

March 2017



Healthy Times

Solve acid reflux,
for good.

Introducing LINX[®] Procedure, a
permanent solution to acid reflux
offered right here at Tri-County.





Message from our President & CEO, Joel Beiswenger



People! Caring! Technology!

These are three key elements of the work we do at Tri-County Health Care as we strive to achieve our mission of “improving the health of the communities we serve.” In this edition of Healthy Times, we are sharing with you several stories of patients, and the people and technology that are helping to make their lives better.

Included is news about an exciting new procedure to treat the all too common condition of acid reflux that affects many of us. You will learn about Telestroke, a life-saving and life-enhancing technology used by physicians and staff in our emergency department to diagnose and treat stroke, and thereby help you avoid its disabling effects. You will also read about the great people involved in these efforts. We realize, of course, that the best technology is useless without having highly qualified people who know how to use it and are committed to ongoing training and research to allow it to do the most it can for you.

I am happy to say that TCHC is blessed with many talented individuals who perform this great work for you. But more than that, they make up a team that is committed to doing their best for you at every visit, every day. I am honored to be able to say that all of these people care deeply about their work and their calling to deliver the highest quality health care services. This is reflected in all of our stories. We are committed to assuring that this is what you will experience at each of your visits or interactions with Tri-County Health Care. Here's to you and your health! Take care and enjoy this edition of Healthy Times.

Questions about your health care insurance? *Let us help!*

“Understand your health insurance plan and ask LOTS of questions,” said Bill Stoderl, Patient Financial Services Manager at Tri-County Health Care. “We receive hundreds of phone calls each year from patients regarding their health care insurance. Our sole objective is to help patients leverage their insurance plans as much as possible and avoid having a patient find out that a hospital or doctor was out-of-network after they receive a bill. Health care can be extremely expensive and we want to help patients find the highest quality care at the lowest possible out-of-pocket cost.”

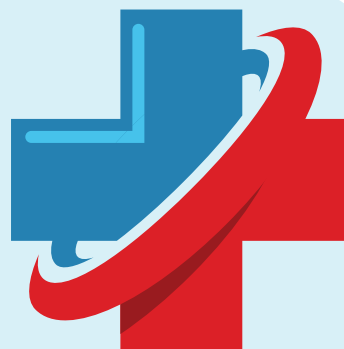
What does it mean to be “In-Network?”

Simply stated, this means that the doctor or facility providing your health care has a contract with your health insurance company. When you receive care at this facility, a portion of your costs will be covered by your insurance company.

What is a narrow network?

The size of the network (or the number of facilities and providers your insurance company works with) varies with each plan. Specifically, a narrow network has been defined by the industry as one that provides its enrollees with access to less than 70 percent of hospitals in a particular area. In some instances, a narrow network may be the only option available to consumers. In others, these plans appear attractive because of their lower premiums, however, consumers need to be aware of the restrictions associated with them and how they can potentially affect care and out-of-pocket costs.

The bottom line is don't be afraid to ask questions. The experts at Tri-County Health Care are here to provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions. If you have any questions about your insurance plan and the care you are receiving at Tri-County, please feel free to contact us at 632-8736.



Telestroke Care

Patient successfully treated using new technology

If you ever think you're having a health emergency, your first instinct may be to get help immediately at the closest hospital.

Not so for Diane Hansen of Clarissa, who experienced a stroke while driving near Pine Center with a friend.

Because of her long-standing devotion to and adoration of Tri-County Health Care (TCHC) in Wadena, she was adamant she should be taken there. They passed Brainerd. They passed Staples. Her only desire was to go to Wadena.

"Tri-County is where I have always done my doctoring," she said. "I have been with Dr. Davis for, I think I was his fourth or fifth patient. I just won't give him up," she laughed. "I said, 'You can't retire until I'm gone!'"

Hansen's symptoms came on suddenly, starting with a funny feeling in the left side of her face. Then her left hand fell off of the steering wheel, and her entire left side went numb.

Her friend reacted quickly, taking the wheel and honoring her request to go to TCHC.

ER personnel rushed out with a wheelchair to collect Hansen, all the while murmuring, "Just hold on, honey. We'll get you in there."

From that moment on, Hansen knew she was in a good place. She was safe.

Emergency Medicine Physician Dennis Faith initiated a video conference with Hansen and St. Cloud Hospital Stroke Center using TCHC's new Telestroke services.

Dr. Dennis Faith (right) works with staff from TCHC and St. Cloud Hospital's Stroke Center to implement Telestroke care at Tri-County Health Care in Wadena.



Diane Hansen (seated) thanks Tri-County emergency room staff who cared for her – Dr. Dennis Faith, Connie Nelson, RN and Kathy Meyer, RN.

Using video conferencing technology and real-time comprehensive patient information, a stroke neurologist from the Stroke Center can evaluate patients in other hospitals, view diagnostic scans, and recommend treatment.

Thanks to Telestroke, doctors determined Hansen was indeed afflicted by a stroke and administered clot-busting medications, which are often the first line of treatment for acute stroke. They must be administered within a four-and-a-half-hour window from the onset of symptoms for best results.

Following the Telestroke conference, Hansen was flown to St. Cloud for further treatment. To this day, however, she holds to the fact that it was TCHC that saved her life right from the start.

Hansen attended therapy at Knute Nelson Home Care in Sauk

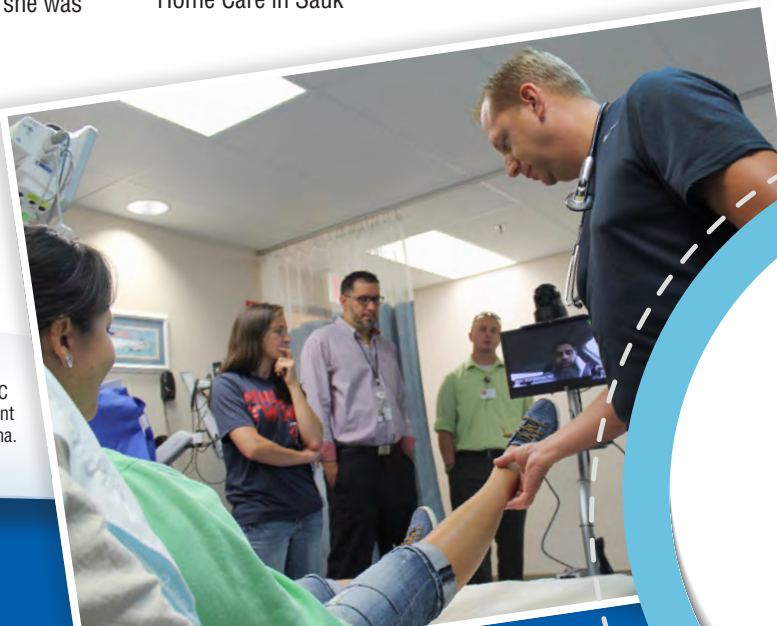
Centre and has since passed all tests and resumed driving.

"Future success in rural medicine is truly dependent on integrating modern technologies such as these," Dr. Faith said of Telestroke. "This technology clearly improves our ability to provide stroke care here at Tri-County, and in fact, has already proven invaluable with several of our patients."

At 68 years old, Hansen is grateful to be here and isn't suffering any long-lasting effects of her stroke, other than some hazy memories, which doctors said should return in time.

Hansen doesn't think she will ever run out of good things to say about TCHC.

"Everybody is so great around there," she said. "If you ever have any problems, go there."



"This technology clearly improves our ability to provide stroke care here at Tri-County, and in fact, has already proven invaluable with several of our patients."

Dr. Dennis Faith, TCHC
Emergency Medicine Physician



Dr. Kloss discusses LINX® procedure with patient Eric Wallace.

New procedure gives acid reflux sufferers a new life

Contrary to popular belief, reflux isn't a problem of acid production. Rather, reflux is caused by weak esophagus muscles that are supposed to act as a one-way valve, allowing food and liquid to pass down into the stomach. But in a patient with reflux, the weak muscles don't stop the stomach contents – acid and bile – from flowing back into the esophagus. Reflux medications reduce acid production in the stomach, but don't address the root cause or give sufferers complete relief. "I tried every medication under the sun," said Eric.

Resigned to living with reflux pain forever, Eric was excited when his physician, Dr. David Kloss, told him about Tri-County Health Care's new laparoscopic procedure to prevent acid reflux. Dr. Kloss is a board certified general surgeon specially trained to perform the surgery, and Tri-County Health Care is one of only nine facilities in Minnesota certified to offer it.

Called the LINX® Reflux Management System, the procedure uses a small, flexible ring of magnetic titanium beads that is implanted around the patient's esophagus just above the stomach. About the size of a quarter, this expandable ring's magnetic band is loose enough to allow food and liquids to pass normally into the stomach, but immediately closes after swallowing to restore the barrier and keep the stomach's contents where they belong.

Eric Wallace of Staples has suffered from acid reflux disease for almost as long as he can remember. "It started when I was a teenager," he explained. Now 47, Eric said the symptoms got worse as he got older. "I was often in a lot of pain, to the point where a piece of bread caused the reflux or I couldn't bend over to change a tire. At night, I would wake up gasping for air or aspirating on stomach acid."

His wife, Wendy, said the acid reflux affected the whole family. "Eric would get up and vomit during the night, which scared our kids because they didn't fully understand what was going on."

Officially diagnosed with Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), Eric is one of millions of Americans who suffer from acid reflux and experience symptoms such as heartburn, regurgitation, sore throat, coughing and chest pain. "Some people don't think acid reflux is a big deal, but it's really a miserable way to live," Eric said.

Hoarseness

Medications can only treat symptoms,

LINX works to eliminate them.

Shortness of breath

Cough

Heartburn

Difficulty swallowing

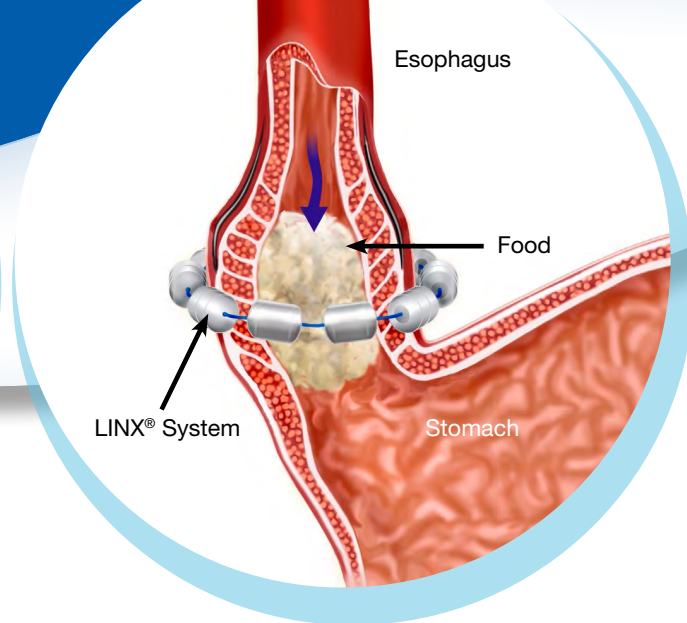
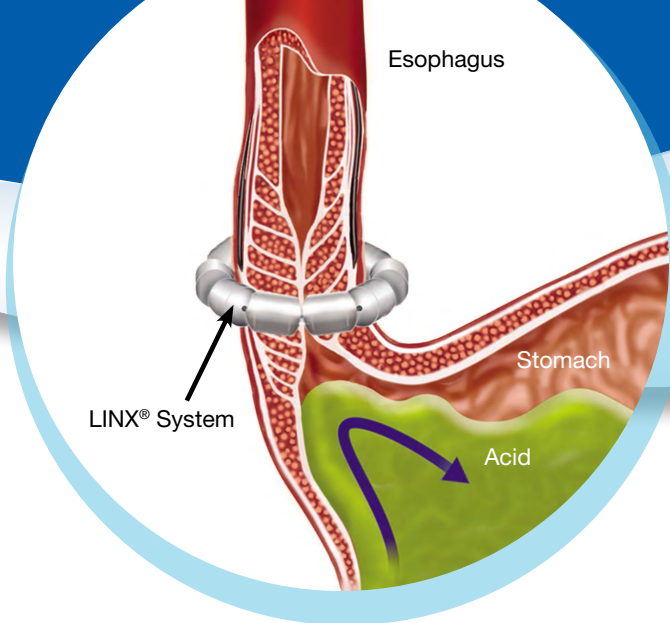
Chest pain

Regurgitation

Dental erosion and bad breath

Sore throat

Asthma



LINX is a small, flexible ring of magnets that opens to allow food and liquid down, then closes to prevent stomach contents from moving up.



Actual size. Actual benefits are immeasurable.

The surgery involves only a small incision, which means the patient experiences less scarring, minimal pain and the ability to be back to work in a few days. LINX® is typically done as an outpatient procedure.

Eric underwent testing to ensure he was a good candidate for the surgery and that he understood what it would entail. Once the procedure was completed, he was amazed at his recovery. "I had surgery in the morning and left the hospital around 4 p.m. The pain from the incision was minimal."

And he noticed improvements immediately. "That night at dinner, I didn't have any acid reflux. Over the next few weeks I slowly weaned off my reflux medication. Now, I have to eat more slowly, take smaller bites and chew my food really well. But I actually enjoy the food I'm eating!"

Eric was back to work full-time within two weeks, and in the months following the surgery he hasn't experienced one episode of reflux. The difference has been life changing. "I can eat what I want, drink what I want, and I don't wake up in the middle of the night. It's like being freed of chains. It's literally like chains dropping off of me."

Wendy noted that the whole family has more freedom now. "Before surgery, we didn't do as much as we could because of how things affected Eric," she said. "Reflux took control of us. Now, he can bend over and pick up his socks and do all the day-to-day things without having horrible acid in his throat."

Eric is grateful to Dr. Kloss and Tri-County Health Care for providing a solution to a condition he thought he'd have to live with forever. "Dr. Kloss is awesome," said Eric. "After surgery, he called me on his own time to check up on me and explain everything. For other people I know who have reflux, I tell them 'You have to go to this guy!'"

*"I can eat what I want,
drink what I want, and I don't wake up
in the middle of the night. It's like being freed of
chains. It's literally like chains dropping off of me."*

Eric Wallace, TCHC Patient

For more about the LINX® procedure, go to TCHC.org.

To determine whether LINX® might be a solution for you, schedule an appointment with your primary health provider to discuss your specific condition and options.



Donate Life: *Leaving a lasting legacy*

In July 2009 Tom and Kim Aagard received a sympathy letter in the mail from LifeSource, a non-profit organization focusing on organ, eye and tissue donation, with condolences on their son Tommy's passing. Included in the letter were the details about the transplant recipients who received a second chance of life because of Tommy's generous gift. In the list of recipients was a Minnesota man. "A 59-year-old man received the gift of Thomas's heart. This recipient is married, lives in Minnesota and is a father," the letter read.

Stephanie Larson, a young mother of two, has worked at Tri-County Health Care since 2003. After having a cardiac arrest in October 2011, at the age of 32 she was able to recover and receive a new heart in September 2012. Because of her personal experience, she volunteers to raise awareness in the Wadena area about organ and tissue donation. She suggested a LifeSource exhibit at TCHC's

February Festival of Health. She asked her friend Bill Carlson, of Minnetonka, to help her with the booth. She had met Bill when she was staying in the hospital at the University of Minnesota ICU after her transplant. They hit it off immediately. Stephanie said, "He came in often to check in to give me support. He was a constant for me during my time and my transplant." Bill had lain in the exact bed in Room 3503 back in 2009 as Stephanie did in 2012 – when he received his own heart transplant.

Kim was working at the 2014 February Festival of Health and she approached the LifeSource booth. Kim spotted a sign that read "My Donor" with a photo of her son Tommy underneath. Looking back on that moment, Kim describes it as surreal. There, standing behind the table, was Bill.

Kim said, "I picked up the photo and looked at Bill and said, 'This is a photo of my son Tommy.'" Bill recalled that he was so nervous that he didn't know how to respond to Kim. "It was like all of a sudden you're meeting a sister that you never had," he said.

Because of the impact of meeting Kim, Bill couldn't finish working at the event and Stephanie stepped in for him.

"Live your life everyday like your donor is watching. Treat this life with the utmost respect to the gift that was given to you by them. I will thank Tommy every day of my life."

Bill Carlson, LifeSource
Heart Transplant Recipient

He called his wife immediately and told her, “I just met Tommy’s mom.’ My wife could tell by my voice that I was very emotional about it, and she asked if I’d be able to drive back home to Minnetonka.”

Meanwhile, Kim had left the event to call her husband and tell him what had happened. She asked if Tom wanted to come to the event and meet Bill. At first Tom was unsure, and the two hung up. But less than 10 minutes later Kim’s phone rang and Tom said, “It’s meant to be. I’m on my way to meet you both.”

For the next couple of hours, the three sat and talked.

Today, as Kim, Bill and Stephanie sit together reciting their fate-filled story filled with tears and smiles, Bill explains a saying they recite in his weekly support group. “Live your life everyday like your donor is watching. Treat this life with the utmost respect to the gift that was given to you by them.’ I will thank Tommy every day of my life.”

INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME AN ORGAN DONOR:

- Register at the DMV or online:
<https://www.dmv.org/mn-minnesota/organ-donor.php>
- Website:
<https://www.donatelifemidwest.org/mn/>

DONATE LIFE FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY:

A flag-raising ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 5 at 9 a.m. All donor families, transplant recipients, friends and the public are invited to gather outside the Emergency Room entrance of Tri-County Health Care, near the flag pole.

Check TCHC.org for more details.



Kevin enjoys walks with his dogs again, thanks to orthopedic surgery done right here at Tri-County Health Care.

A hip, knee, ankle...

Whatever your need, Tri-County has the expertise and providers to get you back in the game, back to work and back to life.

With three visiting orthopedic surgeons, Tri-County Health Care offers patients the flexibility and professional care they need, without the burden of long-distance travel.

Kevin Barnes works for the Bertha-Hewitt School District as a janitor. A string of injuries from weight lifting and skiing left him suffering with shoulder and knee pain, and he was seeking a skilled orthopedic surgeon to help. But because Kevin is legally blind and can’t drive, he needed to arrange transportation for any medical appointments and surgeries. He said he chose Tri-County because “its location was most convenient for me. I’ve now had a couple surgeries there and I always have good experiences.” Kevin explained that orthopedic surgeon Dr. Paul Thompson was his go-to choice, “Dr. Thompson is good at what he does, thorough, and truly cares about his patients. I’ve been to other places where the surgeon was good, but wasn’t a people person. That part matters to me as a patient.” Kevin was able to do his post-surgical rehab in Wadena and returned to enjoying work and regular life shortly thereafter.

To learn more about our orthopedic offerings, visit:
<http://www.tchc.org/what-we-offer/orthopedics>



415 Jefferson Street North, Wadena, MN 56482

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 136
WADENA, MN 56482

218-631-3510 • TCHC.org

Joint Commission-accredited,
award-winning hospital



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

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Photography by:
Rex McDonald Studio,
and Tri-County Staff

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture 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.

Men's Night Out 2017



Featuring: Adam Thielen

Minnesota Vikings Wide Receiver

Detroit Lakes native, father and emerging star for the Minnesota Vikings, Adam has found success at every level of his athletic career. As a multi-sport athlete in high school, a stand-out wide receiver for the Minnesota State University-Mankato football team, and now a playmaker on offense for the Minnesota Vikings, Adam finished the season leading the team in reception yards and was third in total receptions.

Join us as Adam shares his story from his upbringing in Detroit Lakes to his current role as an NFL wide receiver.

Grand Prize... Sign up that evening for your chance to be one of 15 people chosen for an exclusive meet-and-greet held directly after Adam's speech! Winners get a free autographed football and a photo with Adam.

Sunday, April 2

5 – 8 p.m. WDC Middle/High School
600 Colfax Ave. SW, Wadena, MN

5 – 6:30 p.m. Health Screenings | Educational Booths | Light Meal

6:30 – 8 p.m. Keynote with Adam Thielen & Provider Panel

**Date &
Location**

NO PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED



Sponsored by: Tri-County Health Care, TCHC Foundation, TCHC Auxiliary TCHC.org