

I've taken
The Pickle Pledge

August 2019

Healthy Times

promising
my time and
gossiping,
with those who
blaming,
and gossiping.



Culture Shift

Tri-County strengthens
invisible architecture

 **Tri-County
Health Care**
TCHC.org



Message from our President & CEO, Joel Beiswenger

“Whossoever desires constant success must change their conduct with the times.” This quote by Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian philosopher, is the theme of my message to you in this edition of Healthy Times.

In the following pages, you will read about significant changes happening here at Tri-County Health Care. We are devoting our efforts to ensuring just what the quote states, that in order to achieve constant success, we must continue to change with the times, being adaptive, responsive and proactive.

As a result, we are about to introduce one of the biggest changes to TCHC in the last 50 years as we build the new rural healthcare center of the future.

When the Wesley Hospital was built in 1925, it was considered one of the most modern, capable rural hospitals in the state of Minnesota. It served the community well for nearly 50 years, but there was a need for change. It was limited on space, and the Board took the opportunity to capitalize on space available on the west side of Highway 71, where Tri-County Hospital was built in 1974.

This new facility met the needs at the time, when inpatient care accounted for 90 percent of our activity. However, our inpatients now only account for 13 percent of our activity. This has been a marvelous transition in health care to help keep people home and out of the expensive inpatient setting.

Health care will continue to evolve significantly and even faster than it has in the past. That's why we need to pursue a new healthcare campus to serve the Tri-County region.

You will continue to hear more about this over the next 2-3 years.

Change has also come in the form of new services, including orthopedics. In fact, we recently performed our 100th joint replacement. It is remarkable to think that just under a year ago, this was a service we didn't provide. Dr. Robertson and his entire team deliver great care here in Wadena so patients don't have to travel long distances for their hip, knee and shoulder replacements. We are extremely proud that we can offer valuable services, not only in orthopedics but in other specialty areas. Without the openness to change and creativity in finding solutions, we would not have the services we have today.

We have also introduced a new culture initiative and created a list of 12 core values for the organization. The goal is to create an uplifting change in the culture of our organization, starting with staff and providers and impacting you, our patients and community members. We strive to do our absolute best every day but know that sometimes we can do better. Our employees have taken a pledge to turn any complaint into constructive suggestions and take the opportunity to make a positive change. We want to hear from you, both the positives and negatives, so that we can continue improving.

Thank you all for trusting us with your care and being partners in what we do. Here's to your health and wellness as we embark on the road to our exciting future.

From the Expected to the Unexpected... *and everything in between*

You never know what life is going to throw at you. You could be healthy one moment and sick the next. With the school year about to start and flu season creeping up, it's important for you to see your primary care provider so you can face the season ahead with confidence.

Tri-County Health Care will be your trusted partner for those times that are expected so you can be more prepared for the unexpected.

Here are options to consider:

Annual Wellness Exam

The Expected – One-to-one time with your provider gives you a chance to ask questions and learn more about your health. Establishing a relationship now will give you confidence if future health needs arise.

The Unexpected – Why go to the doctor if you're not sick? Wellness exams help to keep you well. Finding warning signs now can prevent serious conditions later.

Sports Physicals

The Expected – Is your child healthy enough to play sports? A thorough medical history and physical exam help your provider put that question to rest!

The Unexpected – Injuries can happen in the blink of an eye, but your provider can give your athlete training tips and find any health conditions that may increase the risk for injury.

Influenza Immunization

The Expected – Will you get the flu from the shot? The short answer is no. You might experience flu-like symptoms, but that means it's working to prepare your immune system to fight off a real influenza virus.

The Unexpected – When influenza hits, it strikes hard and fast. Body aches. Persistent fever. Racking cough. Draining fatigue. It has the potential to knock you down for two to three weeks and can sometimes be fatal.



To make an appointment, call 218-631-3510. Flu clinics will be scheduled in the fall. Stay tuned for more details.



Joanne Olson holds up the cake that was presented to her by the Tri Orthopedics team.



Some of the team members who guided Joanne through her surgery include (back, L-R) Kayla Denny, RN; Lorinda Zigan, PA-C; Medley Shamp, RN; Rachel Peterson, LPN; Jackie Vandermay, LPN; Jeremy Meyer, DPT; (front) Jill Wilkens, PA-C; and Krystle Schwartz, LPN.



Joanne Olson was joined by her close friends and family at the 100th joint replacement celebration.

Celebrating a Centennial

Tri Orthopedics performs 100th joint replacement surgery

Ben Robertson, M.D., and his Tri Orthopedics team at Tri-County Health Care recently performed their 100th joint replacement less than a year after the program's launch. TCHC hired Dr. Robertson full time and spearheaded the program in September of 2018, offering a full spectrum of orthopedic services. Joanne Olson of Wadena, well known to her friends as Annie, was the 100th joint replacement patient.

"I could hardly believe it," Joanne said. "And for (Dr. Robertson) too. He's only been here since September. It's really good. And I really like him. Everybody is great here."

"That we have surpassed our goal of 100 joint replacement procedures so quickly is a thrilling accomplishment for our team and the Wadena area," Dr. Robertson said. "It's rewarding to know we were able to give so many people relief from their pain. We have high expectations as we continue with this program and look forward to serving the next 100 joint patients."

Joanne had been suffering from arthritis pain in her left knee, so her primary care provider, Jill Wilkens, PA-C, referred her to Dr. Robertson. "After I found out about Dr. Robertson, then everybody I talked to said, 'He's the best there is. He did my hip. He did my shoulder. He did

this and he did that. He's really good.' Then I wasn't scared. Not when I knew that he was so good."

Following her knee replacement surgery on June 3, Joanne stayed for two days in the hospital before going home. During recovery, she was consistent with her rehab, attending twice a week and enlisting the help of friends and family to do her exercises at home.

On June 14, Joanne's care team and other TCHC employees hosted a celebration for her and the program's milestone. Joanne brought along her husband, Marlin; her son, Tom; and several friends and family members, who were all treated to lunch and cake.

"After I found out about Dr. Robertson, then everybody I talked to said, 'He's the best there is. He did my hip. He did my shoulder. He did this and he did that. He's really good.' Then I wasn't scared. Not when I knew that he was so good."

Joanne Olson, TCHC patient

"I just can't say enough about everything. Really. I don't know if there's words for everything. It's just really great. I've got to have my other (knee) done too, so I'll be back," Joanne said and then laughed. "Maybe I'll be the 200th one."

For more information about Tri Orthopedics, call 218-631-3510 or visit TCHC.org/ortho.



Along with a cake, Joanne received a Tri-County Health Care tote filled with special gifts to commemorate the occasion.



What a Pickle: From Accountability to Ownership

It's no secret Tri-County Health Care has made many changes in its physical architecture ever since it began as the Wesley Hospital in 1925. Even now, there's a plan in the works to build a brand-new healthcare center.

But did you know it has an invisible architecture? In fact, every business has invisible architecture.

What does "invisible architecture" mean? It's the values held by the organization and employees. It's the culture represented throughout the organization. It's the attitude held by all who make up the workplace. When it comes down to it, these features are far more important to employee engagement and patient satisfaction than the beams and bricks that made up the physical structure.

TCHC is proud of the foundation of healthcare excellence it has already built, but more can be done. Before the physical foundation is laid for its new facility, it is embarking on a major company-wide culture shift to strengthen the invisible architecture.

The Florence Challenge

In January, TCHC welcomed Joe Tye, CEO and head coach at Values Coach, Inc., which provides training on cultural transformation and values-based leadership. Joe is guiding TCHC on its journey to improve its culture and overall invisible architecture.

Joe authored *The Florence Prescription* and perfected the Florence Challenge. In 1854, when Florence Nightingale was deployed to the Scutari Barrack Hospital, she faced a crisis of overworked staff and overcrowding from wounded soldiers. She worked to improve the conditions, eventually founding the modern nursing profession and laying the groundwork for hospitals today.

The Florence Challenge builds upon her founding principles to take health care from a culture of accountability to a culture of ownership. Ownership means employees feel personally invested in the organization's performance and influence in the community. As a result, their work is guided by values rather than rules.

"Accountability is not enough to enable us to deliver the highest quality care to patients," said Joel Beiswenger, president and CEO. "We must go from accountability to ownership. Ownership means doing things because you want to and know it is the right thing to do, not because you must."

The Florence Challenge holds that a culture of ownership can only be achieved if employees are emotionally positive, self-empowered and fully engaged. Instilling these values doesn't just improve the culture, it improves each individual person and eventually the entire community.

"If people are going home at end of day with a more positive attitude, they can be better parents and hopefully teach kids what they've learned, turning complaints into a commitment to make a change," Joe said. "If an entire community begins to embrace this commitment to values, pretty soon you start to change the culture of the organization and of the community. That should be our ultimate goal."

The Pickle Pledge

In February, TCHC found itself in a pickle. The Pickle Pledge, that is! An important part of the Florence Challenge, the Pickle Pledge is a self-empowerment pledge taken by each department every morning:

"I will turn every complaint into either a blessing or constructive suggestion. By taking the Pickle Pledge, I am promising myself that I will no longer waste my time and energy on blaming, complaining, and gossiping, nor will I commiserate with those who steal my energy with their blaming, complaining, and gossiping."



Why the pickle reference?

Because according to Values Coach, Inc., “chronic complainers look like they were born with a dill pickle stuck in their mouths.” The main pledge is taken every day, but each day of the week has its own additional pledge of responsibility, accountability, determination, contribution, resilience, perspective and faith.

To make sure the pledges don’t turn into empty words, the challenge takes it a step further. Each department created and decorated a pickle jar. Every time someone complains or gossips, they must put a quarter in the jar. The money is later donated to charity.

“I’ve sensed a much higher level of receptivity to this at TCHC,” Joe said. “It’s not just a pep rally or program of the month, but it can make a difference for your patients and for each of you as individuals.”

Values Training

“This is a challenging time to be a hospital, and you have to have a stronger culture,” Joe said. “I want Tri-County to be one of our flagships that helps get the word out to other rural hospitals that we need to be taking this seriously. I want others visiting TCHC as the model for a culture of ownership.”

One of the steps in changing the culture from accountability to ownership is to identify core values for TCHC. The TCHC leadership selected 24 employees to serve as certified values coach trainers to communicate these values to the rest of the staff. Joe then personally trained and prepared the coaches for the task.

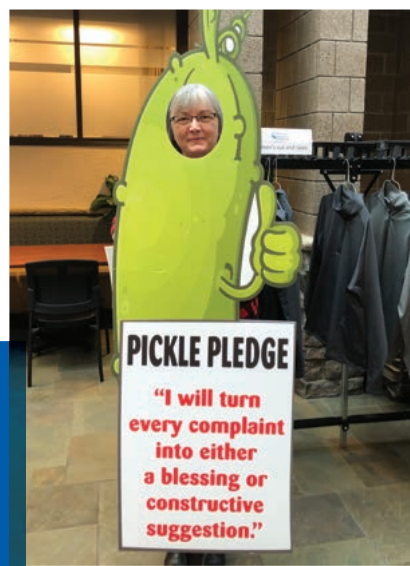
“We have prepared more than 1,000 people to be certified values coach trainers,” Joe said of his company. “The 24 we trained at Tri-County Health Care were some of the most positive and enthusiastic, and I have high expectations for them.”

Starting in the fall, all TCHC employees and providers will attend training sessions led by these values coaches. “The goal is to teach the core values in order to help employees be the best version of themselves that they can be, to really think about their actions at work and at home,” values coach Molly Tabery said. “As a result, this will make TCHC a better place to work and a better place for patients to receive care.”

“This is a way to help people connect with values that are universal to authenticity through leadership, values we all aspire to,” Joe said. “We want to teach them practical skills not just to be better at work but just to be better overall in their lives. It will make them more effective overall in their lives and to do a better job of achieving their own personal and professional goals.”

“I feel truly blessed to work for a company that cares enough about its employees to invest the time and money into helping us be better people. By improving the staff here at Tri-County, we also accomplish our mission of improving the health of the communities we serve by helping improve our whole selves mentally, emotionally and physically,”

Tara Erckenbrack, TCHC Employee
Values Coach



proceed until apprenended

Leadership does not require
a management title

- Emotionally Positive
- Self-Empowered
- Fully Engaged



A new location, a new opportunity

At almost 50 years old, Tri-County Health Care's current building is outdated, cramped and cannot accommodate growing services or keep up with changing healthcare needs. Last fall, the Board of Directors approved an investment for a new hospital. The plan is to build the rural healthcare center of the future to be a strong entity in Wadena and surrounding communities for years to come.

TCHC originally considered the Wadena County Fairgrounds as the location for its future home. However, it is now focusing on a new location west of Wadena on Highway 10. Owned by Kelly and Julie Taggart, the property today boasts more than 70 acres of land and an alpaca farm.

The reason for this shift is that the cost to relocate the fair – including moving the race track, relocating or rebuilding current buildings, adding a parking lot and more – totaled \$13.1 million. This price is well beyond what was anticipated or budgeted.

"Pursuing this option would not be fiscally responsible," said Joel Beiswenger, president and CEO. "To be a good steward of our finances would mean allocating that money toward more clinical program space, technology, services, or other features of the building."

TCHC has a purchase option on the Taggart property, which offers more visibility than the fairgrounds and has a country atmosphere that would help in creating a place of healing. In addition, the cost came in at less than \$2 million, including the cost of installing utilities at the site, significantly less than the \$13.1 million projected for the fairgrounds.

However, the Taggart property resides in Otter Tail County, though TCHC's goal had been to remain in Wadena County. If TCHC purchases the land, it would take steps to annex the property into the city of Wadena, but it would remain in Otter Tail County.

Before pursuing the Taggart property, TCHC considered other options within Wadena County. It researched the option of co-locating with the fair, but this presents another cost concern as well as potential noise interference from the race track. Another possibility was the property south of Wadena on Highway 71 that formerly housed the drive-in movie theater. However, this property does not offer the visibility and location on Highway 10, which was a primary goal in TCHC's master planning.

TCHC also cannot move farther east, as that would place it within 20 miles of Lakewood Health System in Staples. In the past, Medicare has looked at 5-mile increments as it comes to Critical Access Hospital reimbursements and their distance from one another. Being within 20 miles of Lakewood could have financial consequences for both healthcare systems, which could jeopardize their future viability from a federal reimbursement perspective.

The main reasons for focusing on the Taggart property include the cost (in comparison to the fairgrounds) and the location on Highway 10. The Taggart property also offers better visibility and sight lines.

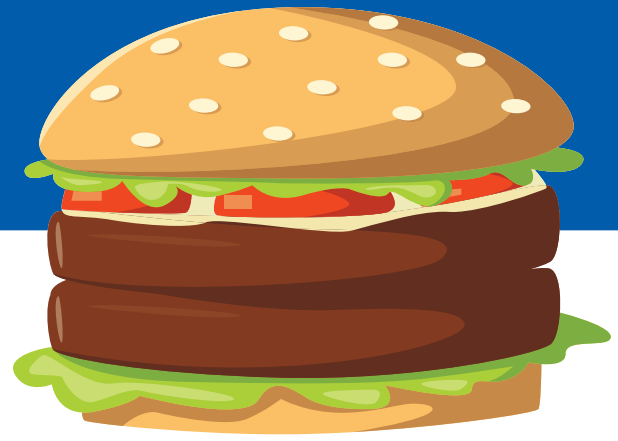
With the decision to pursue the Taggart property reached, TCHC will try to expedite the due diligence process, which includes vibration and soil testing, in order to confirm the Taggart property as an option. It will maintain other Wadena County sites for the possibility of a Plan B option.

"I want to say thank you to Wadena County, the Fair Board, and the city of Wadena for their partnership and collaboration in researching a location for our new facility," Joel said. "We regret not being able to remain in Wadena County, but we are excited by the opportunities presented by the Taggart property and look forward to moving one step closer to bringing a modern healthcare facility to the communities we serve in Wadena, Todd and Otter Tail counties."



The cost of health care:

What if a restaurant operated like a hospital?



The great ocean of healthcare costs is vast and complicated. With a new TCHC facility on the horizon, many worry the project will lead to a rise in healthcare prices. But here's the truth. TCHC will not raise its rates due to a new facility. Here's why.

The prices that a hospital charges are determined by many factors including costs, health plan reimbursements and the variety of health plans accepted by the hospital (e.g. commercial insurance such as Blue Cross Blue Shield or government plans such as Medicare).

To help you understand a little better, here's what it might look like if a restaurant had to start operating like a hospital.

First, this is how a restaurant might normally work. Let's say it costs \$3 to make a burger. If the restaurant charges \$5 per burger, it will make a \$2 profit on every burger. So if it sells 1,000 burgers, it makes a \$2,000 profit. Not bad!

Charge	Cost	Profit for One Burger	# Burgers	Total Profit
\$5	\$3	\$2	1,000	\$ 2,000

In health care, it isn't so simple. When a hospital charges for a service, the money must filter through the patient's insurance, which decides how much to pay the hospital. Government plans pay less than the cost it takes the hospital to provide the service.

So let's say the restaurant charges the same \$5 for a burger. When the customer goes to settle the bill, they have to present their insurance, meaning the restaurant doesn't get paid until it bills the insurance company. The government plan pays only \$2 to the restaurant, even though it costs \$3 to make that burger. As a result, the restaurant loses \$1. If it sells 1,000 burgers, even after adding commercial insurance, it will lose \$680.

	Hamburger Insurance			Profit for One Burger	# Burgers	Total Profit
	Charge	Cost	Reimbursement			
Medicare	\$5	\$3	\$2	(\$1)	450	\$ (450)
MA	\$5	\$3	\$1	(\$2)	230	(460)
Commercial	\$5	\$3	\$4	\$1	250	250
Self-Pay	\$5	\$3	\$1	(\$2)	30	(60)
Other	\$5	\$3	\$4	\$1	40	40
					1,000	\$ (680)

(Totals in parentheses indicate a loss.)

Well, that's a conundrum. If government plans pay less than what the service costs to provide, then how do hospitals make a profit?

The answer is hospitals must raise their prices to offset the loss on government plans.

If the restaurant charged \$10 for a burger that costs \$3 to make, government plans would still only pay \$2. However, commercial insurance would pay \$8 for the same \$10 burger, resulting in a \$320 profit for 1,000 burgers sold.

	Hamburger Insurance			Profit for One Burger	# Burgers	Total Profit
	Charge	Cost	Reimbursement			
Medicare	\$10	\$3	\$2	(\$1)	450	\$ (450)
MA	\$10	\$3	\$1	(\$2)	230	(460)
Commercial	\$10	\$3	\$8	\$5	250	1,250
Self-Pay	\$10	\$3	\$1	(\$2)	30	(60)
Other	\$10	\$3	\$4	\$1	40	40
					1,000	\$ 320

(Totals in parentheses indicate a loss.)

The variety of insurances that a hospital accepts is called a payor mix. This payor mix affects the cost of healthcare services. In fact, if you've ever wondered why a service might cost more at one hospital versus at another, payor mix might be one of the reasons because it varies from hospital to hospital.

Only about 25 percent of TCHC's payor mix is commercial insurance. The rest is made up of Medicare, Medicare Advantage and Medicaid. That means TCHC loses money on nearly 75 percent of its services! However, these government plans are vital to the health care and strength of rural communities. As a result, rural hospitals must find ways to make a profit and keep their doors open to continue serving patients and supporting these programs.

What about taxes?

TCHC is a private, not-for-profit organization. It does not receive tax support and exists solely by making revenue or receiving donations. Therefore, funding for the hospital will not come from public sources.

*The restaurant example is a very basic illustration and does not represent every aspect of healthcare costs.



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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Expanded ENT access ahead!

Have you ever had a sinus headache, a stuffy nose or a sore throat? Without a doubt, the condition of your ears, nose and throat impacts your daily life.

Tri-County Health Care's partnership with ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist Kurtis Waters, M.D., can provide the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions, as well as procedures for structures of the head and neck.

Now, Dr. Waters is expanding his visits in Wadena from once a month to every Friday, giving you more access to the services you need.

With 20 years of experience, Dr. Waters believes strongly in maintaining high levels of trust, communication and confidentiality in the care of his patients. Whether your child is in need of ear tubes or you need same-day surgery, Dr. Waters and his team will be here to give you the care you deserve.

Common conditions treated include:

- **Ears** – Ear infections, hearing loss, balance and dizziness, ringing in the ears
- **Nose** – Sinusitis, allergies, smelling disorders, nasal obstruction
- **Throat** – Airway and vocal disorders, swallowing disorders, tumors
- **Neck and head** – Thyroid disorders, deformities, infections, facial trauma

To make an appointment, call 218-631-3510.

