

# Banishing the Bugs

## Superior Health Commends Johnson Memorial on Infection Control.



Staff from Care Center, Environmental Services, and Infection Control were recognized by SHQA

The dangerous microorganisms that spread infection from patient to patient aren't visible to the human eye. For this reason, Johnson Memorial sanitizes everything from blood pressure cuffs to high-touch surfaces between each patient.

These efforts and others ensure the safety and health of our patients and staff. Johnson Memorial's infection control is stringent, and it's improving every day.

Over the past several years, Kelly Wenthe has been developing a program to improve infection control at JMHS's long-term care facility. It worked. The program received a commendation from the Superior Health Quality Alliance (SHQA) "for completing an infection control improvement initiative."

Just ask Kelly Wenthe, Lab manager, and Infection Control Coordinator.

SHQA and JMHS started with a survey to find areas for improvement. "We identified an area that we wanted to focus on," says Wenthe. "And decided that auditing the cleaning of multi-use equipment after each use would be a good audit."

Then, in concert with SHQA, the team devised a weekly educational program that detailed standards and provided a way to measure progress toward goals. "Auditing is a key component in measuring our quality improvement," says Wenthe.

Families and loved ones "know that we're providing the best possible care for residents, making sure they have a safe environment," she says.

"The staff does an excellent job, and they want what's best for the residents," says Wenthe. Improving and maintaining efficient quality protocols is a goal for all of us.

### SUMMER 2024 NEWSLETTER



# the pulse

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## How Hips are Done in Dawson

### Specialized OR table helps hip surgery patients



Richard Meyer shares his story of a successful, nearly painless hip replacement from Dr. Nwakama and the The Hana table.



Richard Meyer points out that his bad hip affected more people than just him. "The pain was horrible, and your partner isn't sleeping because you're tossing and turning and just miserable."

Meyer is a supervisor at a fertilizer plant and drives semi-trucks in the winter. "My hip would ache," says Meyer, "because you would sit and bounce around."

During the summer, he was limping when he walked, but the turning point came when Meyer almost fell down a flight of 17 stairs at home."

Finally, Jennifer Erdmann, Meyer's younger sister who works at Johnson Memorial, convinced him to see a surgeon. "Dr. Nwakama is the one who looked at my x-rays and told me I needed a new hip. There were bone spurs, and it was literally bone on bone," says Meyer.

Before surgery, he engaged in four weeks of physical therapy to help build muscles around his hip. He also tried aspirin, icing, and an electric stimulator. After declining a steroid injection for the pain, he decided to go ahead with the hip replacement. Two weeks later Meyer had surgery.

That's where the Hana table comes in. It's a specialized OR table designed for the surgeon to approach the hip from the front or anterior. "It allows the patient to have a less invasive procedure with a faster recovery time," says Angie Siverhus, perioperative/outreach manager.

The Hana table looks like it's cut off at the hip. The patient's feet are seated in boots, and two bars support their legs. "This allows the doctor to manipulate the leg by rotating it and moving it from side to side and up and down to expose the hip joint easily," says Siverhus.

Post-surgery, Meyer took four weeks off before returning to work. During that time, "I could still make my daughters' early basketball games, my son's football games, and play fetch with the dog," he says.

Meyer sometimes still feels a slight twinge after using a Bobcat to move snow for a couple of hours. But now he can hit a volleyball around with his kids and run and jump without pain!



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## the pulse

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# Heads Up!

## Lacee Feltman cares for kids with mental health conditions.

There's a mental health crisis in the U.S. And half of all life-time mental illnesses begin by age 14.

"I think social media has a big part to play in that, the changing world and the expectations that we have," says Lacee Feltman, PMHNP (psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner). Feltman specializes in treating children, from age 8 to 16."

In rural America, the problem is magnified because many people simply don't have access to mental healthcare. That's why we are especially pleased to introduce Feltman and to make her services available to the Dawson community.

Feltman understands the mental health challenge in rural areas. She grew up in Chamberlain, South Dakota, where she started working in a nursing home at age 16. That's when she made the decision to pursue nursing as a career. Later, in college, she found herself drawn to psychiatric classes.

Two of the most common conditions Feltman works with are ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and depression. She flags several ADHD symptoms for parents to look for, "Sometimes the child will act out and struggle with paying



Lacee Feltman, PMHNP  
JMHS Mental Health Provider

attention and then distracting other children. And when they lose focus within a couple minutes of doing something they enjoy."

As for depression in children and teens, she holds out social media as one of the main culprits. As a mother and clinical practitioner, Feltman underscores the necessity of checking your children's phones, and "to look for hurtful things like bullying," she says. "That's what my daughter and me do, and that's what I encourage parents to do."

She also recommends that kids have a life outside of technology and have a social life in the real world. "That way, they have social support in case of bullying."

To schedule an appointment with Feltman, go through your primary care doctor and a referral will be sent. Parents will then receive a packet of information to fill out for background before the first appointment.

Feltman loves seeing her patients improve over time. "We ought to be willing to talk to our kids about how they're feeling."

# We'll Pump You Up.

## Blood Flow Restriction Therapy Strengthens Muscles

Rachel Hakanson, PT, DPT, OCS  
Physical Therapist

The rehab team at Johnson Memorial has a new tool, Blood Flow Restriction Therapy (BFR), in its toolbox. Offered since December 2023, BFR strengthens muscles without putting undue stress on an injured limb. For example, someone who lifts 50 pounds will receive the same therapeutic benefit by lifting 15 pounds. BFR works by temporarily reducing the blood supply with a tourniquet high on the arm or leg.

"It's a specialized blood pressure cuff," says Bonnie Will, head of the rehab team. "So, it is a little uncomfortable. But after that, it's more of a fatigue, so it's not painful."

"Research shows that blood flow restriction therapy increases strength quicker than traditional strength building," says physical therapist Rachel Hakanson. "If someone is unable to weight bear due to surgical restrictions, they can still progress strengthening with the use of BFR with non-weight bearing exercise." It's especially valuable



for patients with a long post-surgical recovery, which can last weeks or months for some procedures. BFR ensures the affected area is strong and ready to go when the patient resumes daily activities.

On average, patients receive BFR twice weekly for 4 weeks plus exercises at home. "It's an option the therapy department considers when a patient comes in for an initial assessment."

**Would you like to learn more about BFR for yourself or a loved one? Call 320-312-2128 or visit us online at JMHSMN.org**

# Staying in Rhythm

## How Cardiac Implants Save Lives

Starting in December 2023, the cardiology department has expanded its services to include pacemaker and ICD (implantable cardiac defibrillator) implants. This life-saving technology helps regulate the heart when it suddenly speeds up, slows down, or stops.

Pacemakers use low-energy electrical impulses to ensure the heart beats steadily to meet the body's needs. ICDs also monitor the heart for abnormal rhythms and can deliver a shock if a dangerous rhythm is detected.

One of Johnson Memorial's first pacemaker cases was Crystal Mae Smith, 47. She had persistent symptoms - including fluttering, flushing, fatigue, and a racing heart -

that hadn't been accurately diagnosed before moving to Dawson. But when she had an appointment with Dr. Ayaz Virji, Chief of Staff at Johnson Memorial Health Services, "he immediately saw that something was wrong," says Smith. Just four weeks later, she had a pacemaker implanted.

Before implant surgery, patients undergo a workup that includes an EKG (electrocardiogram), echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart), and a loop recorder. "They observe the patient for a while to see if they meet the criteria for surgery," says Siverhus, perioperative services/outreach manager at Johnson Memorial.

The loop recorder, which Smith used, monitors the heart



Crystal Mae Smith shares her story of a successful, pacemaker implant from Dr. Chelliah and Dr. Virji



for a few weeks to up to five years. Like the pacemaker, it is implanted under the chest wall and transmits information about severe heart episodes to a monitoring station at Johnson Memorial.

"If it wasn't for Dr. Virji not giving up and finding another cardiologist," says Smith, "I might not even be here."

Smith says she received excellent care at Johnson

Memorial. "If I had any questions, they were on it, and if they didn't know, they would call me back."

Siverhus points out how essential these new cardiology services are to the Dawson Community. "Many patients don't want to go down to Sioux Falls, Minneapolis, or St. Cloud," she says. "They want to stay here. I think it's a great thing that we can do these implants in Dawson."

# Johnson Memorial Speaks Spanish

## Patient services at Johnson Memorial Health Services



Cristela Gunderson,  
Patient Access Rep. and,  
Spanish Interpreter

Imagine the frustration of having a doctor who doesn't speak your language. Johnson Memorial Health Services understands, and that's why we offer Spanish-language translation services.

Cristela Gunderson, Patient Access Representative and Spanish Interpreter, is the heart of the service. She joined Johnson Memorial in November 2020. Within a few weeks, the Emergency Department (ED) needed her services for three Spanish-speaking patients who arrived simultaneously. "They were happy I was there," says Gunderson. "I was bouncing from one room to the next."

Gunderson learned Spanish as a child in Argentina and stayed immersed in the language when her parents moved to Southern California. When patients who struggle with English arrive at the clinic's front desk or call, Cristela is the go-to person for Spanish.

The Johnson Memorial's computer system also flags Spanish speakers, so they have translation services available the next time they visit the clinic. "On the days when I get to translate, it makes me feel accomplished and like I've helped somebody," says Gunderson. "And they probably wouldn't have had such a pleasant experience if I wasn't here."