

FALL 2025

HEALTHY*TIMES*

Cancer Center Open

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A new era in care

Joel Beiswenger, President and CEO

“ Now more than ever, we must come together to protect access to quality care close to home. ”

JOEL BEISWENGER



As summer draws to a close, many great new things are on the horizon for Astera Health. We just opened our brand-new Cancer Center! In partnership with CentraCare, this center helps people get the care they need close to home. It's filled with the latest technology in radiation oncology and an incredible staff to help our patients on their cancer care journey. We're so proud to bring this to our community.

You'll also read about some great things we've done together – like the success of our Foundation, the art beautifying the halls and exam rooms of our new cancer center. We are providing some important information about MyChart and a recent event hosted by Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN.

As we celebrate our many successes, it is also important to recognize that many significant challenges lie ahead for healthcare providers. There are multiple factors creating financial challenges for hospitals but will impact rural

hospitals the most. There are many unknowns associated with inflation related to potential tariffs on medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and equipment.

Additionally, future impacts to Medicaid coverage put Astera Health in a very awkward position. Our health system serves one of the poorest regions in Minnesota. A reduction in Medicaid will create financial struggles for our most vulnerable patients but also affect access to care for everyone. We all realize that rural healthcare organizations are woven into the fabric of our communities, both culturally and economically, yet our stability is at risk.

Now more than ever, we must come together to protect access to quality care close to home. By raising your voice, you can help ensure that policymakers understand the vital role rural healthcare plays in the health and well-being of our families, neighbors, and communities.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony! On Tuesday, July 8, we celebrated what's possible when dedication, collaboration, and vision come together. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our staff, project partners, and community supporters, we've opened the doors to much-needed, high-level cancer care right here in our region. Our first patients were seen Monday, July 14. **Take a virtual tour here!** →



“They’re already walking in with a specific mindset; my goal is to remove them from that mindset and bring them into my world.”

LREZ, ARTIST



Adding Color to Cancer Care

Art has the incredible power to inspire healing and hope. A cancer diagnosis, and the treatments that follow, can bring a wave of uncertainty, fear, and emotional weight that’s difficult to put into words. The beauty of art goes a long way in alleviating the anxiety that comes with cancer treatment; that is why art is such a powerful fixture in the construction of the new Astera Health/CentraCare - Coborn Cancer Center. In addition to dozens of canvas photos submitted by Astera Health staff, a local artist, known for his beautiful still-life paintings and landscapes, was approached to create two special pieces. The hope is that adding color to cancer care will make the journey a little easier for patients.

Lrez

Jay, who goes by the artist’s name, Lrez, contributed two pieces, *The Fearless Funambulist* and *Choppy Waters*.

Lrez previously worked in the residential construction industry, with art only being his hobby. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he found himself in a unique scenario, like so many others, and decided to pursue art as a full-time endeavor. According to Lrez, some of his best work was completed during the pandemic.

The artist resides in Perham, Minnesota, with his wife, Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN. They recently celebrated the birth of their first child, Alexander. Lrez explained that the move to rural Minnesota impacted his work heavily. Being surrounded by lush greenery is a constant motivator to add vibrant colors to his artwork.

The process of adding color to cancer care

The paintings being displayed in the cancer center were a labor of love completed over the span of eight months. Lrez usually starts with a conceptualization and drafting phase. After sketches, he adds a base layer of acrylic, then he adds more layers of oil paint until the image takes shape. This process is time-intensive because he must wait for every layer to dry before adding more.

Meditating through art

“It’s different from putting it into a gallery for everyone to see,” said Lrez while discussing the impact of his work within the facility. The nature of the cancer center had a large impact on the color

choices, composition, and subject matter within his artwork. He knew that each painting should be made of light and bright colors that accentuate rich scenes of movement and detail. The true goal was always to take patients away from cancer for just a moment and give them the chance to focus on something else. The paintings are like a visual treasure hunt where a patient can always find something new.

To learn more, please visit: asterahealth.org/cancercenter.



The Fearless Funambulist

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” he thinks as he steps out on the line, unnoticed by most, regarded by few. Creeks run, fruit gets sold, cafés open, dancers’ feet trace the earth. “Let my feet be filled with joy, and hope too” he remembers, moving forward with a kick of whimsy, believing.

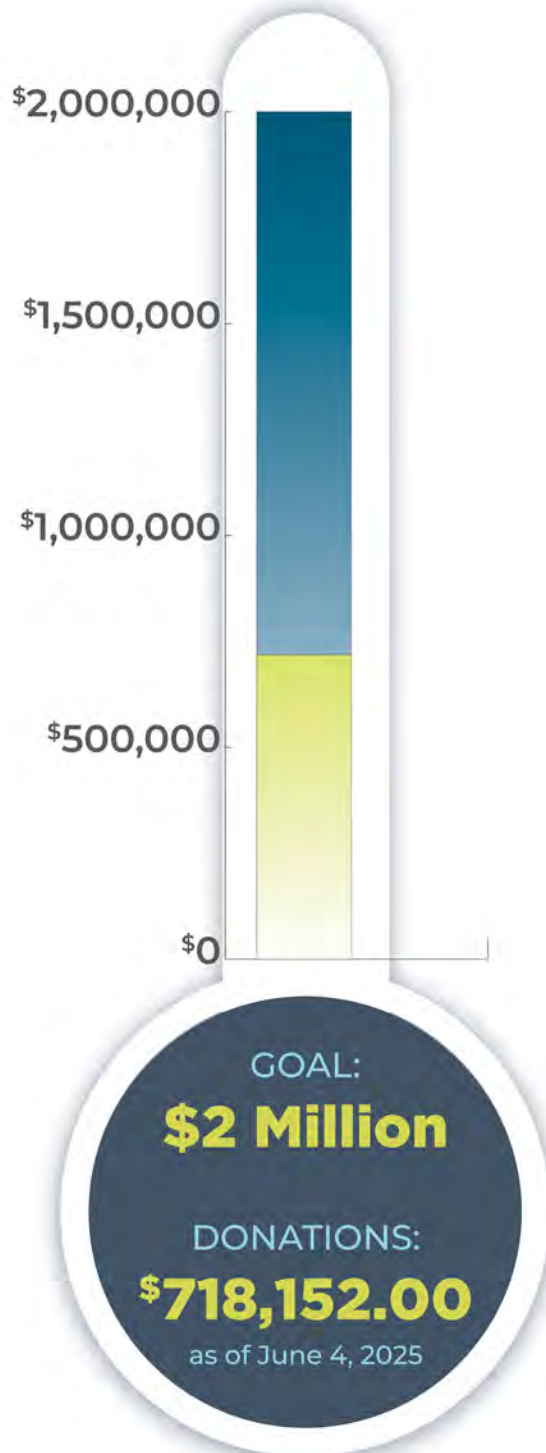
Choppy Waters

We sail the boat we’ve been given, as well as the one we’ve made. Below, the surf roils and dazzles. Above, Hope hangs by many threads. Suspended, every line of support matters. Each tree a potential anchor.



Lrez’s artwork can be viewed on his website, lrezart.com. He also has an Instagram account: [artlrez](https://www.instagram.com/artlrez). Feel free to contact the artist via email at lrez@lrezart.com.

2024 Year in Review



This past year was full of kindness, teamwork, and generosity at the Astera Health Foundation. With the help of our wonderful donors, amazing volunteers, and strong community, we raised \$388,647 to support health programs, patients, and families in our area, a significant increase from our 2023 total of \$316,797.

In 2024, 437 people donated to help others. Many gave again this year, with 64 percent of our past donors returning to show their continued support. That's a sign that people believe in the work we're doing. Our Celestial Givers, who are employees of Astera Health, contributed over \$38,680 to the Foundation as well as their time and talent at our various events.

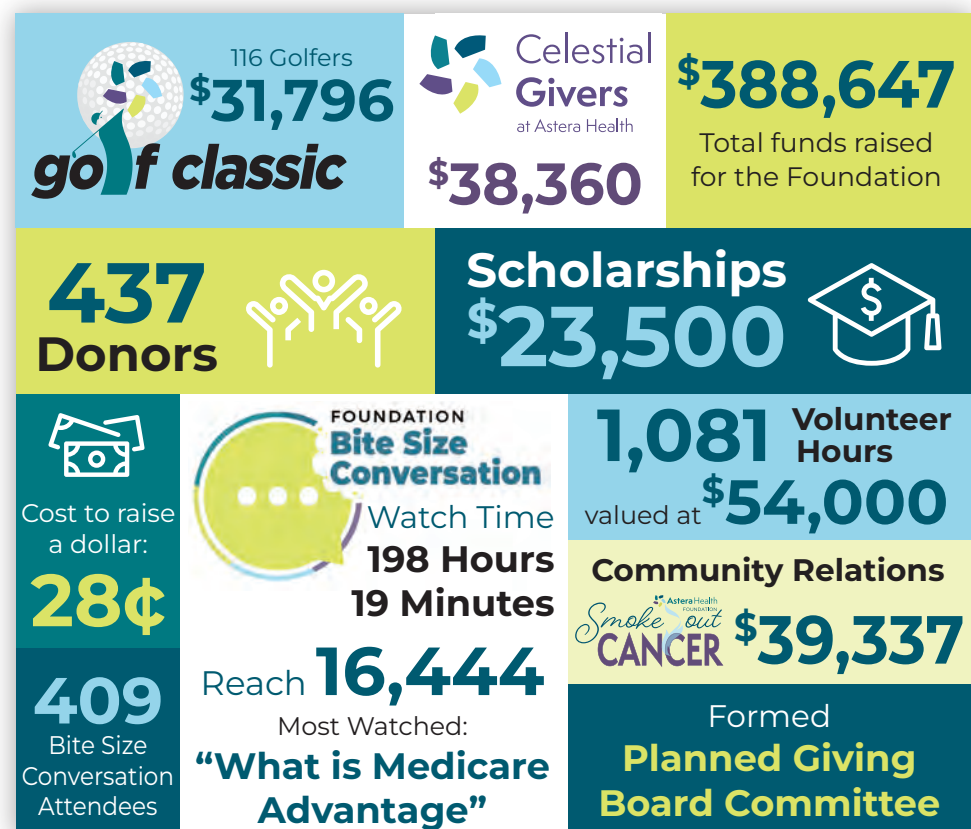
Our Golf Classic brought together 116 golfers, and their fun day on the green helped raise over \$31,000. These events showed that helping others can be both meaningful and fun.

The Foundation also helped students with big dreams. We awarded \$23,500 in scholarships to students pursuing careers in healthcare. This helps make sure our community has caring nurses, doctors, and healthcare workers in the future.

Volunteers were also a part of our success. Our dedicated team of volunteers gave their time in the hospital, clinics, events, and throughout the community. They gave over 1,000 hours of their time to support the Foundation and its goals.

A fundraising goal of \$2 million has been established for the cancer center, and we are working hard to reach that milestone by the end of 2026.

We are full of hope and excitement. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the Astera Health Foundation. Your kindness helps people heal, learn, and feel cared for.



A Department of Astera Health



From left: Shelly Gompf, Chief Operating Officer/VP of HR; Kim Aagard, Chief Financial Officer; Joel Beiswenger, President and CEO; Allan Lynk, donor; Julie Meyer, MD; Kim Beiswenger, Foundation Lead; Tom Pint, Chief Nursing Officer.

Foundation receives piano donation, calls for volunteers

The Astera Health Foundation was gifted a baby grand piano from Allan Lynk. As a hospice volunteer, he has noticed how music can be very therapeutic, and wanted to ensure that Astera Health has the tools for a music therapy program where volunteers can come in and play in the new Astera Health/CentraCare - Coborn Cancer Center as well as our main lobby.

"Music can help heal by calming the mind and lifting the spirit. The brain naturally responds to sound and rhythm, and music can bring comfort and peace during difficult times. We are grateful for this donation and all the generosity from our community for our new cancer center," said Kim Beiswenger, who leads the Foundation. She has led the efforts to raise nearly \$1 million toward the \$2 million goal to support cancer care programs.

Astera Health is looking for people who can play the piano at the cancer center. If you would like to help, please call Kim Beiswenger at 218-631-7499 or use the QR below to apply.

Interested in volunteering?

Scan the code for more information and opportunities or call Kim at 218-631-7499



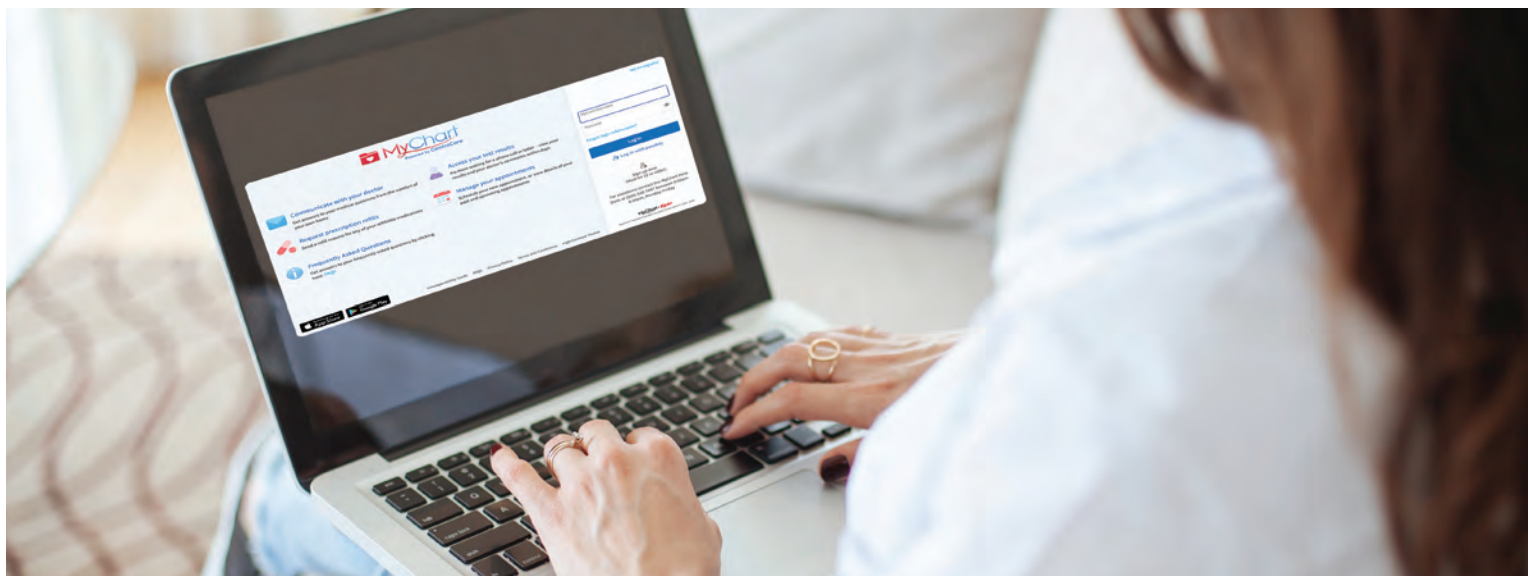
Volunteering is a great way to help others and feel good doing it. At Astera Health, volunteers are an important part of the team. They help with events and support patients in many ways.

The Astera Health Foundation is always looking for people who want to make a difference. Volunteering can help you feel more connected, meet new friends, and learn useful skills. It can even improve your health by lowering stress and boosting your mood.

Astera Health makes it easy to volunteer with flexible schedules that can fit your life. If you're a student, volunteering is a great way to gain experience in a hospital and even earn school credit.



Volunteering enriches both patients and volunteers. It fosters purpose, friendships, and skill development while also reducing stress, lowering depression risk, and boosting well-being.



How to use MyChart at Astera Health

Managing your health is easier with MyChart, Astera Health's secure online tool that connects you to your medical information anytime, anywhere. Whether you're scheduling appointments, checking test results, or messaging your provider, MyChart puts your health at your fingertips. Here's how to get started and make the most of it.

Step 1: Sign Up for MyChart

The easiest way to enroll is by asking your provider or a member of your care team. They'll send you a personalized link to set up your account.

Step 2: Log In Securely

Once registered, access MyChart via a computer, tablet, or smartphone with an internet connection. You'll need a unique username and password. For added security, MyChart now uses two-factor authentication.

Step 3: Explore Key Features

After logging in, you can:

- **Join video visits using MyChart.**
- **Message your provider or nurse securely.**
- **Track your health by logging daily readings like weight or blood pressure.**
- **View test results, immunizations, allergies, and medications.**
- **Download visit summaries and share your medical record with outside providers.**
- **Pay medical bills and set preferences for electronic statements.**

Still have questions about MyChart?

For non-medical questions about MyChart, email mychart@asterahealth.org (include your name and date of birth) or call 218-631-5220.

Online Scheduling

Online scheduling is now available! No phone calls or extra steps, simply log in to MyChart and select an available time to meet with your provider.

The option to schedule online is also available on our website, asterahealth.org. Navigate to the provider of your choice and select your appointment type. Whether you have been to Astera Health before or are new to the area, anyone can schedule appointments online.

Some specialists require a referral and will not display the option to schedule online.

eCheck-in

Save time with an eCheck-in. MyChart lets users update important information before an appointment. This makes appointments easier and quicker. This check-in covers:

- **Demographic changes**
- **Current medications**
- **Allergies**
- **Health issues**
- **Questionnaires**
- **Photo ID**
- **Yearly consent**

MyChart questions are designed to gather specific medical information prior to an appointment. Filling out the questionnaire ahead of time makes for a less stressful appointment and helps your care team understand you and your health needs before your appointment.



Aster Health

SheMatters

with Dr. Hala Madi



On August 14, women gathered at The Nest in Perham for “She Matters,” a special event led by Dr. Hala Madi, an OB/GYN at Aster Health. The event gave women a chance to learn about their health in a welcoming space. Dr. Madi talked about topics like birth control and menopause, answered questions, and encouraged women to feel confident and take care of their health.

Birth Control and Pregnancy Care

Dr. Madi talked about how she supports women during pregnancy, whether it's low-risk or high-risk. She said even easy pregnancies can result in severe tears or an emergency C-section, so it's good to have an OB/GYN by your side. Additionally, she discussed how her services compliment and coexist with the offerings of the other obstetrics providers.

She also addressed different types of birth control and how each one works, including:

- **Birth control pills, patches, rings**
- **IUDs and implants (long-lasting and easy to use)**
- **Permanent surgical options like sterilization**

Pap Tests & Colposcopy

A Pap test checks cells from the cervix to find any problems. If something looks unusual, Dr. Madi may do a colposcopy—a quick procedure that uses a special tool to look closely at the cervix and catch issues early.

Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Dr. Madi explained pelvic organ prolapse, which happens when organs like the bladder, uterus, or rectum slip out of place and push on the vagina. This can cause:

- **Pressure or bulging**
- **Trouble with peeing or bowel movements**
- **Pain during sex and general pelvic pain**

The good news is that these problems can often be treated with exercises, medicine, or simple surgeries.

Pelvic Pain & Heavy Periods

Many women deal with problems like ovarian cysts and issues that cause pain and heavy menstrual bleeding. These issues can be addressed and relieved. Dr. Madi discussed medicine and surgery options, like:

- **Ablation:** a procedure where the lining of the uterus is burned to reduce or stop heavy bleeding
- **Laparoscopic surgery:** This involves very small cuts used to operate inside the abdomen. This is done to remove masses or to perform a hysterectomy.

Menopause

A major topic of interest was menopause. Menopause is when the female body goes through menstrual and hormonal changes at the end of a woman's reproductive years. She said women don't need to “wait it out” and that there are treatments that help with the many symptoms of menopause even before periods stop completely:

- **Hot flashes and night sweats**
- **Dryness**
- **Sleep and sex drive**
- **Bone health**

Dr. Madi encourages women not to fear menopause. It is simply one more phase in being a woman. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is an option for helping with many of the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause. She also discussed non-hormonal options.

Infertility

Dr. Madi helps couples who are trying to have a baby. She uses special tests and medicines that help with ovulation. She also offers IUI (intrauterine insemination), where sperm is placed directly into the uterus during ovulation to increase the chances of pregnancy.

Benefits of IUI:

- **Less invasive than IVF**
- **Lower cost**
- **No referral required**
- **Can be combined with ovulation-inducing medications**

Working with Dr. Madi

Dr. Madi helps women understand their bodies, ask important questions, and explore the care available to them. If you missed the event, she is now accepting new patients at Aster Health—supporting you at every stage of life, because YOU matter. Scan the code to schedule your appointment.





Upcoming Events *Mark your calendars!*

Bite Size Conversation – Talk about Incontinence

Thursday, Sept. 10, 5:30 p.m. at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena

Foundation Annual Fundraiser – Brunch at Tiffany's

Saturday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena

Pink Flannel and Fizz

Friday, Oct. 3, 5 p.m. at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena

Bite Size Conversation – Medicare Matinee Q & A

Thursday, Oct. 9, 2 p.m. at Cozy Theatre, Wadena

Bite Size Conversation – The Weight of Worry

Monday, Nov. 17, Noon at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena

Holiday Jingle and Mingle

Thursday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena

Bite Size Conversation – Be Cyber Smart

Monday, Dec. 15, Noon at Astera Health Main Campus, Wadena



For updates and additional events, visit: asterahealth.org/events