

June 2018

Healthy Times

Jacob Cronk
of willpower and wonders



**Tri-County
Health Care**

TCHC.org



Message from our President & CEO, Joel Beiswenger

Welcome to summer, everyone! I hope you enjoyed spring, belated as it was. As we hardy Minnesotans know, we need to be *READY* for anything in our wonderful, beautiful and sometimes frustrating corner of the world. *READY* for an April snowstorm, *READY* to jump quickly into spring planting for our local farmers and gardeners, and excitedly *READY* to fill our summer calendars chock full of outdoor activities!

READY for anything is one of the themes of this edition of Tri-County Health Care's Healthy Times. Herein, you will read about one family's story of a harrowing life or death experience in which the Tri-County ambulance and emergency department staff did what they do every day, save lives and prevent further illness or injury. We at Tri-County are extremely proud of our first-class emergency medical services, and I invite you to watch for future news about improvements to make the service even better than it is today.

We stand at the *READY* to help and protect the children in our community, including one local 10-year-old boy with severe sensory issues who had his life drastically

changed by our occupational therapy staff. And for the mothers delivering our youngest patients, we offer gentle pain management through nitrous oxide and the option for a water birth.

We are also *READY* to provide day-to-day quality-of-life services such as helping our patients look after and groom their feet at our new foot care clinics. This service is offered at all of our Wadena, Todd and Otter Tail county clinics.

From ReadyCare to rehab, surgery to specialty services, and everything in between, being *READY* to improve the health of our friends, neighbors, families and communities is our greatest mission.

So get *READY* to enjoy this edition of Healthy Times, and know that we look forward to serving you now and into the future. And get *READY* to have a great time this July 17 at our annual TCHC Block Party. We look forward to seeing you there.

Take care, everyone, and have a safe and enjoyable summer!

A new Medicare ID number is coming your way

Those with Medicare coverage will soon see a change to their ID number, if they haven't already.

Previously, your Social Security number served as your Medicare ID. Between April 2018 and April 2019, Medicare will remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards and issue a new number and card to each beneficiary. By issuing you a new number separate from Social Security, it will help to keep your information more secure and protect your identity.

Your new Medicare number will be used only for your Medicare coverage. The new card won't change your coverage or benefits. More information will be included with your new card.

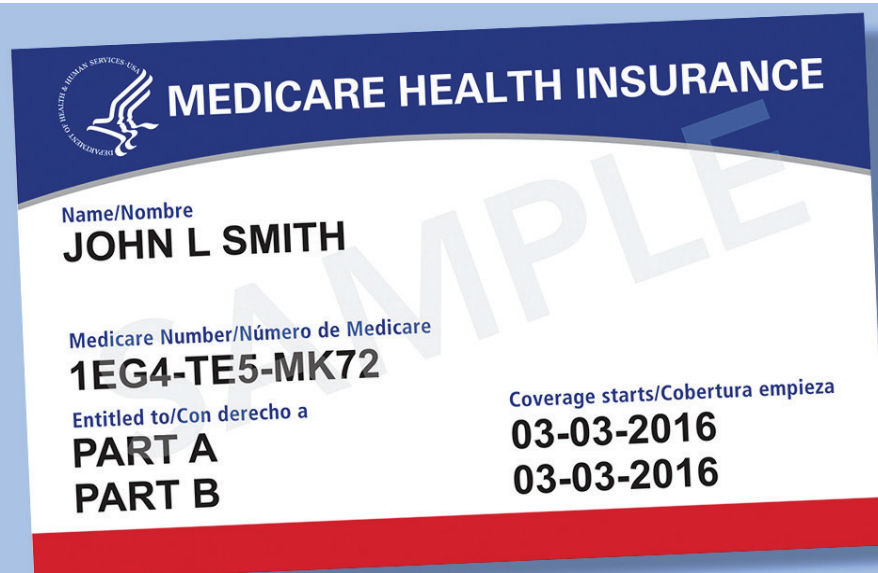
Medicare began sending out new cards by region at the beginning of April. Minnesotans should start to see their new cards around June or later.

If you are asked for your new number at a clinic visit but you haven't yet received your

new card, don't worry. Medicare will accept both your old and new number through Dec. 31, 2019.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR NEW CARD:

- Make sure your mailing address is up to date. To update your address, contact Social Security at ssa.gov/myaccount or 1-800-772-1213. Ensure that you open any mail coming from CMS or Medicare, as it could contain your new card or important information.
- Beware of scams. Medicare will never ask you to provide personal or private information regarding your new number and card. Be cautious if anyone contacts you about your new card.
- Be patient. Mailing everyone a new card will take some time. You might receive your card at a different time than your friends or neighbors.





Treat your feet

Feet take us everywhere we want to go. But if your feet are in rough shape or are causing you pain, navigating the world can be difficult.

That's why Tri-County Health Care introduced foot care clinics in May at each of its rural locations. These clinics give you a designated time devoted to foot care, creating ample time for you to spend with your provider at your regular checkup addressing other health care questions or concerns.

Specially trained licensed professionals will groom and clean your feet while monitoring their health. If they find an issue, they will refer you to your provider.

Dean and Diane Mickelson were the first patients to experience Tri-County Health Care's new foot care clinics. Their daughter saw an ad and encouraged them to sign up, not just for the health aspect but for some relaxation.

"Foot care is very important. The reason I'm here is I'm having some swelling and to get some advice," Dean said. "I'm enjoying it. At this point, I recommend it."

"He loves this kind of thing," Diane said of her husband. "It's important to look for health concerns. It's a great service, feels good, and

seniors need it." She noted that she would absolutely use the service again.

The services

At each clinic, you receive:

- Toenail trimming and filing
- Foot inspection
- Foot soak, cleaning and moisturizing massage
- Callus treatment

The tools

At your first clinic, you will receive a free foot care kit with all of the tools you need, to be used by only you.

Your kit contains:

- Basin
- Pumice stone
- Emery board (nail file)
- Lotion

*Please bring this kit with you to each TCHC foot care clinic you attend. A fee will be charged if you require additional kits.

Above: Dean Mickelson was one of the first patients to experience Tri-County Health Care's new foot care clinics.

At left: Kayla Januszewski is one of the nurses who underwent special training to provide this service at Tri-County Health Care's Wadena clinic.

Clinic Schedule

Cost: \$25 (Collected at time of service.)

Call your clinic directly or stop in person to make an appointment or check the schedule.

Wadena – 218-631-3510

Henning – 218-583-2953

Verndale – 218-445-5990

Ottertail – 218-367-6262

Bertha – 218-924-2250

Sebeka – 218-837-5333

For more information, go to: TCHC.org/education-and-resources/foot-care

Of willpower and wonders:

10-YEAR-OLD OVERCOMES THE ODDS WITH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Jacob and his brothers,
BentLee and Maverick.



Holding a fish for a photo. Playing in the snow. Assembling a Lego creation. These are all typical activities of a young boy, and yet, up until September of 2017, they were things that 10-year-old Jacob Cronk couldn't do.

Jacob has severe sensory issues, meaning he doesn't like to touch certain textures or be touched. He also has a multitude of diagnoses, including autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, mood dysregulation disorder and oppositional defiant disorder.

Jacob's parents, Tina and Phil, have been managing his sensory issues for as long as they can remember. "Anytime he would get anything on his hands, he would go into a major meltdown," Tina said. "His meltdowns went as far as throwing himself on the ground or head-butting the wall."

The problems became more evident when Jacob started preschool. Even the simplest tasks such as using scissors or eating lunch were nearly impossible.

There are very few foods he will eat, so most of his meals consist of a salad or sandwich.

His parents have since had to supplement his diet with nutritional drinks but are struggling to gain insurance coverage.

Coping as a parent

Tina and Phil recently enrolled Jacob at White Pine Academy/Leaf River Academy in Deer Creek, a school for autistic and special needs children. On top of regular schoolwork, the educators help the kids develop social, behavior and coping skills.

"I've been in denial over having to put him there," Tina admitted. "As a parent with a kid of special needs, putting him there makes you always think, 'I'm going to be looked at different. I'll be looked at as if I can't handle my child.' I feel like that all the time."

Those fears occasionally come true when Tina brings Jacob along on shopping errands. When he acts out, Tina becomes the target of stares and whispered words such as, "He just needs to be spanked," or "He just needs to be disciplined."



“Obviously, just because kids melt down doesn’t mean they’re not being disciplined,” Tina said. “Kids with special needs have meltdowns. But they don’t see the big picture. And I want to open my mouth so bad some days.”

Trying something new

Last year, during one of Jacob’s appointments at Tri-County Health Care’s behavioral health, Tina and Aaron Larson, M.D., developed a new plan to help Jacob’s sensory issues: occupational therapy (OT).

Jacob attends OT twice a week with Lora Foust, certified occupational therapist, one day on land and one day in the pool for aquatic therapy. Lora works with Jacob in a sensory-rich environment to help him adapt to various textures or movements. They also focus on hand-eye coordination and dabble with light weights in the gym.

“Lora has done wonders for him,” Tina said. “He’s had a couple bad meltdown incidents, and I thought she wouldn’t want him to come back or she’s not gonna want to work with him anymore. She doesn’t let that bother her. She always has him come back. She says, ‘You know what? It was a bad day. Everybody’s allowed to have bad days.’”

Lora’s treatment reaches far beyond their appointments at the rehab clinic. Each week, she creates goals that incorporate OT for Jacob to work toward at home. For instance, she challenged Jacob to clean his room twice a week for two weeks straight. As a reward, she treated him to a pizza party.

“That was something he looked forward to,” Tina said. “He made his goal. He worked so hard for that.”

A life changed for the better

Now more than seven months later, consistent OT has made all the difference in Jacob’s life and then some.

“From the time he was little, he would never ever even go near a fish, touch a fish, whatsoever.” Tears welled in Tina’s eyes. “Since he has started working with Lora, he will now touch them. He will go fishing. And that’s all he wants to do.”

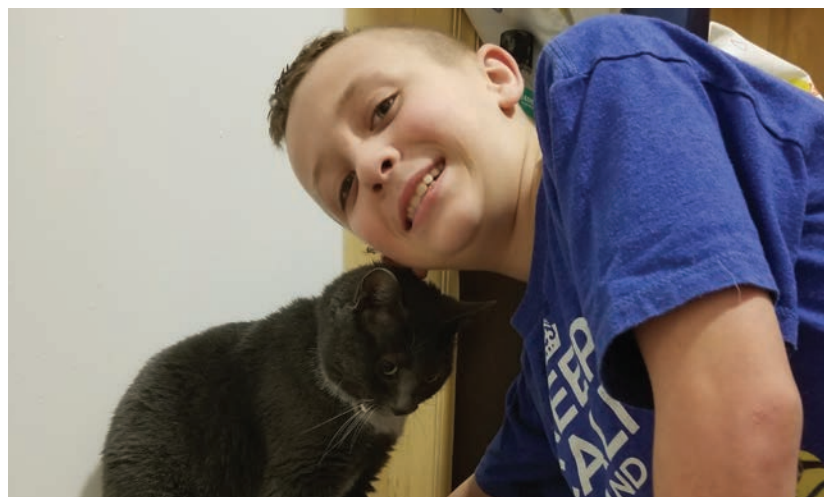
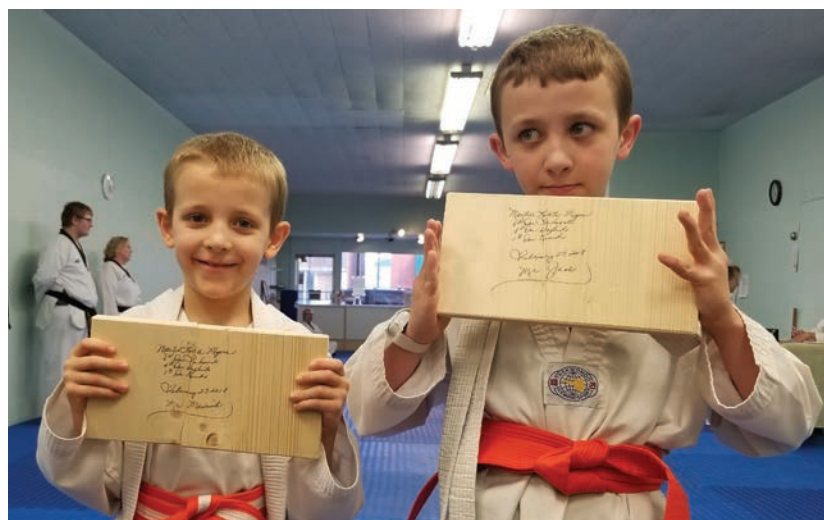
Jacob has also begun playing outside in the snow, building with Legos, and washing his own hair in the shower, activities that used to be far out of reach for him.

“He’s hit a lot of milestones since he started OT,” Tina said. “He has had more willpower to learn now than he ever has.”

To further build his behavioral skills, Lora recommended taekwondo at Mid-Minnesota Taekwondo in Wadena. The experience has done wonders for both him and his younger brother, Maverick, who joined with him. Jacob has learned self-respect, as well as how to treat adults and other children with respect.

The road going forward for Jacob will likely contain more setbacks and successes, but Tina is proud of how far her son has come.

“I would never change him for the world because he is made how he is,” Tina said. “He’s the sweetest kid ever. We all have our good days and we all have our bad. He’s just made how he is.”





A matter of life or death

The start of a new year is typically a time of eager anticipation and the promise of new beginnings. For Thomas and Tammy Williams, it was a time of terror and the very real possibility of loss.

Near the end of December, Thomas had a tonsillectomy to remove his tonsils and a septoplasty to straighten his nose for better airflow. The procedures went off without a hitch, and he was discharged on the 30th.

On the evening of Jan. 1, while recovering from surgery at his home near Henning, Thomas started to cough. Tammy believes that the force dislodged the healing scabs in his throat. He began bleeding severely and heaving up blood. Tammy immediately called 911.

The Henning ambulance picked them up and rushed toward Tri-County Health Care. The TCHC ambulance met them along the way. By the time they got to Wadena, Thomas was unresponsive with a dangerously low blood pressure. He entered hypovolemic shock as they pulled into the ambulance garage, having lost so much blood that his heart couldn't circulate enough to sustain him.

"Dr. Faith was working that night," Tammy recalled, "and he said it was a matter of life or death."

With experience as a registered nurse, Tammy knew the gravity of Thomas' condition. Her mind ran wild as she watched the staff pump Thomas with fluids and blood, hoping to stabilize him.

"I must have looked white because someone pushed up a chair behind me," she said. "They knew exactly what I needed. That's just a tiny example of all that they did for us."

As the team brought Thomas' blood pressure up, they called for a helicopter to bring him to St. Cloud for emergency surgery.

"It was surreal, but it wasn't as stressful as it could have been," Tammy said. "I was impressed with their calmness, quickness and professionalism."

Tammy couldn't ride with her husband in the helicopter, so it was imperative for her to see him off and say goodbye in case he didn't make it to his destination. Their two children, ages 18 and 24, and daughter-in-law were on their way to the hospital when they were held up by a train. By then, the helicopter had arrived and was ready to take Thomas away.

"Dr. Faith said they would wait for them," Tammy said. "He and the ED staff were so considerate of the whole situation. They waited for the kids to come and tell Thomas goodbye."

Thomas arrived in St. Cloud and was rushed to surgery to cauterize his wounds and stop the bleeding. The procedure was successful. He was discharged the next day and returned home with his wife and children. The remainder of his recovery went smoothly.

"When a situation like that happens, if someone wasn't quick enough or if the team didn't work, it could have been a different story," Tammy said. "(Without the EMS and ED staff,) Thomas would have been gone. It was the whole team working as a well-oiled machine. They are the whole package. We're so thankful."

"It was surreal, but it wasn't as stressful as it could have been. I was impressed with their calmness, quickness and professionalism."

Tammy Williams

Exciting additions to Tri Baby Beginnings

Water is an extraordinary substance. On one hand, it is a sustainer of all life on earth, but it can also be a catalyst for bringing new life into the world. Expectant mothers at Tri-County Health Care now have the option of delivering their baby in a tub filled with warm water.

“In the tub, the buoyancy of the water makes you feel a lot lighter and helps to relieve pressure in your body,” said Dawn Dahlgren-Roemmich, certified nurse midwife. “It’s an environment that helps many women feel calm, safe and relaxed.”

Mothers can choose to only use the tub for labor or when it comes time to push, or they can remain in the water for the entire birthing process.

Benefits:

- Increased relaxation
- Easier time coping with contractions
- Little to no need for pain medication
- Improved positioning for birthing the baby
- Slowed or stopped contractions in early labor
- Shorter labor
- Ability to get out and walk around
- Less need for forceps, vacuum or cesarean section
- Reduced chance of a serious tear or need for an episiotomy

How do I know it is safe for my baby?

As a mother, one of your first priorities is the safety of your child. When it comes to that safety, there are no known risks to you or to your baby during a water birth.

- Research shows no increase of infections in women or babies after labor or birth in water.
- The tubs are cleaned thoroughly before and after each birth.
- Your providers will monitor you and your baby closely while you are in the tub.

Will my baby breathe underwater?

Your baby has natural instincts that keep him or her from breathing until the right moment:

HORMONES: In the days leading up to labor, a baby’s breathing activity decreases dramatically because of hormones released by the placenta.

TEMPERATURE: When babies encounter cool air after birth, their bodies tell them to breathe. Because the water in the tub is kept close to body temperature, they never receive the signal to breathe until they are lifted out of the water.

DIVE REFLEX: Humans have a powerful dive reflex that maximizes their ability to hold their breath underwater. In a baby, that reflex is triggered immediately when it comes into contact with the water.

HYPOXIA: Babies are born in a state of acute hypoxia, meaning they are temporarily without oxygen. This prevents them from breathing prematurely.



Nitrous Oxide

Dawn recently introduced a new, gentle method of pain management to laboring mothers: nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

“The effects of pain relief are quick when you use nitrous oxide,” she said. “You take slow easy breaths into a mask that allows you to control how much and how often you use it. That’s the beauty of it.”

BENEFITS:

- The effects are immediate and powerful enough to help with painful contractions.
- The medication fades from the mom’s and baby’s systems within 10 seconds.
- There is no droopy, groggy feeling.
- Unlike with an epidural or intravenous medication, mothers can get up and move around.
- It is useful for those whose bodies react negatively to other medication.

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*Our patients are our priority,
and award-winning quality health
care is what they deserve.*



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Rex Studio Photography,
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policy, Tri-County Health Care is prohibited from discriminating on
the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. This
institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

POSTAL CUSTOMER

TCHC Block Party

Tuesday, July 17

Join us on the Wesley lawn
from 4 – 7 p.m. for this free
community event featuring:

- Food
- Emergency Vehicle Tours
- Kids' Games & Inflatables
- Entertainment & Music
- Splash out Stigma Duck Drop
- Plus Much More!

