "It's led to a lot of connections and changes for me," Michele said. "The 100 Wellness Wishes program has helped me rebalance my life."

Granting 100 Wellness Wishes: 70 and Counting!

As part of year-long events and celebrations, Charlevoix Hospital is granting 100 Wellness Wishes to community members — at no charge — throughout the year. About 70 wishes have been granted so far, said Julie Voci, of Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Wellness Workshop. The wishes have ranged from seeking wellness advice from MHC experts to looking to have a warm meal at the hospital cafeteria.

"It's amazing how excited people get. We have had a really good turn-out," Voci said. "A couple of people who have met with our dietitian here and taken our plant-based food classes because they've gotten really inspired and have chosen to use that as a stepping stone to making changes. Our social worker has also worked with people on end-of-life and will planning."

Wishes can be submitted online at munsonhealthcare.org/charlevoix-hospital, in the wish boxes located throughout Charlevoix Hospital, and at these additional Charlevoix-area locations: Bay Street Orthopaedics, Beaver Island Rural Health Center, Boyne Area Health Center, Boyne Rehab Center, Charlevoix Behavioral Health, Charlevoix Primary Care, Charlevoix Surgeons, Charlevoix Wellness Workshop, Charlevoix Women's Health, and Jordan Valley Rehab Center.

100
YEARS OF CARING



Community Health Needs Assessment: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Top Priorities

Providing preventative and accessible mental health and substance abuse services is an essential regional need, according to the results of the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) also known as MiThrive. Also identified as a strategic priority for our health care system: addressing basic needs of living to create resiliency and promote equity.

"This is a significant shift in our priorities and certainly resonated with many in our community in addition to health care providers," said Christi Nowak, system manager of community health at Munson Healthcare (MHC).

As a non-profit hospital system, MHC is required to conduct a community health needs assessment every three years, Nowak said. The community health needs assessment process, which lasted 18 months, involved surveying residents and organizations in 31 northern Michigan counties in addition to looking at secondary data.

"Over the past several months, several community organizations and individuals have come together to participate in the CHNA project," she said. "It has been wonderful to collaborate with several health systems, health departments, and many others to standardize this process."

The 2019 CHNA differs from the previous assessment, conducted in 2016, in that it covers a greater geographic area and features more engaged partners and collaborations. We've also honed in on our most important priorities.

Taking a regional approach to this assessment is important in part because it maximizes resources, helps us understand local and regional patterns, assists in strengthening partnerships, and aligns priorities and strategies across the region and organizations for a greater impact on community health.

Our next steps: create a community health improvement plan involving many different sectors that can start to improve the health of our communities, said Nowak.

"I'm motivated by the findings of the CHNA as we have a lot of work to do in our communities and there is great momentum heading in these directions."



From left: Courtney Jones, NA, and RaeAnne Rohn, NA.

Nursing Assistants: Providing Amazing Care



Terry Zalud McKnight, NA

Nursing assistants (NAs) work on the front line of patient care. And the names of nursing assistants are often found on the "MVP" and "Thank a Staff Member" forms filled out by patients responding to their care.

In Cadillac, Terry Zalud McKnight, NA, works on the third floor caring for many kinds of patients including post-surgical and orthopedic. She has worked in health care for most of her working career and has been at the hospital since 2017, though she was a graduate of the former Mercy Hospital Cadillac's nursing school in 1984.

"I enjoy my current position as an NA because I believe strongly in the ability to positively affect patient

outcomes with compassion, integrity, respect, and communication," she said. "I believe that the NA position is key in all four of these."

She characterizes her days as a mixture of physical care, emotional support, a little humor, and a lot of compassion. In addition to patient care, she assists nurses, and offers support and compassion to family members and visitors.

"I am engaged by this work because I know the importance of it, and it is my hope that those who encounter me, during the course of my day, are uplifted by our interaction," she said.

For nursing assistant Glenda Aldridge, CENA, who also serves as unit clerk

on the Maternal and Newborn Unit at Grayling Hospital, working in health care was not something she planned until she found herself in extended hospital stays and spending time in NICUs during the birth of her own children.

"Those were my first real experiences in the hospital settings and observing what nursing assistants do," she said. "When my first child was one, I chose to go through the American Red Cross nursing assistant training and take my Kentucky state certification exam while volunteering at the local hospital."

Aldridge focuses on providing patients with compassionate care and meeting practical needs so nurses can focus on the patient beyond the scope of her practice. In her role she takes vital signs, adjusts the bed, helps patients to the bathroom, remakes beds, obtains newborn vital information, makes patient charts, and cleans rooms after patients are discharged.

Courtney Jones, NA, helps provide care for up to 24 patients on her post-surgical and medical floor at Otsego Memorial Hospital, which means she stays busy from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm on her shift. And she loves her role.

"I went into health care because I love the compassion and care nursing offers," she said. "I have time to sit and engage patients, especially the older generation. They can be lonely and I feel like we make a really big impact on their stay — and I love that."

Her typical day, after commuting from Johannesburg, begins with obtaining patient vital signs and blood-sugar readings before breakfast. At 11 am and 3 pm the cycle repeats and in between there are a lot of call lights going off for bathroom needs, a glass of water, or an adjustment to the bed. After noon, surgical patients start arriving on the floor and she helps get them settled.

"When I am there, I do have hard days, but I approach them with optimism and helpfulness and lend an ear," she said. "When you hear, 'You have made my stay so much better,' that is why I do it."

At Paul Oliver Living and Rehabilitation Center, Kathy Mathews, CENA, cares for both long-term residents and patients undergoing a rehab stay. In her 13th year on the job, she still loves taking care of people. She joined the Paul Oliver team after working for a home health agency and providing private care.

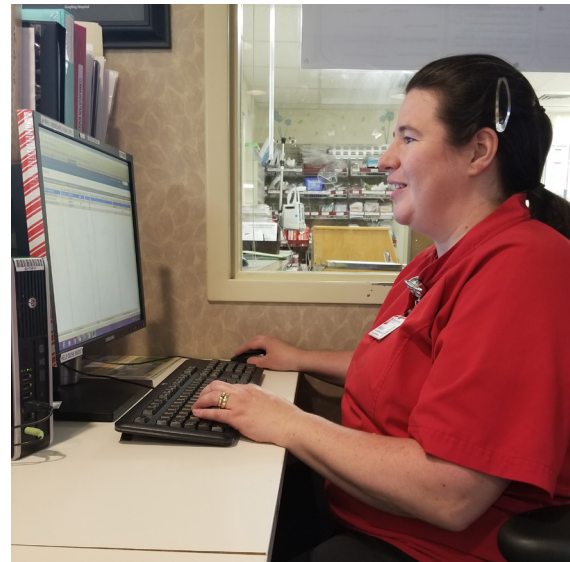
"I have a good rapport with all of my residents. I love them and they love me," she said. "I love it when they say, 'I heard your laugh and knew you were coming.'" Her day begins at 8 am with a report on the status of residents. Then she fills her cart with the things she knows she'll need to meet the needs of her residents or rehab patients for the day. The people she cares for bring her to work every day.

"I love to smile and I love to laugh," she said. "I love to provide good care and make sure all of my residents are safe."



When I am there, I do have hard days, but I approach them with optimism and helpfulness and lend an ear. When you hear 'You have made my stay so much better,' that is why I do it.

—Courtney Jones,
Otsego Memorial Hospital,
Nursing Assistant



Glenda Aldridge, CENA



Kathy Mathews, CENA

All in the Family

In the spirit of Parents' Day, celebrated this year on July 28, we asked our Health Care Team: Does Munson Healthcare run in your family? Here are some of the special stories we received:



"What do you want to be when you grow up?" My response has always been that I wanted to work in the medical field, and my mother, Patricia Romberg, has been a major influence in that decision. She has been working for Munson Healthcare (MHC) in the MRI department for over 30 years. She inspired me with her passion and curiosity for the field that she has dedicated herself to. I have so many fond memories of visiting her at work over the years. Having been born at Munson Medical Center myself, it was destined to be that I would one day work for MHC. I started working for the organization in 2010 when I was 18. I finally found my niche in Pharmacy at the Foster Family Community Health Center — the same building where my mother works. Having the ability to visit with her during breaks has truly made working for MHC a unique and cherished experience."

—**Kim Romberg**, CPhT, Specialty Care Pharmacy

"I've been with Corporate Communications at Manistee Hospital since 2009. My daughter, Emma Quinn, joined MHC in 2016 as an admissions representative. She saw that I enjoyed my work, found my job rewarding, and worked with great people, so she decided to apply. She loves working with her team in Registration and finds it meaningful that she's able to help people, even if it's just in a small way. While we don't have much opportunity to interact on the job, we both enjoy working with our dedicated colleagues and are proud to put our skills to use in an organization that makes a difference in people's lives every day."

—**Julie Mueller**, Marketing Director, Manistee Hospital



"I started my job as a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner at MMC in 2010. Soon after, my oldest son Adam completed his degree in Biomedical Engineering and was able to do his internship at MMC. He was hired into the Biomedical Department and is now the coordinator in Biomed. My youngest son, Ryan, joined us at MMC as an IT tech working at the Help Desk and, my daughter-in-law, Kayla, works as a scheduling clerk for Physical Therapy at Cadillac Hospital. Moving to this area was one of the best things that could have happened for our family. It's fun that four of us work at MHC. And if we have equipment issues or IT issues in the NICU, it's nice to be able to say that I know a couple people who might be able to help us."

—**Cheryl Vorpapel**, NNP, Munson Medical Center NICU

"My mom, Donna Dodge, is a unit clerk in the NICU, and has worked at MMC for more than 10 years. I have worked for MMC for 6 years in the Ambulatory/Discharge Pharmacy, and my husband has also worked here since 2008. I wouldn't say I "followed in my mom's footsteps," but I knew this was a great place to work because I would come have lunch with her on occasion in the cafeteria. Now that I am here, it seems a lot of people know my mom, because when they find out I'm her daughter, they always tell me what a wonderful lady she is (something I already knew)!"

—**Shelly Durkin**, Pharmacist, Munson Medical Center



Munson Healthcare's Purpose

Earlier this year, we embarked on creating a purpose statement that would help unite us together. We needed to create something strong that every one of us could get behind — which meant every one needed to be involved. Through a survey on the Intranet, you were asked to voice your opinion and share what inspires you. In the end, **"We Improve Lives"** rose to the top. This purpose continuously reminds us why we dedicate so much of our time, passion, and energy to doing what we do. It resonates with everyone at Munson Healthcare,

whether you are a part of the clinical team on the front-line, a staff member in support services, or a volunteer at one of our hospitals. You are helping to improve lives — the lives of our patients, the lives of their families who love them, and the lives of our co-workers who we support every day.

Below is the story of the Jenkins-Jones family. This is just one example of how, at Munson Healthcare, **We Improve Lives.**



The Jenkins-Jones family visits Dr. Arnold and some of our amazing NICU staff. From left: Hannah Borsvold, RN; Neonatologist and NICU Medical Director Matthew Arnold, MD; Mom Rachel Jones (holding Keenan); Dad Aaron Jenkins; Kelsey Fordyce, LMSW; and Ashley Stinson, RN. Health Care Team members not pictured who assisted directly in Keenan's recovery: Emergency Medicine Physician Mark Mikula, MD; Respiratory Therapist Lindsey McCrum, NP; Tammy Vaughan, NP; and Angela Fortney-Ross, RN.

Arbor where he could be monitored by a team of sub-specialists, the Jenkins-Jones family views Dr. Arnold as nothing short of a hero.

"This family is a special family," Arnold says. "This was a traumatic experience for them and the fact that Keenan's doing so well is amazing."

Home since St. Patrick's Day, Keenan is now a healthy and happy baby, nestled contently in the arms of his loving parents who are all smiles as they introduce him to the life they clearly have so much passion for — like enjoying great music, walking favorite trails, and just watching a new season unfold in the creek that winds through their backyard.

"After the experience that we had to begin with and his recovery, we're just grateful for every day with him," Jenkins said. "It's been a lot of fun being new parents and just watching him grow and learn — it's been the best."

Celebrating Keenan

Aaron Jenkins, a Munson Healthcare Corporate Finance employee, and his wife Rachel Jones couldn't wait to introduce their new son Keenan to their favorite joys in life: experiencing nature, building community, and the magic of books and music. And today they are doing just that with their beautiful baby boy. Like any set of proud new parents, their love for Keenan is obvious with every gaze, snuggle, and kiss. But this Lake Ann couple experiences another flood of emotions when they look at their son: gratitude.

Earlier this year and shortly after his birth, Keenan began struggling to breathe. After calling 911 and

reaching the ED at Munson Medical Center, the unthinkable happened — Keenan stopped breathing.

Neonatologist and NICU Medical Director Matthew Arnold, MD, and his team rushed over immediately to assist. "Because he wasn't breathing, his internal organs were failing," Dr. Arnold explained. "Our job was to place a breathing tube so we could help him breathe — breathe for him. Once we were able to do that his organs started to work again."

Although Keenan received care in MMC's NICU for just one day before the team transitioned him to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann



Safety Measures

A strong culture of safety is critical at Munson Healthcare. We are constantly reviewing our safety initiatives and always looking for ways to improve. Here is a sampling of projects we're doing across the system to keep our patients and our Health Care Team safe:



Purple-Colored Paper Protects Patients with Food Allergies

The Nutrition Services team at Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital started a new color coding initiative to protect patients with food allergies. Those with allergies receive a lilac-colored meal ticket to reinforce food allergy awareness and prevent allergy-induced reactions. "This simple visual cue works well to ensure our patients' safety," says POMH Director of Support Services Lynette Maxey.



Heated Sidewalks Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

Both Charlevoix Hospital and Otsego Memorial Hospital installed heated sidewalks in key areas of the hospital, such as the ED (OMH) and main entrance (Charlevoix). The ice-free walkways reduce risk of falls for patients, visitors, and staff. "Safety is always on our minds," said Bruce Giem, Charlevoix Hospital manager of Plant Engineering. "Upgrading our main entrance to be completely free of snow and ice throughout the winter months will make a big difference. This is especially true for patients who get in and out of cars in front of the entrance. Their safety is the main reason for this important project."



Illuminated Call Boxes Increase Security

This winter, Manistee Hospital installed call boxes with bright blue lights throughout the campus so patients, visitors, and staff can easily contact a switchboard operator for security, medical, or facilities assistance. "Having a quick and reliable way to summon help in the event of a medical emergency, car trouble, or suspicious activity is an important safety measure for our staff, patients, and visitors," shares Dan Debano, Manistee Hospital plant operations manager.



Security Cameras Aid ED Monitoring

At OMH, security cameras now monitor key areas of the ED. The additional "eyes" help inform staff of any potential compromises in safety — from spotting patients/visitors who can't find their way to the correct entrance to identifying people who display suspicious behavior or require immediate medical assistance. "Safety is an important component of every decision that we make," said Joshua Bitson, director of Facilities Services. "Many people enter our hospital through the ED and we need the staff to have the peace of mind to provide great patient care. Because of this, adding security cameras was a very important addition to this department."

Health Care Team Members Recognized for Quality

Our Health Care Team provides quality care every day. Recently, two team members received special recognition for their extraordinary work in our communities.



Kevin Parker MEd, AT/ATC, President of Michigan Athletic Trainers Society and Amy Ream, AT/ATC

Amy Ream, Secondary School Athletic Trainer of the Year

Amy Ream, AT/ATC, a certified athletic trainer at the Foster Family Community Health Center was named the Secondary School Athletic Trainer of the Year by the Michigan Athletic Trainers Society. Ream serves as the Traverse City Central High School athletic trainer and works with students involved in the school's sports teams.

She earned the honor in recognition of her abilities to meet the needs of students, lead initiatives in health and safety, and for her exceptional abilities to relate to families and staff over her 28 years of service.

"As an athletic trainer, I provide rehabilitation services after an athlete gets injured, with concussion protocol being a key component," Ream explained. "I also provide prevention programs to improve athletes' strength, and I work with our strength and conditioning coach to get athletes back on the field after they are injured."

Ream said she is humbled to receive the award and appreciates being recognized by her peers. "I do what I do because I love being around the athletes, coaches, and administration, and my family has allowed me to do what I love for a long time."

Roderic Tinney, 2019 CDC Childhood Immunization Champion

Dr. Roderic Tinney, MD, FAAP, a pediatrician at Charlevoix Hospital, was named the 2019 CDC Childhood Immunization Champion for Michigan. The award, given jointly by the Association of Immunization Managers and the CDC, honors individuals who are doing an exemplary job or going above and beyond to promote childhood immunizations in their communities.

Dr. Tinney says he's been around long enough to have cared for many vaccine preventable diseases and has witnessed the elimination or near elimination of many such as bacterial meningitis, epiglottitis, and bacteremia.

Immunization Champions are recognized for providing immunization leadership in the community, finding creative solutions

to immunization challenges, and speaking out about the importance of childhood immunization.

"Vaccinations have always been promoted vigorously by pediatricians. I often tell families, being in medicine about 40 years I have seen many cases of vaccine preventable disease and the positive impact of vaccines," Dr. Tinney said. "From birth we try and emphasize the importance, effectiveness, and safety of vaccines."

Although Dr. Tinney's name is on the award, he cites a huge team effort, including the OB nurses, health department, and especially his office staff. "I am flattered by the award," he said, "but I'm just the old guy with my name on the door."



Above: Dr. Tinney and Charlevoix Hospital President Joanne Schroeder; below: Dr. Tinney and his Charlevoix Hospital team.

Photos courtesy of the Petoskey News Review.



A new bridge over Kids Creek at the Seventh Street entrance to the Emergency Department completes creek restoration efforts on MMC's campus.

Kids Creek Restoration: Stewarding Resources

After 10 years of effort, the final phase of Kids Creek restoration on Munson Medical Center's campus arrived in the form of a bridge over the much less troubled water.

Partnerships with the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, Grand Traverse Conservation District, and others over the decade have brought new life to the stream and provided a natural oasis for patients and visitors on challenging days.



A Traverse City worker guides a piece of bridge for Kids Creek into place.

"For the past 15 years, The Watershed Center has invested more than \$5 million of grant and local funding to restore and repair Kids Creek to a healthy functioning stream," said

Sarah U'Ren, program director for The Watershed Center. "Much of The Watershed Center's work over the past several years has been in partnership with MMC and its neighbors. Benefits to Kids Creek have been reduced sedimentation impacts from stormwater runoff and vast improvements to in-stream habitat for aquatic insects and fish."

Munson Healthcare Vice President of Facilities Steve Tongue said initial work on the hospital campus began in 2009 with natural plantings and a little oasis area along the creek at the northwest corner of Parking Lot A. Restoration efforts really advanced with the hospital board's decision to move forward with construction of the Cowell Family Cancer Center.

"To build the cancer center required us to bring the creek out of underground culverts and move and daylight the creek," Tongue said. "Our partnerships with The Watershed Center and Conservation District and their efforts obtaining grant money, as well as key donations through Munson Healthcare Foundations made the project possible."

In 2013, the project brought 900 feet of flowing water back to the surface and created a nearly quarter-mile meandering stream with natural plantings along the creek bed to buffer the creek. The project also resulted in a 27,000-square-foot flood plain.

Design for the cancer center, which after construction earned LEED certification, included a green roof and pervious pavement in the parking lot in efforts to reduce runoff into the creek.

When the new parking structure in Lot A was constructed in 2017, a large storm water basin was placed underneath to catch runoff and prevent it from reaching the creek. Other smaller efforts in the past few years have involved rain basins along Medical Campus Drive, tree box planters, and a storm water wetland retention pond at the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Medical Campus Drive.

And the final phase of the project called for taking the creek out of a culvert underneath the Emergency Department entrance and installing a bridge that allows for appropriate stream flow.

"The recent work to replace the undersized culverts at the Emergency Department entrance on Seventh Street will improve passage for young fish moving upstream and reduce scouring and streambank erosion downstream of the crossing," U'Ren said.

Tongue said the efforts set a standard and created a model for other urban creek renewal projects. "One of our organization's values is stewardship," he said. "The Kids Creek project represents a significant resource for us and the community. These kinds of projects are important for Munson Healthcare. They are another way we're giving back to our communities."