

FALL 2026

HEALTHY*TIMES*



Stacy's Story

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A Message from Interim CEO Mike Schramm

“ I have had the opportunity to serve rural hospitals and healthcare systems across Minnesota for more than 25 years. ”



MIKE SCHRAMM,
INTERIM CEO

It is a privilege to introduce myself as the Interim Chief Executive Officer of Astera Health. Since joining the organization on July 6, I have already experienced the warmth, compassion, and dedication that make Astera Health such a special place.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to serve rural hospitals and healthcare systems across Minnesota for more than 25 years. From provider recruitment and strategic planning to expanding services and strengthening financial stability, my focus has always been the same: ensuring people have access to high-quality healthcare close to home.

What drew me to Astera Health is the organization's strong reputation for exceptional patient care and its deep commitment to the communities it serves. I know that trust is earned, and I look forward to building relationships with our patients, employees, volunteers, providers, community partners, and local leaders over the coming months.

As the Board of Directors conducts its search for the next permanent CEO, my role is to provide leadership, stability, and support for our team while ensuring we continue

delivering the compassionate, high-quality care our communities expect and deserve.

In this issue of Healthy Times, you will find a heartwarming story about Stacy, who shares her battle with alcohol abuse and the caring providers who have supported her along the way. You will also find guidelines about measles vaccines as we see more measles cases occurring in our region. Our annual report from our Foundation is on page 3, showing the generosity of our community and benefits to our patients and staff. Page 7 shares how some area athletes made comebacks from injuries with the help of our athletic training program.

We recently celebrated one year of service in our new cancer center; you can see pictures below of our celebration of donors who helped make this all possible.

Thank you for the warm welcome I have already received. I look forward to meeting many of you in the weeks and months ahead and learning more about the people and communities that make Astera Health such an important a vital part of this region.

Thank you for placing your trust in Astera Health.



A Department of Astera Health

Tuesday, July 14 was a special evening celebrating the one-year anniversary of our Cancer Center — a milestone made possible through the generous support of our many donors. Guests enjoyed refreshments, tours of the Cancer Center by the staff, and the unveiling of our new donor recognition displays.



2025 Year in Review



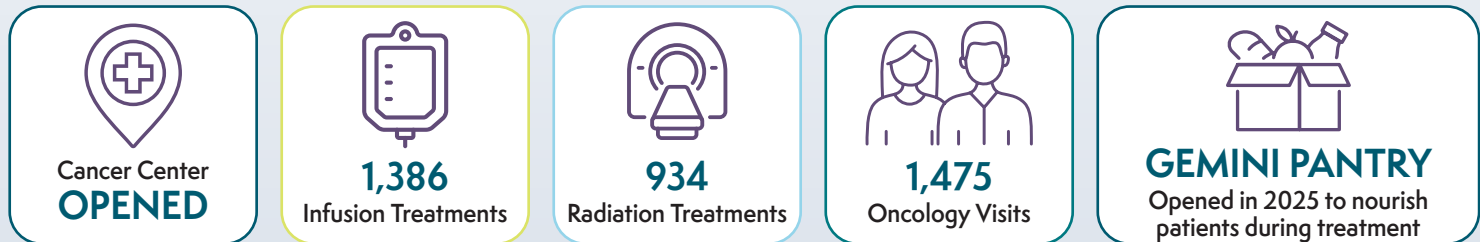
Together, Our Community Brought Cancer Care Closer to Home



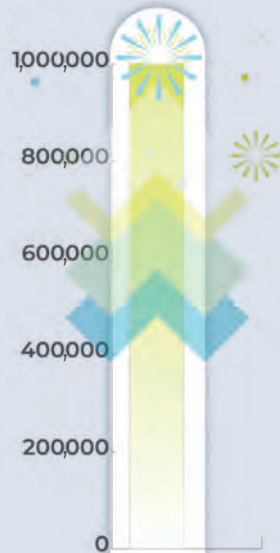
Because of the generosity of our donors and community, the Astera Health/CentraCare Coborn Cancer Center brought more than advanced cancer care to our region. It gave patients less time on the road, more time with loved ones, and more moments where healing happens—close to home.

Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of donors, volunteers, businesses, employees, foundations, and community partners, the Foundation reached its first \$1 million milestone in support of the Cancer Center.

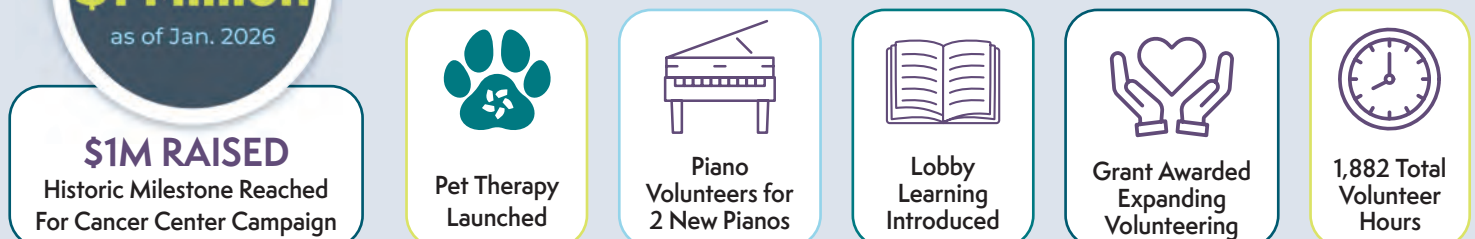
What Our Community Made Possible



Community Impact



Expanding Care



\$1M RAISED
Historic Milestone Reached
For Cancer Center Campaign



Pictured with her care team (L-R):
Ryan Scott, DO; Jill Wilkens, PA-C;
Stacy Westman; Traci Jones, APRN, PMHNP

A Second Chance: Stacy's Story

Stacy Westman sat in her parents' basement, alone. For weeks, she had been drinking and barely eating. The days blurred together. The nights felt even darker. She didn't see a way out.

"I truly believed my life was over," Stacy said.

That night in 2022, she made a choice. She told her dad she was either going to end her life—or alcohol would do it for her.

He didn't wait. He took her to the Emergency Room at Astera Health.

Stacy never thought alcohol would take over her life. She was a mom, friend, daughter, sister, caregiver, and someone others depended on. But over time, stress, pain, and past trauma built up. What started as a way to relax slowly became something she could not control and a daily need to fill the emptiness and hurt.

"I didn't wake up one day and decide to become an alcoholic," she said. "It just happened over time. It consumes you faster than you realize."

In the Emergency Room, Stacy met Dr. Ryan Scott. "He didn't treat me like 'just another drunk,'" Stacy said. "He treated me like a person. He listened to me. He truly cared about who I was and wanted to help me get better."

Dr. Scott says the most important part of recovery is when a person decides they are ready for change. "In Stacy's case, she wanted to make a change," he said. "It has to come from the person—it can't come from me or the ER team."

He says the Emergency Room often sees people during some of

the hardest moments of their lives. Many patients are scared, embarrassed, or unsure how to ask for help.

"There are many people in our area suffering with addiction," Dr. Scott said. "Stacy owned it and still owns it today. She needed to know there are good humans on the other side of addiction."

Dr. Scott believes Stacy's strength and commitment are what made recovery possible. "Stacy is a wonderful soul and a great example for others," he said.

Stacy's journey continued in Family Medicine with physician assistant, Jill Wilkens, her primary care provider. Jill says family medicine is about caring for the whole person—not just a diagnosis. "We are your teammate for life," Jill said. "We help coordinate care, provide support, and make sure we care for the entire person." Having those honest and open conversations with your primary care provider is the first step in allowing them to be a trusted partner.

Jill says she is most proud that once Stacy decided she was ready to get sober, she stayed committed to recovery. "That is a hard road," Jill said. "Many people may fall off the wagon, but Stacy kept going and made it happen for herself."

Stacy also began working with Traci Jones, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. Traci explains that many people who go through trauma turn to unhealthy ways to cope, like alcohol. At the same time, working through trauma and staying sober can feel overwhelming. "It can feel like a lot," Traci said. "That's why support matters—both from the community and from professionals."

"If you are struggling, please reach out. This is a safe place. They will help you. Everyone matters and you are enough."

STACY WESTMAN, PATIENT

Traci also wants people to know that recovery is not perfect. “Relapses can happen,” she said. “That does not mean someone has failed.”

With the support of her care team, Stacy began to heal—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

She will be four years sober in October.

She now spends her time helping others who are struggling. She shares her story so people know they are not alone—and that change is possible.

“Even small steps forward matter,” Traci said. “Not giving up is progress.”

Stacy believes Astera Health saved her life—not because someone “fixed” her, but because a team of caring people supported her when she was ready to change.

“If you are struggling, please reach out,” she said. “This is a safe place. They will help you. Everyone matters and you are enough.”



Stacy, now four years sober, with her sons Addison and Tristan



Resources for Alcohol Addiction Support and Recovery

Recovery looks different for each person. Some people benefit from counseling or medical care. Others find support through peer groups, online meetings, or community programs. The important thing is knowing you are not alone — and help is available. Our friends at Wadena County Public Health provided the following resources.

Alcohol Abuse Resources

- **Alcoholics Anonymous**
[aa.org](https://www.aa.org)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
<https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/learn/alcohol>
- **CDC – Alcohol Use**
<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/index.html>
- **National Institutes on Aging – Alcohol Misuse**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alcohol-misuse-or-alcohol-use-disorder>
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**
<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>
- **Minnesota Recovery Connection provides peer support, online recovery groups, and recovery resources for Minnesotans**
minnesotarecovery.org
- **The Minnesota Department of Human Services offers statewide recovery support information and treatment resources**
mn.gov // [Minnesota’s State Portal](https://mn.gov/minnesota-state-portal)

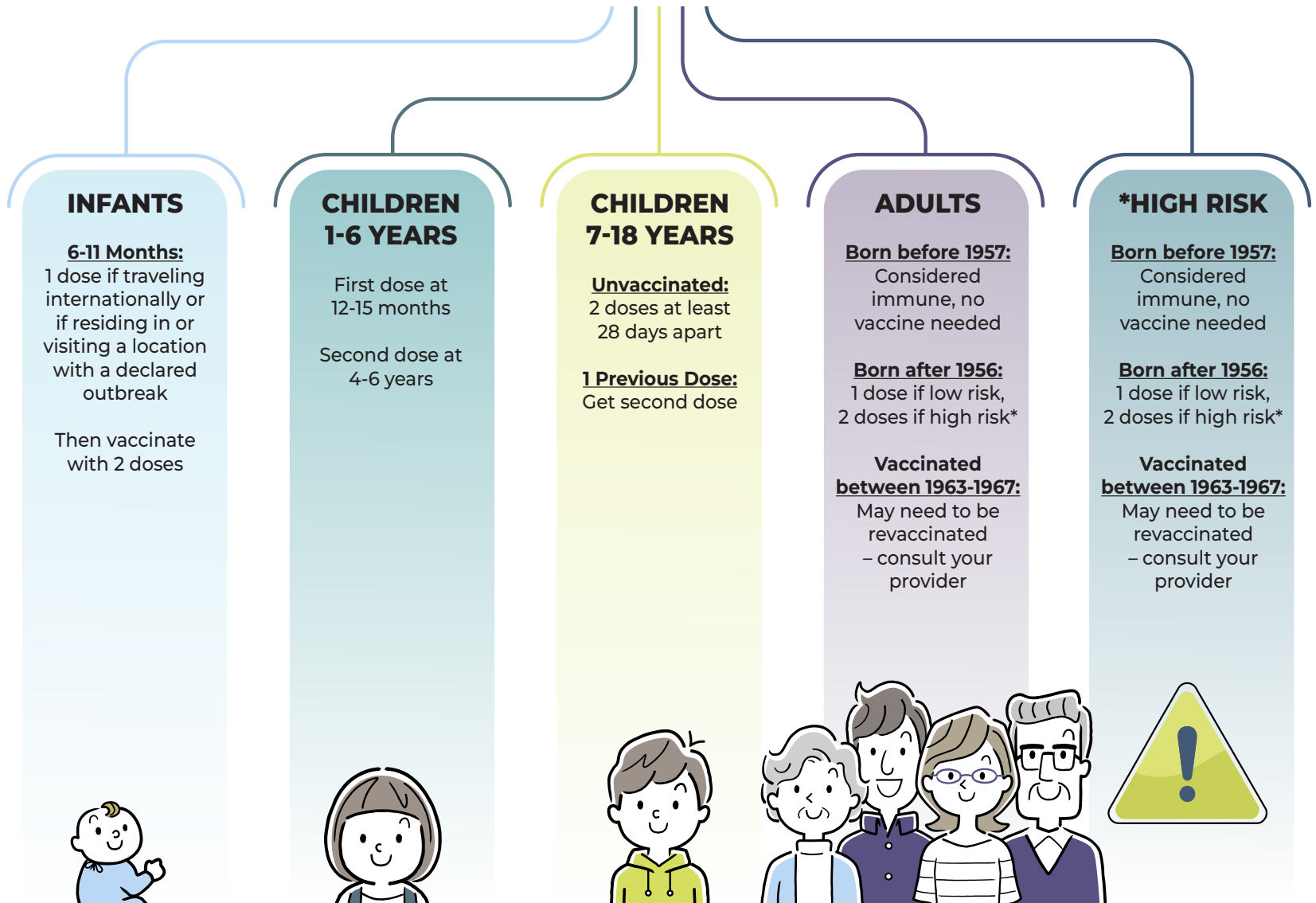
Crisis Support

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or having thoughts of suicide:

- **Call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
- **Call 911**

Measles (MMR) Shot Recommendations

(based on recommendations by MN Dept. of Health)



Volunteering: Giving Back to the Communities We Serve

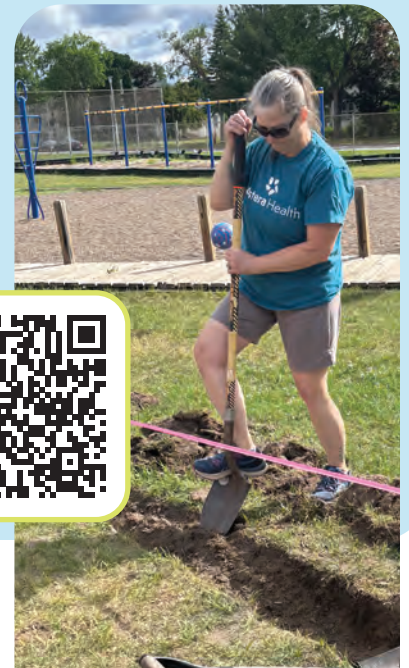
In 2026, Astera Health introduced a new volunteer benefit that gives staff four paid hours each year to serve in their communities. Through this program, employees support nonprofits, schools, community groups, health fairs, screenings, educational events, and other local projects.

We are proud of all our staff members for helping make a difference. Their work reflects Astera Health's mission to improve the health of the communities we serve and our vision to be your trusted partner for life.

Community health reaches far beyond the walls of a hospital or clinic. It grows through strong partnerships, shared service and people who are

willing to lend a hand. We are grateful for the organizations that welcomed our staff and gave them meaningful ways to serve. Astera Health looks forward to continuing this program and working alongside our communities to support local needs, strengthen connections and help build a healthier future for everyone.

Scan this code to learn more or to request volunteer support for events or activities that align with our mission and availability.





Joe Elfstrum, Verndale, was presented the award by Nathan Fry, ATC

Celebrating every comeback



Returning to competition after an injury takes more than physical strength. It also takes patience, courage, and a strong support system. Astera Health's Comeback Player of the Year Award honors local student-athletes who worked hard to recover and return to the activities they love.

We are proud to recognize our 2026 Comeback Player of the Year Award recipients:

- » Jada Dykhoff, Wadena-Deer Creek
- » Parker Kiser, Sebeka
- » Anna Hegarty, Bertha-Hewitt
- » Joe Elfstrum, Verndale

These student-athletes worked closely with Astera Health athletic trainers, orthopedic providers, and rehabilitation staff to overcome setbacks and safely return to competition.

The award highlights the important role sports medicine plays before, during, and after an injury.

Supporting Our Local Athletes at School

Astera Health provides school-based sports medicine services to local high schools. Athletic trainers are on-site during after-school practices, home games, and tournament play. Their goal is to help protect student-athletes and provide quick care when an injury happens.

Athletic trainers do more than respond to injuries. They watch how athletes move and look for concerns that could affect their bones, muscles, or joints. They also teach safe weight-lifting methods and offer tips to help athletes stay healthy during physical activity.

When an injury occurs, an athletic trainer can evaluate ankle sprains, muscle strains, and other sports-related injuries. Minor

injuries may be treated at school with ice, heat, taping, functional braces, or other forms of care.

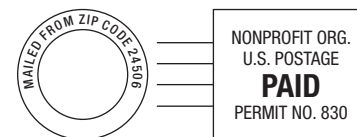
When an athlete needs more advanced care, the trainer can help stabilize the injury and connect the student with the right specialist. Because Astera Health athletic trainers work closely with our orthopedics and rehabilitation teams, the process is smooth and easy for athletes and their families.

Astera Health is proud to partner with Wadena-Deer Creek, Sebeka, Menahga, Bertha-Hewitt, Verndale, and New York Mills schools to provide athletic training services.

The Comeback Player of the Year Award celebrates more than a return to the game. It recognizes the effort, teamwork, and determination behind every recovery. We are proud to support local student-athletes through every practice, every game, and every comeback.



Jada Dykhoff, WDC, was awarded by Sarah Maninga, ATC



Upcoming Events *Mark your calendars!*

Pink Flannel and Fizz

Friday, Oct. 2 at 5 p.m. at Aster Health Main Campus

Lobby Learning: Emergency Preparedness

Oct. 5-9 in Clinic Entrance at Aster Health Main Campus

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Monday, Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Aster Health Main Campus

Bite Size Conversation: Medicare Q&A

Monday, Oct. 19 at Noon at Cozy Theatre, Wadena

Lobby Learning: Small Acts Can Make a Big Impact

Nov. 9-13 in Clinic Entrance at Aster Health Main Campus

Bite Size Conversation: Mental Health and Addiction Community Roundtable

Monday, Nov. 16 at 5 p.m. at Aster Health Main Campus

2nd Annual Jingle and Mingle Open House

Thursday, Nov. 19, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Aster Health Main Campus

Bite Size Conversation – Your Mental Health: What we don't talk about

Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 5:30 p.m. at Wadena City Library

Lobby Learning: Winter Wellness

Dec. 14-18 in Clinic Entrance at Aster Health Main Campus

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

