

Johnson Memorial Rocks Riverfest

Obstacle Course, Parade, and the First 5K Color Run

Johnson Memorial Health Services had a busy week during Riverfest, June 27-30, holding three separate events and participating in the parade.

On Thursday, we kicked things off with the kid's obstacle course. The rain had us pivoting from the football field to the elementary gym. A huge crowd cheered on the 68 kids competing.

Saturday morning, the weather was perfect for our first 5K Color Run. Twenty-one participants competed, including most of the LQPV-DB cross country team.

Saturday afternoon, we held an open house celebration to honor Dr. Ralph Gerbig. Dr. Gerbig has spent more than 42 years practicing at JMHS. The event included a short program and a video tribute from several past and present JMHS staff members.

On Sunday, JMHS participated in the Riverfest parade, with Care Center residents and assisted living tenants riding on the golf cart and trishaw. We want to thank everyone who joined us for these events and our amazing staff for making them happen!



Participants in the first 5K Color Run

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

JMHS Johnson Memorial
Health Services
High Quality, Compassionate Healthcare.

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Telestroke offers specialty care via the internet.

Telestroke to the Rescue

Quick Access to Specialty Care in Dawson

Strokes, if not treated immediately, can be devastating. They can alter speech, the ability to learn and understand, and paralyze one side the body. If you need immediate care, driving to St. Cloud or the Metro is not an option.

Through Telestroke, you can still receive care from a neurology specialist right here in Dawson. The system allows our emergency department doctors to connect digitally in real time with a stroke and vascular neurologist at the CentraCare Neuroscience Stroke Center. The Telestroke equipment consists of a large computer monitor and a camera, which allows the specialist to communicate with Johnson Memorial doctors and examine the patient.

"The key to successful treatment of a stroke is early evaluation and diagnosis which can lead to lifesaving treatment. The new telestroke system allows us to

access specialists immediately and begin that treatment quickly if needed" says Dr. Erik Shelstad, medical director for the clinic and care center.

Know your symptoms — B.E.F.A.S.T.

- B**alance loss
- E**yesight changes
- F**acial droop or numbness
- A**rm weakness
- S**peech difficulty
- T**ime is of the essence

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately. "And if it's not a stroke," says Shelstad, "it's probably something else that they need to come in for anyway, but we do not want people to delay."

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Information in The Pulse comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your healthcare provider.

Fall 2024

Follow us on:



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Compassionate Breast Care in Your Hometown!

We understand that breast care might not be your favorite subject. But our team of providers and specialists will put you at ease and treat you with kindness and compassion every step of the way.

At Johnson Memorial Health Services, we believe in a proactive approach that starts with monthly breast self-exams and an annual mammogram for women over 40. The monthly exam establishes a baseline of what your breasts feel like so you can observe any changes over time. “Those symptoms may include feeling a lump, tenderness, a nipple discharge, or a sharp pain,” says Angie Siverhus, Surgery/Outreach Clinic Manager. Your primary care provider can show you how to conduct the self-exam.

A mammogram is a radiological test that takes about 10 minutes. JMHS offers both digital and 3-D Mammogram capabilities. You’ll be notified immediately if there is something suspicious that may require additional tests. “A woman with cystic breasts may need further images with ultrasound, and, if there’s a diagnosis of “dense” breasts, she may require an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging),” says Siverhus.

If a positive cancer diagnosis is made, we’re committed to providing efficient, streamlined care and beginning treatment as quickly as possible. “Our goal is to get the patient’s questions answered and hopefully calm their fears,” says Siverhus.

If you need more advanced care, we’re here to help. You’ll consult with an oncologist, who will determine the best possible treatment plan, which may include a biopsy, lumpectomy, or mastectomy.

A biopsy will determine whether the lump in your breasts is benign or cancerous. The outpatient procedure takes about a half hour under local anesthesia. A lumpectomy, often preferred by younger women, removes the cancerous tissue and preserves the breast. This procedure may include a biopsy of the lymph nodes under the arm to see if the cancer has spread. Patients with more widespread disease may require a mastectomy or the total removal of the breast.

Fortunately, all the tests and procedures you require, from a mammogram to potential surgery, are available right here in Dawson. Save yourself a trip of 60 minutes or more to another facility when the technology, expertise, and compassionate care you need is right here at JMHS.

Talk to your primary care provider to learn about conducting a breast self-exam or schedule a mammogram directly by calling 320-769-4323 and asking for the radiology department.



Gretchen Reeves helps patients with communication.

Opening the Lines of Communication

Speech Therapist Gretchen Reeves

Gretchen Reeves, our new speech therapist, is an educator and a passionate advocate for patients and caregivers. She helps patients overcome speech disorders so their voices can be heard and understood by their friends, colleagues, and loved ones.

We’re excited that she joined Johnson Memorial Health Services!

Reeves helps patients with general communication, including speech, language, memory loss, stuttering, and swallowing disorders. These symptoms are often associated with strokes, traumatic brain injuries, and diseases like ALS and Parkinson’s. Reeves offers hope to these patients and their caregivers through treatment and education.

Treatments include exercises to produce sounds and improve speech clarity, swallowing, and breathing. Reeves also handles receptive disorders to understand and process spoken and written language.

With more than 30 years of experience in the field, Reeves is an authority on speech therapy and the care of dementia patients. She appeared in the Pioneer PBS’s 2023 documentary “Birkey’s Brain.”

Reeves puts her experience to work treating older adults with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Multiple Sclerosis, and stroke patients. “The person who’s living with dementia’s brain is dying, and so we must change how we communicate and interact with them,” says Reeves.

Open the lines of communication for a happier life for your loved one. Ask your primary care physician for a referral to Reeves or call her at 320-769-4323 for more information.

Pelvic Floor Therapy to Stop Pain and Incontinence

Pelvic floor disorders affect 16% of men and 32% of women.



Bonnie Will heads up the JMHS rehab team.

Occasionally, the muscles in your pelvic floor do not cooperate. The result is leakage of urine or feces, bowel issues, constipation, or pain anywhere in the genitals, rectum, hips, pelvis, or back. The pelvic floor muscles support reproductive organs, the bladder, and the colorectal tract. Pelvic floor therapy targets the muscles in those areas both externally and internally.

Bonnie Will is JMHS’ head of the rehab team and is trained in pelvic floor therapy. Pelvic floor muscle tone can change due to childbirth, the aging process, stress, or injury. Pelvic floor therapy benefits can help people with specific health conditions,

including incontinence, pregnancy and post-partum changes, constipation, hysterectomy, and neurological conditions like multiple sclerosis. Will has specialized training in this area.

Treatment frequency varies based on the severity of the condition, with most patients receiving sessions once a week or every other week. Every patient is unique, so this is based off patient needs and preferences.

Education is critical for pelvic floor patients: “We have a model so that we can explain everything ahead of time.

People always have options about what they’re comfortable with, so it’s very much patient-centric,” she says.

Pelvic floor therapy is part of Johnson Memorial’s planned expansion of rehab capabilities. “We’re bringing in these new services so people in Dawson and the region don’t have to travel far from home. It’s our vision of delivering high-quality, compassionate healthcare to our friends and neighbors,” says Will.

If you have symptoms of Pelvic Floor Disorder, talk with your provider about a referral or call Bonnie Will at 320-312-2128

Kathy Johnson Returns as Interim CEO

Kathy Johnson has a history of getting things done. She served as JMHS CEO from 2007 to 2015, handled major building projects, and now, after semi-retirement, she’s back as interim CEO. And how does that feel? “It’s like coming home. It’s a great feeling. There are a lot of great people who work here.”

Johnson discovered her interest in healthcare right after high school when she worked as a nursing assistant. Since then, she has earned her LPN license, worked as a nurse manager, director of nursing, chief operating officer, and finally, CEO. On one career stop, she managed the daunting task of installing a hospital’s mainframe computer.

“I got to work in every department for a week to understand their workflow. Now, when somebody texts me about their role, I understand what they’re saying. So that really helps with being a CEO.”

Since July 9, Johnson, along with the board of directors, has led the search for the new CEO, which she hopes will be finished by November. She’s a snowbird at heart and hopes to fly off to Arizona before winter sets in with a vengeance. But she’ll be here if we need her.

In the interim, Johnson will focus on patients, residents, and tenants. “They’re our main reason for being here,” she says, “so we want to give them the best care we’re capable of giving.” Then, it’s off to warmer climates.

Kathy Johnson, Interim CEO, gets things done.

