

Photo by BB Photography

Fall 2026

VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & CLINICS

FOUNTAINS OF HEALTH

Welcome Dr. Olaitan Akinboboye!



Dr. Olaitan Akinboboye

Our new family practice physician, Dr. Olaitan Akinboboye, has been caring for patients in the Postville and Waukon Clinics since mid-September and is happy with his decision to join this practice and community!

Dr. Akinboboye practices full-spectrum Family Medicine, providing comprehensive care for patients of all ages—from newborns to seniors. His practice includes preventive wellness exams, acute care for immediate illnesses, and long-term management of chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. He is also passionate about health promotion and partnering with patients to improve their overall quality of life.

"After living and training in the Midwest for several years, my family and I were immediately drawn to Waukon's warmth and strong sense of community. As I have had the opportunity to see patients and begin settling into the community, I have been struck by how welcoming and supportive everyone has been. The patients I have had the opportunity to care for have also been incredibly kind and pleasant. I have enjoyed getting to know them, listening to their concerns, and beginning to build relationships with them."

Dr. Akinboboye cares for patients in the Waukon Clinic on Mondays and the Postville Clinic on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays each week. He adds a physician choice to the Postville Clinic, which has been the desire of many patients following the retirement of Dr. Thomas McMullan

Akinboboye ... Continued on Page 2

35th Annual

Christmas Fantasy



A Visit to the North Pole

Enjoy a fun-filled Christmas Fantasy Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, November 13, 14, 15, and 16, at the Allamakee Fairgrounds Pavilion!

Enjoy the spectacular Christmas trees, each decorated and sponsored by area individuals, organizations and businesses, plus the on-site silent auction with over 100 various items all available to the highest bidder, winning the purchase when the auction ends at 6:00 p.m. Monday evening, November 16. Until that closing time, bidders can return, free of charge to the Fantasy and raise their bid. AGAIN THIS YEAR…a live auction will take place on the opening night, Friday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m.!

Christmas Fantasy ... Continued on Page 9

From the Administrator...



Jayne McCormick, CEO

I take great pride in being the CEO of Veterans Memorial Hospital and Clinics. Throughout my 24 years at VMH, starting at the age of 16, I have served in many different capacities and have gained a world of knowledge. I have also gained lifelong friends who feel like an extension of my family. We have great people here and I am blessed to lead them.

I thank Garith Steiner, who served as our interim CEO these last few months. His kind and humble personality is what we needed during this big transition. I appreciate the time and effort he put into VMH when he could have spent his retirement with his family but chose to help us. That means a lot.

We have been very busy at VMH with the opening of our new Postville Clinic. Laura Baxter, Chief Clinical Officer, and her staff, along with Dave Martin, Facilities Director, and his great team, worked extremely hard to see our new space come to life.

None of it would have been possible without Beth Shafer, Growth and Development Coordinator, who worked tirelessly on our grant and fundraising efforts. The community support for this project is overwhelming and we deeply appreciate every donation that was received.

Senior Life Solutions (SLS) is another great new asset for the mental health of senior citizens in our community. The ladies in SLS have a true passion for their jobs, and it shows! Every month, the number of participants in the program keeps growing. I am so thankful that this vital program is available to those who may need it. Together with our three Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners, Tara Fink, Angela Taylor, and Janet Hunter, we have more behavioral health care readily available for all ages than ever before.

That is what I love so much about VMH—everyone here cares about one another and the community we serve. I have always loved this facility and I am incredibly excited for our future!

Jayne

Akinboboye ... Continued from Page 1

last November. He joins nurse practitioners Minji Ransom, NP; Katie Maker, NP/Nurse Midwife; Hannah Kelly, NP; Mason Kerian, NP; and Alex Berns, NP, who all provide family medicine one to two days a week at the Postville Clinic as well as at the Waukon Clinic.



Dr. Akinboboye pictured with Postville Clinic staff members, left to right, Alisha Henderson, RN; Sandy Lopez, MA; Perla Gonzalez, Receptionist (seated); and Selina Perez, MA.

"My experience practicing medicine at Veterans Memorial Hospital has been incredibly rewarding. From the very beginning, I have felt warmly welcomed by my colleagues, patients, and the entire community. It has been a privilege to provide both primary care and building meaningful relationships with patients and their families while contributing to the health and well-being of the community.

Living in Allamakee County has been equally wonderful. My family and I have been touched by the kindness, hospitality, and genuine sense of community that make this area so special. The peaceful environment, beautiful scenery, and welcoming people have made our transition much easier. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve this community, and I look forward to growing both personally and professionally while making a lasting, positive impact on the lives of those I care for."

Dr. Akinboboye earned his medical degree from Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, then moved to the Midwest in the United States, where he completed an MPH in Epidemiology at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and a PhD in Public Health at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Most recently, he completed his Family Medicine residency training at the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine in Kalamazoo.

Appointments with Dr. Akinboboye can be made by calling the Postville Clinic at 563-864-7221 or the Waukon Clinic at 563-568-5530.

Garith Steiner, Interim CEO
(July-September, 2026)

It has been an honor and privilege to serve Veterans Memorial Hospital and the communities that depend on it. I leave with tremendous confidence in the people who make VMH special—the caregivers, the providers, staff, volunteers, and community partners who show every day what rural health care is truly about.



There is much to be proud of and even more to look forward to. The future holds opportunity, possibility, and the chance to build something even stronger together.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this journey. I will always be grateful for the experience and will be cheering for VMH's continued success.

THREE HEARTS, THREE STORIES, ONE POWERFUL MESSAGE

This issue of the Fountains of Health celebrates real-life CPR success stories that show how CPR saves lives! Hands-Only CPR is a simple, effective way to make a lifesaving difference. Check out the graphic to the right, cut it out, and keep it handy in your wallet or on your refrigerator. You never know when someone may need you—be ready to step in and help with strong, firm chest compressions!

The Surprise in the Operating Room...
Dennis Blocker of Waukon's Survival Story

As our 75th anniversary year of the hospital comes to a close, Dennis Blocker of Waukon shares his story of the numerous times he has benefitted from the services provided by Veterans Memorial Hospital throughout his lifetime… from having his tonsils out when he was in kindergarten to having children that were born here to various visits to the ER to the more specialized areas of care needed the past few years.

Dennis began having some heart issues that landed him in the ER in 2024. Upon further testing, Dennis needed to have a pacemaker implanted in his heart. His first pacemaker was put in place on June 24, 2024, and he began the Cardiac Rehabilitation program at Veterans Memorial Hospital. But within a few weeks, his pacemaker was infected and needed to be removed.

Dennis began seeing Certified Wound Therapist, Amy Robinson, for wound care. She used a wound vac to continuously suction the area around the pacemaker to remove infected fluids and encourage new skin growth, as well as regular dressing changes until the area was healed.



Amy Robinson, Rehab Director and Wound Care Specialist, pictured at left, with Dennis and Marlene Blocker of Waukon.

On July 31, 2024, he had his toes on his left foot amputated due to circulation and infection issues. Following his surgery and stay in the hospital in La Crosse, he was asked if he would like to go to another facility for skilled care, and he and his wife, Marlene, immediately chose Veterans Memorial Hospital.

He stayed at the hospital for two weeks in skilled care where he received continuous physical therapy to learn how to walk again following the amputation and again had wound care with Amy Robinson. The wound care program helped his foot heal so much faster and without infection thanks to regular dressing changes and debriding by Amy. Dennis soon returned home with the help of Community and Home Care, then continued his physical therapy and wound care as an outpatient.

Dennis also visited the hospital's Infusion Center for antibiotics to fight the infection as well as receive needed iron infusions. In December of that same year, Dennis had a leadless pacemaker put in the bottom chamber of his heart, until April when his third pacemaker could be put in place in both chambers of his heart. Dennis then again entered the Cardiac Rehab program at the hospital.

All was going well until this last July when Dennis was scheduled for a foot surgery, this time on his right foot. He was taken into surgery in La Crosse, and shortly after inserting the tube in his throat, his heart stopped. Immediately they began CPR with three teams of cardiac professionals, each switching every minute to stay fresh. CPR continued for 30 minutes until Dennis was revived.

"They always say, 'don't give up' and they didn't… I'm still here!," explains Dennis. "I had quite a few weeks of severe pain with broken ribs and sternum following, but it's all better now. They told Marlene, they didn't know how my brain would react to being gone for that long, but when I woke up she asked me what day it was and the date, and I was good to go."

Again, Dennis returned to Veterans Memorial Hospital in Skilled Care, getting physical and occupational therapy, as well as pulmonary rehabilitation.

"Since my foot surgery could not be done that day, I continued coming to the hospital for wound care once again to heal my right foot," adds Dennis. "Now, 'Dr. Marlene' we call her, continues with my dressing changes and antibiotics when needed."

Both times Dennis utilized the Swing Bed Skilled Care services and was discharged home with home health care receiving physical and occupational therapy in the home.

"We are so thankful the hospital is here," Dennis concludes. "It is a wonderful place and for a smaller town, we are very lucky to have it."

Dennis' wife Marlene, or 'Dr. Marlene,' has been by Dennis' side this entire time, helping with his cares and keeping his appointments and treatments organized. She states, "Whenever they would ask us in La Crosse where we wanted to send Dennis for skilled care, we would always say Waukon right away. And every time, the staff would assure us that was a wonderful choice. They knew the skilled care program and rehabilitation here were terrific and they also were very happy with our local Cardiac Rehab program. There was nothing but good reports from here and we completely agree!"



Three Hearts, Three Stories, One Powerful Message CPR Saves Lives

A Week of Feeling Unwell...
Bruce Mueller of Postville's Survival Story

For over a week, Bruce Mueller of Postville was experiencing flu-like symptoms that resembled Influenza B and was prescribed anti-nausea meds. A few days later, as he was not feeling better, he came to the clinic to see Alex Berns, Nurse Practitioner. Bruce needed a wheelchair to get to the entrance, which signaled to his wife that he was getting very critical. Alex knew right away Bruce needed to be admitted to the hospital for testing.

Hospitalist Chelsey Sherburne ordered a heart test for Bruce, which showed a high cardiac marker and attempted to transfer him, but was unable to due to the qualifications. Shortly thereafter, Bruce's heart stopped. It was 6 pm and his daughter, Natalie Kelly, RN, who is a charge nurse at the hospital, was off work and in the room with him at the time. She immediately began CPR and after a few compressions, revived him.

At 8 pm, Natalie left the room to walk down to the nurse's station, and Bruce's heart stopped again. Natalie came running back to the room and again began CPR. Fortunately, with the use of defibrillation and the Lucas compression machine, Bruce was revived once again and was then flown by MedLink Air to Emplify by Gundersen in La Crosse shortly thereafter.

Natalie drove to La Crosse, anticipating that her dad would be in the Heart Cath Lab when she arrived; however, they were unable to place a stent in his heart, so they performed further testing.

The next day, Bruce returned to the Cath Lab and they placed in an Impella heart pump that helped pump the left side of his heart that wasn't functioning. They stated there was nothing more that could be done for him there and that the only option was to give him comfort care, or to transfer him for an LVAD, a left ventricular assisted device, which would pump his heart for him.

"We stated that doing nothing was not acceptable, that we wanted to try something more," explained Bruce's wife, Betty. "They mentioned to us that the Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee was the only option, so the La Crosse team called them. When they said they would take him, he was then again flown from La Crosse to Milwaukee."

The Froedtert Heart Center explained that they were not going to hurry and left the heart pump in place for Bruce's heart to recover. For 18 days, Bruce laid flat in one position to not disturb the heart pump. Every week a new team of doctors came in for a fresh set of eyes to look over his case and discuss future options.

Finally, a week into his stay, he was strong enough to undergo the needed stent procedure to get blood flow to the right side of his heart. The Impella heart pump had been in place all that time while Bruce remained in the Intensive CVICU Care Unit.

"I asked if we could transfer dad closer to home, but they wanted to keep him there until they felt he could safely go home," states Bruce's daughter, Natalie. "He was transferred to a regular hospital room for two weeks for continued testing before we could bring him home. He was hospitalized for a total of 37 days, from May 8 to June 13."



Bruce pictured in the Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit at the hospital with Cardiac Rehab nurse, Dietsy Weymiller, at left, and his daughter, Natalie.

On June 13, Bruce returned home to rest until he was strong enough to begin Cardiac Rehabilitation at Veterans Memorial Hospital.

During his cardiac rehabilitation, Bruce returned to Froedtert Hospital to have a Cardiomems device placed into his heart. The device is about the size of a paper clip and transmits his heart functions to the heart center to detect heart failure faster.

"Bruce has slowly but steadily grown stronger, nearly back to normal, and we are so thankful," adds Betty. "We were blessed with so many of the most amazing doctors and medical professionals who would often pray with us. Bruce has truly been at the right place at the right time throughout this journey. So often when the doctor called us from the Cath Lab, they would use the words 'best case scenario,' and that was the best thing I could've ever heard!"

Bruce's daughter, Natalie, adds, "My dad is a true fighter. He had a long, tough road, but he made it! I am thankful God put me in the right place at the right time to be there for him."

"I don't remember anything from the time I entered the hospital in Waukon until I woke up a few days later in Milwaukee, but I do know my daughter, Natalie, has been right by my side every step of this journey. She didn't even break any of my ribs doing CPR on me, twice—that shows true professionalism," explains Bruce. "I had a silent heart attack without any classic heart symptoms and now they have enrolled my case in research studies. God brought me back for a purpose."



Donate to Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation

Go to **veteransmemorialhospital.com** Click **Donate Today**

Three Hearts, Three Stories, One Powerful Message CPR Saves Lives

Without Warning...

Randy Murphy of Waukon's Survival Story

April 15, after a morning of work at the Waukon Country Club, Randy Murphy returned home around 12:30 pm and sat down in his favorite chair to relax and watch the news, as he usually does. Randy's wife, Lisa, would usually have been busy in another room, but thankfully on this particular day, she was reading a book in the room right next to Randy, which proved to be lifesaving. Lisa explains, in her own words.

"Randy had just gotten home, and not long after, I heard him make a really strange sound that caught my attention. At first I thought he was snoring, but then I knew something wasn't right. So I went in and saw his head move and him taking his last gasp of air. I could tell immediately he was gone. I ran for my phone by my chair to call 9-1-1 and opened our front door for the ambulance. 9-1-1 asked if Randy was on the floor, but he was reclined in his chair, so, by the grace of God, I had the strength to get him on the floor and she told me to start CPR. Thankfully, I had many years of learning it through my early childhood training and working with TASC, so I knew to start compressions.

Within minutes, EMTs entered our home and took over CPR. I was so relieved! They were like angels! They shocked Randy twice with the defibrillator, and after what felt like an eternity, I heard them say, 'We have a pulse.' Before they got him out of the house, they said he was trying to breathe on his own.

They took him by ambulance to the hospital and it was like God's puzzle—every piece just fit into place that day. Dr. Schwartz was there, even though it was his day off, and La Crosse had a room for him so he could be airlifted. The EMTs were in the hallway with me and were so compassionate. Our daughter-in-law, Liz, was there to call our kids. My one call was to my sister-in-law, Barb, to please start the prayer chain. I knew our community was praying for Randy and that was all we needed right then. I could feel it.

The helicopter lifted, taking Randy to La Crosse, and our kids and I started driving. When we arrived, we found Randy's sister and husband, Sandy and Dave Lyons, already there waiting for us! Dave is an ER nurse and one of the emergency responders that day. It was huge having him there to help us through this. He assured me they wouldn't have Randy in surgery if they didn't think he was going to do ok.



Emplify Health Air Medical Transport awarded Clinical Excellence Challenge Coins to many hospital emergency team members on their quick and accurate response to this 911 cardiac arrest. Randy's wife, Lisa, was also complimented on her quick response in starting CPR as soon as she did and the important role it played in his survival. Pictured from left to right, is Erin Cantrell, flight nurse with the Emplify Health Air Medical Transport; Dave Martin, EMT; McLain Swauger, EMS Manager; Dave Lyons, RN; Randy and Lisa Murphy; Cheryl Livingston, Paramedic; and Shawn Martin, EMT.

Randy's main artery was 100% blocked and he needed two stents. When he came out of surgery, the doctor said it might be the next day before he would come out of sedation, but in a couple of hours he was ready to wake up.

I was so worried about his brain function, but when he came to, the doctor asked him to squeeze my hand and wiggle his feet, and Randy saw that he was surrounded by his family. His brother-in-law, Dave, was in the room. The doctor asked Randy if he knew his name, and if anyone knows Randy, he is always joking. He pointed at Dave and said, 'Dave Lyons!' We all laughed and instantly knew he was back!



Randy and Lisa Murphy seated outside the hospital on a nice day during Randy's swing bed skilled care stay.

On day two, Cardiology came in the room and told us maybe we could go home. I thought there was no way in heaven we could go home yet. I knew we needed to stay for three days to qualify for swing bed skilled care in Waukon and once I heard that he could stay, I was so relieved.

Getting back home to our hospital, our medical people, and our community was huge. Thank God for Dr. Schwartz. He made it so much easier for us, as we were able to see him multiple times during Randy's recovery.

Randy was so weak and tired. I requested no visitors so he could rest, and that was the best decision I had made. It is not just the patient; it is their spouse and family who are also dealing with a lot, and rest was really needed. He was able to stay in swing bed skilled care for nine days, getting needed physical and occupational therapy every day.

On that last weekend, the hospital suggested we 'break out' and come home for a few hours on Saturday and Sunday and that was great help. It was very nice to be able to slowly get back home.

The hospital provided everything I needed to know about his medications. He had never been on anything before this. Even the dietitian met with us and that was so helpful. We were prepared and he was ready to come home.

Randy started cardiac rehabilitation right away at Veterans Memorial Hospital and continued for 12 weeks. That was like sending him to his own little therapy social group… he made lots of new friends!

He doesn't remember anything that happened, but he has heard his heart story many times! My advice to anyone doing compressions during CPR is to remember to make the compressions deep. Don't be afraid of hurting them or breaking ribs. It needs to be strong pressures to be effective.

Since then, Dr. Schwartz has continued to see him. He has made it so much easier on both of us… he made sure Randy could have his echocardiogram here in Waukon, without traveling back to La Crosse. And we can also have his lab work done here and sent to Cardiology in La Crosse whenever needed.

We are so thankful for our hospital and our care. I don't know why we were so blessed that day and I am still in awe of witnessing a miracle before my very eyes. We are so grateful and thankful for our hospital and each person who made a difference in Randy being here. We have the best hospital and care right here at home in our small community."

RESPITE CARE

WHEN YOU CAN'T QUALIFY FOR SWING BED SKILLED CARE

Swing Bed Skilled Care is a very helpful step following surgery or illness to help patients regain strength before going back home. But to qualify for this level of care, a patient must be hospitalized for three days in acute care before they can be transferred to swing bed care. Without a three-day prior stay, patients do not qualify and must be discharged home.

With so many hip and knee replacements now only staying one night in the hospital following surgery or even being discharged home the same day, it has grown more difficult to qualify for swing bed skilled care. But Veterans Memorial Hospital offers Respite Care, which provides all of the benefits of swing bed skilled care for an out-of-pocket fee.



Kathy Pettit of Prairie du Chien, at left, with her daughter-in-law, Mandy, who found this Respite program for Kathy and it was exactly what she needed!

Kathy Pettit of Prairie du Chien has taken advantage of this level of care twice following a hip and later a knee replacement. Living alone, she knew there was no way she could return home following her hip surgery, but she also did not qualify for skilled care. Her daughter-in-law, Mandy Pettit, found this Respite program for Kathy and it was exactly what she needed.

"I was looking on the web for some option for me following my hip replacement and it was all so confusing. I was so thankful when my daughter-in-law found this program for me. It was the closest one to my home and was exactly what I needed, both times!" states Kathy. "I had gone through chemotherapy treatments for breast cancer before this and the treatments dissolved my hip, so I had not walked for four months prior to having my hip replaced. I knew I needed somewhere to go and this program really worked well. I received therapy twice a day, which was so much better than driving to therapy a few times a week. The nurses were excellent, knowledgeable, kind, and supportive, and the entire physical and occupational therapy department was wonderful. It was just like being admitted to skilled care, only I paid for the care out-of-pocket."

"I remember one day, I just didn't think I was progressing like I should be, and the staff was so supportive of me. Carrie from the pharmacy came down the hall and gave me a little gift because she knew I was sad. I cried, even though I was already crying, but this time it was happy tears! One day I will pass that bracelet on to someone else who is sad and needs it. I appreciated it so much."

"All of the staff went out of their way the two weeks I was there. The food from the dietary staff was amazing and they even sent me a mocktail in the evenings! The housekeepers would clean my room and visit with me and I knew many of their relatives. When I was finally able to walk the entire square on the patient floor, the staff made me a big gold star of achievement! And one day, my friends from Prairie du Chien came to visit and the nurses even set up a place in the front entrance meeting room where we could play cards like we love to do. It was a great time."

"Then I went back again in August after I had my knee done. I am 73 and I can't ask my friends or sister to help care for me because I am not safe at home and I would've made them unsafe. I am happy I have found this place to go where they take great care of me and don't mind helping get me to the bathroom in the middle of the night! It is so well worth it."

"I am planning on having another knee done and will be back here again on Respite Care. It is comfortable, safe and everyone is so kind and knowledgeable. It's a great program and there aren't enough of them in the area!"



ASK

If Your Infusion and Chemotherapy Treatments Can Be Given Right Here, Comfortably and Conveniently, Close to Home!

CALL INFUSION

563-568-5558

to discuss your options.

We will help coordinate everything for you!

Birthing Services Testimonial

"We had such a great experience with the VMH Clinic and Hospital throughout my pregnancy, delivery, and after having our son, Macson. I really loved the at-home feel and how personal the care was. Everyone was always so kind, welcoming, and supportive, and both Riley and I always felt comfortable and cared for. Everyone took the time to answer our questions and make sure we felt comfortable and supported, both during delivery and after Macson was born.



Kaylee and Riley Reis of Waukon with son Macson

Photo courtesy of BB Photography

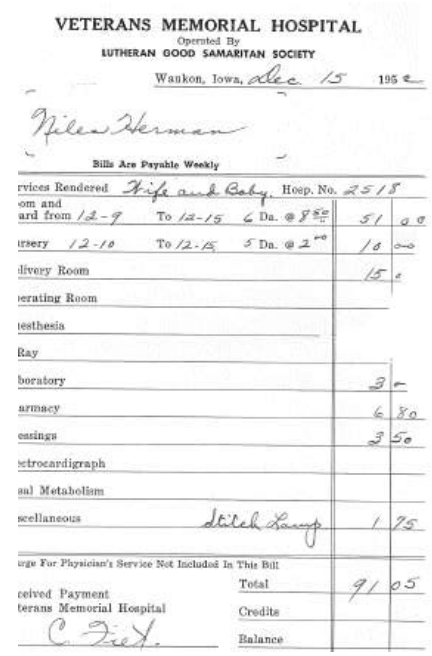
Dr. Schwartz was amazing. He already knew my family and had a good idea of what to expect, which made me feel really comfortable and confident in his care. Natalie was also wonderful during my delivery. She was so encouraging and made me feel comfortable and supported throughout the whole process, and it was especially nice having a familiar face there on such a big day.

We're so thankful for everyone who cared for us throughout the whole experience. They made such a special time in our lives even better, and we couldn't have asked for a better experience bringing Macson into the world!"

Kaylee and Riley Reis

A Blast From VMH's Past

This actual obstetrics bill from 1952 was recently found by the Niles and Ruby Herman family from their son Brad's birth. Imagine having a baby and staying in the hospital for six days for under $100!



VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Operated By
LUTHERAN GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

Waukon, Iowa, Dec 15 195 2

Niles Herman

Bills Are Payable Weekly

rvices Rendered Wife and Baby Hosp. No. 2518

om and ard from 12-9 To 12-15 6 Da. @ 8.50 51 00

ursery 12-10 To 12-15 5 Da. @ 2.00 10 00

dlivery Room 15 00

erating Room

esthesia

Ray

boratory 3 00

armacy 6 80

essings 3 50

etrocardiograph

sal Metabolism

scellaneous Stitch Lamp 1 75

rge For Physician's Service Not Included In This Bill

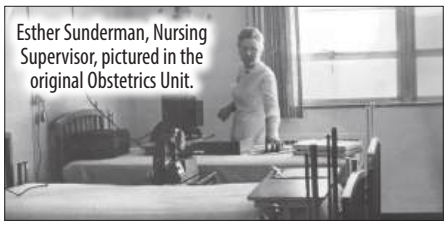
Total 91 05

ceived Payment
terans Memorial Hospital

Credits

Balance

C. Fiet



Esther Sunderman, Nursing Supervisor, pictured in the original Obstetrics Unit.

A Local Option for LIVING WITH LESS PAIN

For people living with chronic pain, finding the right treatment can sometimes feel like a long journey. At Veterans Memorial, our Chronic Pain Clinic is working to make that journey a little easier—right here in your community.

Our clinic welcomes anyone experiencing chronic pain who is interested in interventional treatment options. We accept referrals from all medical professionals, including primary care providers, chiropractors, and/or physical therapists.

We treat a wide range of painful conditions, including back and neck pain, radiculopathy, joint pain, painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy, shingles-related pain, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), and other chronic pain conditions. We can also help some patients experiencing loss of taste/smell associated with long COVID syndrome.

Treatment is individualized for each patient. When appropriate, we offer non-opioid medication management as well as interventional procedures such as epidural steroid injections, joint injections, radiofrequency ablation of the neck, back, shoulder, hip, and knee, and Qutenza.

We can help coordinate updated imaging, conservative therapies such as physical therapy, and surgical referrals when surgery is desired or medically necessary.

Our goal is simple: to listen to patients, understand their goals, and help them find a path toward better function and a better quality of life.

If chronic pain is limiting your daily life, talk with your healthcare professional about a referral to Shawn Blake, CRNA at Veterans Memorial Pain Clinic. Interventional pain care may offer another option when other treatments haven't provided the relief you need.



Shawn Blake, CRNA, Pain Clinic Specialist

Reflections From the Past

Board of Trustee & Current Patient - Bob Rotach

Bob Rotach of Waukon dedicated 10 years of service on the hospital's Board of Trustees from 1994 to 2003, serving as Chairman of the Board for many of those years. His role was challenging, maneuvering through all of the changes in health care during those years and the birth of Critical Access Hospitals, which VMH became and still remains today. Bob was always focused on the importance of keeping the hospital open for the economic viability of the county as well as the accessibility to local care.

"I was always concerned about losing this hospital as a business during those unknown years of dwindling reimbursement and this new term called 'critical access hospital.' I always looked at all the people employed here and what a loss that would be to the economic standing of the county, and especially the access to all that great local health care," reflects Bob. "All of a sudden during those years, we were looking for a new administrator, we had a big building and renovation project we needed to do, we had a severe nursing shortage, and both Mayo and Gundersen hospitals in La Crosse wanted us to affiliate with them. It was a challenging time, to say the least."



Bob and Julia Rotach of Waukon pictured with many of their health care team, including, kneeling in front row Abie Daniel, Physical Therapist, and Amy Evanson, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant; and in back row, Dave Lyons, RN; Drew Gordon, RN; Bailey Meyer-Benson, RN; Dr. Dave Schwartz; and Melissa Clarke, Occupational Therapist.

"When you look back on it, I am satisfied with how it all worked out. We still have partners in health, Gundersen, who work with us and we have our own beautiful clinic… that addition was wonderful. We had great people on the board with us and we still do," adds Bob.

Since those 10 years on the Board of Trustees, Bob and his wife, Julia, have experienced an even greater, personal need for this local, accessible health care.

"Since then, I have utilized a number of the hospital services, from the Emergency Room a number of times, being transferred to a larger facility for heart concerns, returning for Cardiac Rehabilitation, and working many weeks with the physical therapy department following my two knee replacements. The care here has always been great! I often have wondered, 'Where would people go without all these local services?' It is so convenient."

"One of the best things we did was to hire all of those rehabilitation staff members as our own employees, instead of being contracted by Rehab Visions. That service has grown and grown since then, and they are outstanding," states Bob. "Every service here is every bit as good as the big hospitals. But here you actually know them and that makes all the difference."

"The staff did a great job with skilled care here for my wife, Julia, this past summer. She had surgery to remove a non-cancerous brain tumor at the same time I had just had a heart valve replaced and a pacemaker installed, so there was no way I could have cared for her at home, even if I would have been in better condition myself. They found her a skilled care room, cared for her, and physical and occupational therapy worked with her every day. Now she is doing great. It made quite a difference in her recovery."

"I was really glad that the county approved the vote to make VMH a county hospital. There are so many people coming here from all over and I'm glad we have the support that enabled us to keep going. The important thing is people need to remember to ask if they couldn't do this here instead of going out of town, such as my upcoming nuclear stress test. They wanted me to have that in La Crosse and I said, 'I think I can do that in Waukon,' and sure enough, I am having it here. I always want it done here if I can!"

"I have a lot of satisfaction thinking that maybe I was on the ground floor of a lot of these positive changes that were made here, but those years were definitely a challenge," concludes Bob. "The changes have all been for the better. All of the improvements that have been done were greatly needed, and we have been able to retain a lot of our longer, experienced staff, and that is huge."

Christmas Fantasy





Christmas Fantasy ... Continued from Page 1

2026 FANTASY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

"TINGLE 'N MINGLE" HAPPY HOUR

This event is a special opportunity to meet socially with friends and co-workers. Many hearty hors d'oeuvres, desserts, candies, breads and spirits will be served among the trees from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Friday night, November 13. The cost is $25 per person and includes two drink tickets and unlimited hors d'oeuvres throughout the evening. Advance tickets are available at Veterans Memorial Hospital or at the door.

WINE, CHEESE AND DESSERT EVENT

Saturday evening, November 14, will host a special wine, cheese and dessert event sponsored by Eagle's Landing Winery of Marquette, Empty Nest Winery of Waukon and Madigan Winery of Lansing. The event will begin at 7:00 p.m. Reservations are required for this event as seats are limited. Please call 563-568-4177 to make a reservation. The cost for each ticket is $25 per person, which includes wine, cheese, meats, cheese curds and spreads, crackers, dessert, and viewing of the decorations and silent auction.

BRUNCH WITH SANTA

Brunch will be offered Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to noon, serving a large, full brunch with a cash Mimosa and Bloody Mary Bar. This event is sponsored by the Allamakee Pork Producers, Iowa Pork Producers and Jet's Meats. Please make a reservation by calling 563-568-4177. Tickets are $15 per adult, $10 for children under age 12 and free for preschool-aged children and under. Santa will also be available for visits and photos!

MONDAY LUNCHEON

One luncheon will be held this year Monday, November 16 and will again be sponsored by the Allamakee County Cattlemen. Please call 563-568-4177 to make a reservation. The cost is $25 per person.

VISITS AND PHOTOS WITH SANTA CLAUS

Santa will be available for a visit Sunday, November 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Be ready with your cameras for a great photo opportunity!

GENERAL VIEWING

The Christmas Fantasy 2026 event will be open to the public Saturday, November 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Sunday, November 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Monday, November 16, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. Complimentary Christmas treats and hot chocolate will be available during all these public showings. Tickets are just $5 each and $2 for children ages 12 and under.

The 35th Annual Christmas Fantasy is planned and sponsored by the Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation, including Sue Blagsvedt, Vicki Bloxham, Dawn Clark, Kris Cote´, Chris Engstrom-Fosaaen, Patty Goltz, Kevin Hanson, Judy Herman, Sue Kratz, Ardie Kuhse, Craig Lensing, Reid Mahoney, Becky Mitchell, Barb Shull, Tim Smedsrud, Sue Stamper, Jeremy Strub, Kim Sylvester and Matt Teslow.



2026 CHRISTMAS FANTASY THEME:

A Visit to the North Pole

FRIDAY, NOV. 13

TINGLE 'N MINGLE HAPPY HOUR

- 5:00-8:00 pm
- $25 Per Person
- Live Auction 7:00 pm!

SATURDAY, NOV. 14

CHRISTMAS TREATS & COCOA

- 10:00 am-2:00 pm
- $5 Per Adult, Ages 12 & Under $2, Preschool Age & Younger Free

WINE, CHEESE & DESSERT

Sponsored by Eagles Landing Winery, Empty Nest Winery & Madigan Winery

- 7:00-9:00 pm
- $25 Per Person
- Call 563-568-4177 for Reservations

SUNDAY, NOV. 15

BRUNCH WITH SANTA

Sponsored by Allamakee County Pork Producers, Iowa Pork Producers & Jet's Meats

- 9:00 am-12:00 pm
- $15 Per Adult, Ages 12 & Under $10, Preschool Age & Younger Free
- Call 563-568-4177 for Reservations

CHRISTMAS TREATS & COCOA

- 9:00 am-3:00 pm
- $5 Per Adult, Ages 12 & Under $2, Preschool Age & Younger Free
- Visits & Photos with Santa

MONDAY, NOV. 16

NOON FANTASY LUNCHEON

Sponsored by Allamakee County Cattlemen

- $25 Per Person
- Call 563-568-4177 for Reservations

CHRISTMAS TREATS & COCOA

- 2:00-6:00 pm
- $5 Per Adult, Ages 12 & Under $2, Preschool Age & Younger Free

Gifts

The following generously responded with a monetary gift to the Foundation's 2025 Winter mail request. These funds were used to renovate the new Postville Medical Clinic which opened on Monday, September 28.

IMO = In Memory of
IHO = In Honor of

Ron & Nancy Adam
Ted Ager
Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative
Douglas Anderson
Marilyn Anderson
Arlin Falck Foundation
Beverly Bacon
IMO Dwight & Sam Bacon
James Barry
Dr. Larry & Lin Barthel
John Bauercamper
IMO Marian Bauercamper & Arlene Martin
Anonymous
Beneke Associates
Black Hills Energy
Brad & Erin Berns
Nancy Berns
IMO Eugene "Gene" Joseph Berns
Ron Berns
IMO Rebecca Berns
Bill & Sue Blagsvedt
Edith Bloxham
IMO Ellen Mellick, Ozzie & Phyllis Quandahl
Bodley Equipment Repair
Mark Bohr
James & Wilma Brazell
Sandra Bresnahan
IMO Neil Bresnahan
Richard & Evelyn Brincks
Jacob & Caty Bruening
Wendy Bucheit
IMO Roger Hesse
Tim Bulman
IMO Dorie Bulman
Jean Buntrock
Mary Ann Burke
IMO Ray Burke & Msgr Ed Lechtenberg
Randy Burke
IMO Terry (Hoot) Meyer & Debra Burke
Dennis Byrnes
IMO Judy Byrnes
Dan & Sue Cahoon
IMO Mildred Hall
Karen Carlton
Charles Kelly Law Office, P.C.
William & Joyce Christofferson
Sheila Clair
IMO Dr. William P. Clair
Clark Tire Center, Inc.
Marilyn Clark
IMO William H. Clark
Craig & Cindy Converse
Leo Conway
Don & Bonnie Cunningham
Mary Cunningham
IMO Joseph "Joe" Cunningham
Steve & Roberta Cunningham
IMO Lee & Barbara Palmer
John & Eileen Curtin
Neal & Nancy Daley
Trey Davidson
IMO Matthew "Matt" Sweeney
Dennis & Sandy Deal
IMO Otto & Eleanor Thorstenson
Pam Delphey
IMO Richard Delphey
Jane Dietrich
IMO Duane & Noah Dietrich
Anonymous
John & Dorothy Drew
Lorraine Drew
Sallie Driscoll
Cheryl Duncklee
Elaine Eadie
Loren Lee Eberling
Gordon & Louise Ellingson
Elliott Jewelers Inc.
IMO Shirley Kay Elliott
IHO VMH Staff
Chris Engstrom
Mary Jo Engstrom
John & Rita Erickson
Kenneth & Nancy Everman
Fidelity Bank & Trust
Mary Fink
IMO Rodney Fink, Dakota Ness & Makaela Ness
Ann Fossum
IMO Jeremy Johnson
FreedomBank
Patrick Friar
Donna Frieden
Carole Gerdes
IMO James "Jim" Gerdes
David & Angela Gibbs
Anonymous
Jean Gilbertson
IMO Gary Gilbertson
Anonymous
Bill & Carol Grady
Barbara Grahlman
Dale & Karen Green
Merrill Gruber Family Trust
Alan & Kathy Gunderson
IMO Dean & Clarian Gunderson
Hacker Nelson & Co., P.C.
Jason & Lorie Hackman
Elmo & Sheri Hagen and Hugh & Marcie Givens
IMO John Wood
Jack & Dellene Hager
Dr. David & Suzanne Hahn
Don & DiAnne Haler
Hall Roberts Son, Inc.
Mary Susan Hall
IMO Charles Hall
William & Carol Hancock
Wendy Hanken
Robert & Joy Hansmeier
Anonymous
Ellie Harmon
Dr. Jane & Wayne Hasek
Dan & Denise Headington
IMO Wayne Headington
Arthur & Julie Heitland
Eileen Hemesath
IMO Jerry Hemesath
Alisha & Andrew Henderson
Ralph Henry
Melvin & Barb Hershberger
Nathan & Rosemary Hershberger
Jeremy & Heather Hogan
Anonymous
Larry & Carolyn Homewood
Paul & Kathy Howes
Jeff & Judy Huinker
Helen Johnson
IMO Ozzie Quandahl
Jim & Jane Johnson
Melvin & Cindy Johnson
IMO Neilah Nobles & Amanda Fravel
DeeAnna Weed & Charles Kelly
Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank
John & Lorna Kerndt
Patsy Kerndt
Steve & Deb Kiley
Larry & Nancy Klocke
Donald Knight
Dennis & Sandy Koenig
IHO Dr. Tom McMullan
Gary Kolsrud
IMO Toni Kolsrud
Jeremy & Jeni Kolsrud
Kris & Jennifer Kovarik
IHO VMH Staff
Ken & Gloria Krambeer
Diane Kraus
Ardie Kuhse
Gary & Marsha Landsgard
Lyle & Cindy Leikvold
IMO Jean Hagen
Richard & Joan Leiran
Roger & Kathy Linderbaum
IHO Dr. Tom McMullan
Randy & Karen Loeb
Gerald & Beverly Loftsgard
Revelyn Lonning
IMO Ozzie Quandahl & Jean Hagen
Luana Savings Bank
Dennis & Sherri Lyons
Theresa Lyons
Anonymous
Anonymous
Cheryl Martins
Gail Mathis
Rita Mathis
IMO Dan Mathis
McElroy Trust
Dr. Tom & Gloria McMullan
Mary Miller
Laurie Moody & Randy Olson
IHO Shawn Moody
Pat Moody
IMO Bill Moody
Larry & Mary Jo Moore
Lesa Moose
IMO Jim Moose & Marlene Dahlstrom
Lyle Moose
IMO Diane Moose
Barry & Sue Mueller
Cici Mueller
IHO Natalie Kelly
Robert Nargang
Scott & Karen Ness
IMO Dakota & Makaela Ness
Randy & Patty Nordheim
Dwaine & Lorraine Nordhus
IMO Edith Feuerhelm & Ruth Nordhus
Norplex - Micarta, LLC
Dr. Kenneth & Sharon Olson
Caleb Opfer
Ron & Joyce Osterholm
Jacqueline Owen
Palmer Abstract, Inc.
Greg & Marlene Palmer
Jeremy & Jodi Peake
Harold & Sandra Pearson
Harold & Dona Peck
IHO Dr. Tom McMullan
Peoples State Bank
Tess Pladsen
IMO Arlyn Pladsen
Dave & Gail Prestemon
John & Sheryl Prestemon
IHO Hannah Kelly, NP
Richard & Melodye Protsman
Valetta Radloff
Tom & Karen Regan
IMO Marlene Dahlstrom
Bob Reierson
IMO Mary Reierson
Anonymous
Wayne & Nona Sawyer
Kathy Schacht
Anonymous
David & Denise Schmelzer
Joan & Scott Schmidt
IMO Marlys Jacobs
Lillian Schmieden
IMO Wayne Schmieden
Nancy Schoh
Dan & Mary Scholtes
Anonymous
Rhonda Seibert
IMO Richard Bloxham

Beverly Shafer
IMO John W. Shafer, Attorney
Bill & Beth Shafer
Linda Siegrist
Jim & Ardis Smith
Alan Snitker
IMO Clark Snitker
Larry & Sharon Snitker
IMO Walter Kurth, Jr. & Ruby Herman
Mike & Julie Snitker
Ron & Terese Snitker
Steve & Mary Beth Snitker
Cletus & Sandi Sommer
IMO Ralph & Ileen Sweeney and Charles & Eve Sommer
Dennis & Chris Soride
St. John's Lutheran Church
Bill & Joyce Steffenson
Gordon & Shirley Steffenson
Stan & Mary Straate
Marvin & Marjorie Strike
Jeffrey & Rae Swartz
Margo Sweeney
Hall & LuAnn Swenson
Robert & June Swenson
Szabo Construction Co. Inc.
Bob Tayek
Anonymous
Lynn Thomson
Chuck & Bona Thorson
Anonymous
Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation
Chuck & Lois Votsmier
Anonymous
Waukon State Bank
Kevin & Teri Welsh
IMO Dan & Sarah Welsh and Rodney "Occo" Fink
David & Laure Weymiller
Ross & Morgan Weymiller
Ray & Edna Whalen
Anonymous
Lyle & Barb Wilkes
Gary Williams
IMO Erma Williams
Les & JoAnn Winters Family
IHO Dr. David Schwartz & the VMH Staff
Brian & Denise Wullner
IHO Dr. Tom McMullan
Alvin & Betty Yoder
Ziegler Inc.
Nick & Deb Zuercher



Drive Your 'Bus' & Make the Appointment for that Mammogram

Sheryl Darling-Mooney, RN, Breast Cancer Survivor

Pictured with the mammogram machine that detected her one centimeter sized lump.

Many years ago, while working in Family Medicine, I did some public speaking on a topic I called "Drive Your Bus." I talked about how important it is to take care of yourself and to take control of your life. You are the driver of your bus. This bus follows the road and there are things along the road that you can't change, but by taking care of your "bus" you are helping to set yourself up for a great ride through life. Believe me, this sounded better than my short description of that talk. But I still think it is true today.

I am at least the seventh woman in my mom's family to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Some have even had it twice—maybe a different type, maybe a different side. Luckily these ladies have all been able to come out the other side.

Because of the prevalence of this in my family, I have felt a black cloud over my head for about the last twenty years, just waiting for it to be my turn. I didn't need to be told the importance of self-breast exams or mammograms. Being the lucky recipient of dense fibrocystic breast tissue, I was occasionally referred for more imaging to get a better look. It always came back okay.

In December of last year, I had my annual mammogram the Monday of Christmas week. I got the call that afternoon that they needed more images and an ultrasound and scheduled it for the following week.

The ultrasound showed a small "weird" mass. The radiologist thought we should schedule a biopsy. My anxiety jumped a bit, but the team was very reassuring that whatever it was looked very small. I mentioned right then that if it was "something," I wanted a bilateral mastectomy and to just be done with that worry.

A few days after the biopsy, I received a call at work, and the radiologist told me I had invasive ductal cancer in my left breast. She also told me the area looked very small and from the ultrasound my lymph nodes looked normal; however until final pathology came back, we would not know the definite outcome and what further treatment would be necessary. BOOM! It's here.

Telling people was by far the worst part of this whole thing. Especially my family and friends.

Things moved quickly. I met with my medical team and the plan was for a bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction. Surgery was scheduled for the end of January—about 6 weeks after that first mammogram. Surgery was scheduled as a same-day procedure and I have to say it went way better than I expected. Going home that afternoon wasn't a problem. I can't thank my husband, family and friends enough for the great care they provided.

Two days after surgery, my surgeon called to see how I was doing and to tell me that final pathology showed I had a pea-sized tumor of a different kind of cancer in my other breast. I definitely made the right decision when I said I wanted a bilateral mastectomy. Recovery went well and I had a reconstruction procedure done in early June.

Through all of this I NEVER FELT A LUMP.

People have commented on me having a positive attitude through this. I would be lying if I didn't admit to the dark moments. You can't and shouldn't ignore the fear, anxiety, and all the other unknowns that creep in. For the most part, I have stayed positive. Positivity and humor have gotten me through this. I know that in order for me to be able to handle challenges physically, I have to be able to successfully manage them mentally. I knew what I wanted to do in case I was diagnosed with breast cancer. My medical team was on board, but I was driving that "bus." They could handle the medical part, but I was in charge of the "me" part.

I know that I am blessed and I know that I want to be able to support others on their journey. Since my diagnosis I have had two friends diagnosed, and yes, they are doing well because of early detection.

My message is being proactive rather than reactive gives you the best opportunity to be in the driver's seat on your bus. Know who you need on your bus. Find medical providers you trust, take recommendations to heart, and trust the science. I have shared my story with you in hopes that you can take the actions necessary to live your best life. There are too many things in life that we have no control over. Take advantage of the things we can control to help prevent the things we can't control.

Early detection & prevention saves lives!

New Postville Medical Clinic

A Dream Come True!

134 West Greene St. Postville

Last fall, our Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation kicked off their annual campaign to raise funds for a NEW Postville Medical Clinic. They began their campaign with a goal of $200,000, and thanks to so many amazing supporters, they surpassed that goal, raising more than $211,000, plus grants totaling $52,521! Monday, September 28, the new Postville Medical Clinic opened and is truly a dream come true!

This new Postville Clinic is nearly triple the size of the previous clinic, which is located right next door. Now, five full exam rooms, plus a procedure room and two behavioral health care rooms, are all readily available for patient care, plus handicap-accessible restrooms, a registration area, a laboratory, a medication room and staff offices and work area.





Laura Baxter, Chief Clinical Officer, states, "We are truly blessed to be working in our beautiful new clinic, made possible in large part through the support of the Postville community, our supporters and clinic team. This new space allows us to better serve our patients and expand access to care. With the additional space, we are now able to schedule at least two providers each day, helping us meet the needs of the community."

All of the supporters of the entire Fall 2025 campaign are listed on page10 and 11. Our Foundation is so grateful to all of our donors, whether you donated to this Postville Clinic project, to another department or piece of equipment, or to the general fund. Thanks to all of our donors for making so many important things happen!

To Make an Appointment at the Postville Clinic, Call 563-864-7221

Hours: Mon. 7am-5pm, Tue. 8am-5pm, Wed. 7am-5pm, Thur. 8am-5pm, Fri. 8am-5pm

"As a new physician joining this wonderful community, I am truly excited to be part of this important milestone. Since arriving, I have been incredibly grateful for the warm welcome from my colleagues and from the general community. I am excited about what we can accomplish together." ***Dr. Olaitan Akinboboye***

"The new space is amazing + the great staff we have = the perfect mix!" ***Alisha Henderson, Postville Clinic RN***

"We are loving the new clinic, and it is feeling more and more like home every day! It is a much more professional, functional space for all of us. It is much easier to protect patient privacy and have a quiet exam room, free from distraction and extra noise. The additional exam rooms have been very useful on busy days to ensure that patients are not needing to wait due to room availability, thus setting providers behind schedule." ***Hannah Kelly, Nurse Practitioner***

"Having a new clinic has been a wonderful benefit for both our community and our staff. With five rooms, including a procedure room, we have more opportunities to welcome patients and provide the care they need. During my time at VMH, I've had the privilege of seeing more familiar faces in the community and building meaningful relationships with our patients. As we continue to care for them, they become more than just patients—they begin to feel like family. It's rewarding to be part of a clinic that brings our community closer together while allowing us to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve." ***Selena Perez, Medical Assistant***

"This renovated space offers a new start for patients who haven't been to a primary care provider in many years. Postville is a very deserving community with a hardworking population, and they deserve a place they can trust and feel supported in, no matter their background. I hope that's what the new clinic can be for the town and surrounding areas." ***Mason Kerian, Nurse Practitioner***

"The new clinic has been great! We've been able to get patients in and out in a timely manner, and it's so exciting to see our community growing. We're thrilled to be able to serve more patients and continue making a positive impact in our community!" ***Sandy Lopez, Medical Assistant***



Over 100 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Postville Medical Clinic, arranged by the Postville Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Dennis Koenig began the program, speaking about what the beautiful new clinic means to the community and how it will benefit the town and surrounding area.

The clinic is staffed by eight providers—six in family medicine and two behavioral health nurses. Medical providers consist of Alex Berns, NP; Minji Ransom, NP; Hannah Kelly, NP; Mason Kerian, NP; Katy Maker, NP and Nurse Midwife, and now Dr. Olaitan Akinboboye has joined this team as a physician. He is available to see patients three days per week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Postville Medical Clinic.

With the opening of the new clinic and the addition of Dr. Akinboboye, the clinic hours have been expanded to 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The clinic remains open during the noon hour and walk-in appointments are also available.



Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners, Tara Fink, PMHNP, and Angela Taylor, PMHNP, also provide behavioral health care at the clinic each week.

The new Veterans Memorial Hospital Postville Clinic represents a significant investment in the health and future of the community, made possible through the generosity and support of residents, businesses, organizations and health care professionals.

To make an appointment, please call the clinic at 563-864-7221. Walk-ins are always welcome!

"I have been very down about the health care system in the past, but I recently started a new insurance plan and am now going to the Postville and Waukon Clinics and have been very, very happy.

I used to go to the Postville Clinic to see Dr. McMullan. After he retired, I was recommended by a staff member to see Nurse Practitioner Katy Maker, so I made an appointment and began seeing her earlier this year. I have made her my main provider and continue seeing her in both the Postville and Waukon Clinics. Since then, she has even reached out to me many times in person, checking on me to be sure everything is going ok.

The staff are always real quick at getting back to me with appointments and have great follow-up. They make the calls to Hartig Drug for me and fill my prescriptions and even helped me set up my health care services around here to be approved by my insurance. They look out for your well-being and your out-of-pocket costs, and don't order any tests that you don't need.

I also head to the hospital in Waukon for my lab tests and have had surgery in the Surgical Suite. One day I even needed to see the ophthalmologist next door at Emplify Clinic by Gundersen and they called over and got me right in the same day.

I also made one trip to the emergency room and everyone went out of their way to do their very best. They were very quick about getting my appointments to see other providers made for follow-up.

Everyone here really cares, especially Katy… she goes above and beyond. If she doesn't have the answer, she digs deep and finds the answers. I trust her more than any doctor I have been treated by. Since I have come back from Decorah, everything I have dealt with has been top-notch. It is so good to have that kind of care here in Allamakee County.



I even look forward to going to the doctor now. I have shared my good feelings with many others at my church and in my community and tell everyone to go here for their care!"

Travis Hughes, Luana



"I have lived in Postville for five years now. I have three small children: twins who are almost three and a five-year-old. When my twins were born, they both had several little health-related complications, so I always traveled far away to La Crosse and to the Children's Hospital in Iowa City, and even a little further sometimes. But as they started to grow, I eventually found the VMH Clinic in Postville and I consistently started to take them there for ear-related infections and all kinds of things.

I just started to love it there because they would take my boys in that same day, as soon as possible, making them a priority and the care providers there are always so kind and understanding. They are all really good at getting back to me on things. We always have a very short wait time, which is really important with my twins!

I truly have felt at home there at the Postville Clinic. Most of them even recognize my boys. Thankfully, many of their health problems have resolved and they are healthy, but I have a BIG appreciation for the staff, providers, nurses and medical assistants. I am truly, truly grateful they are here in Postville and close to such a mixed cultural community because a few of them also are Spanish-speaking and that makes a big difference for many of us. This new clinic is a blessing to the community, it really is!"

Ani Robertson, Postville

The Story of Local Health Care with 304 Stickers

What happens when you give members of the community a simple sticker and ask them, "Where does healthcare touch your life?"

At Veterans Memorial Hospital and Clinics, that simple question yielded over 300 stickers—and a powerful reminder of just how many ways local health care touches the lives of area families.

For three months this summer, a display board was taken to various locations and events throughout the area, including the Allamakee County Fair, the Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation Golf Tournament, farmers markets in local communities, the Women's Wellness Night Out and the Postville Clinic Open House. Visitors were invited to participate in an interactive display by placing a sticker next to the department or service they or a family member had used at Veterans Memorial Hospital and Clinics.

The display was designed as a fun, informal community engagement activity. People could choose to participate and place a sticker based on their experience or that of a family member. The results simply offer a snapshot of the many ways community members connect with VMH!

While the Emergency Department had the highest number of stickers, perhaps the most meaningful part of the display was everything beyond emergency care. More than three-quarters of the 304 stickers represented services outside the Emergency Department.

Those stickers represent many different health care journeys….

They represent someone receiving physical therapy after an injury. A patient having surgery close to home. A mother welcoming a baby. A family visiting a local clinic for routine or ongoing care. A loved one receiving care through Home Health. A patient receiving specialized treatment through Infusion, Pain Management or Podiatry.

Each sticker may have been small, but each represented a personal experience. It was especially meaningful to hear the stories behind the stickers. One participant commented, "I loved being able to come to Waukon for my infusion treatments after chemotherapy in La Crosse." Another commented, "Our physical therapy department is the best around! When my doctors in La Crosse heard I was from Waukon, they knew I would have great follow-up care in physical therapy." Another comment, heard more than once, was simply, "I've used most of these services!"



Beth Shafer, Growth and Development Coordinator, pictured by the 304 stickers collected this last summer, showing how the community values and supports local health care.

The display also offered a visual reminder that Veterans Memorial Hospital is much more than an Emergency Department. It is a place where people receive care throughout many stages of life—from maternity and childhood through adulthood, rehabilitation and specialized care.

"Sometimes we don't realize how many different ways our local hospital serves our community until we stop and look at it all in one place," states Beth Shafer, Growth and Development Coordinator for the Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation. "The sticker display was a fun way to engage with our community, but the results also gave us a wonderful picture of the many services people rely on right here at home."

The 304 stickers are more than a number. They represent patients, families, milestones, challenges, recoveries and everyday health care needs. And they reinforce an important message: local health care matters.

The Veterans Memorial Health Care Foundation is grateful to everyone who participated in the display and, more importantly, to the community members who continue to support Veterans Memorial Hospital. Through donations and community support, the Foundation helps provide equipment, technology, facility improvements and other resources that strengthen health care close to home.

Behind every sticker is a story. Together, those 304 stickers tell the story of a community that continues to value and support its local health care.

Behavioral Health Care

VERY ACCESSIBLE

In Northeast Iowa!

Northeast Iowa has gone from nearly no accessibility to incredible access for **ALL AGES!**

THREE Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioners on staff are available to meet privately, in person, offering prescribing and counseling services for anyone of any age. Appointments are completely confidential.



Call the Waukon Clinic 563-568-5530 or the Postville Clinic 563-864-7221 to make an appointment.

Anyone Can Make a Referral to Either Program!

We accept self-referrals for either program, as well as from primary care providers, specialists, family members, friends, community groups, and nursing or residential facilities.

Senior Life Solutions



SLS Provides Outpatient Services Designed to Meet the Unique Needs of Individuals, Typically 65 Years and Older

experiencing low mood, sadness, grief, excessive worry or anxiety related to life changes often associated with aging.

Services Include:

Group and Individual Therapy, Medication Management, and After-Care Planning

Left to Right: Katherine Osmonson - Office & Patient Coordinator, Mandy Pettit, RN - Program Director and Kayla Baxter - Therapist.

Our Senior Life Solutions provides outpatient services to patients with Medicare insurance coverages experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental health challenges associated with aging. These services include group therapy, individual therapy, psychiatric assessment, and medication management. Senior Life Solutions staff includes a board-certified psychiatrist, a licensed therapist, a registered nurse, and other professionals dedicated to the emotional well-being of the seniors in our community. Call us at 563-568-5560.

TOP 10 ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

by Sue McMillan, Nurse Practitioner, Waukon Clinic

"Getting older is not a disease – it is a privilege. Women are living longer, working longer, caring for children, caring for their parents, starting businesses, changing careers, traveling, exercising and... occasionally standing in the kitchen wondering why they walked in there!"



HERE ARE 10 OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR WOMEN AS WE AGE.

10. ARTHRITIS-OSTEOARTHRITIS & JOINT HEALTH

As women age, joint problems become increasingly common. Knees, hips, hands, shoulders - basically anything with a hinge files a complaint, because the cartilage that cushions our joints eventually breaks down.

Pain and stiffness are not something you have to 'live with.' Maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, strengthening muscles and improving balance can all help with mobility. 'Motion is lotion' - swimming, cycling and strength training can help. Find something you enjoy and do it regularly.

9. OSTEOPOROSIS & BONE HEALTH

Bones get thin quietly. Prevention is much easier than recovering from a hip fracture. Things that matter include weight-bearing exercise, strength training, adequate calcium and vitamin D, avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol, and asking your healthcare provider about having a bone densitometry test.

8. MENTAL HEALTH

Women can experience anxiety, depression, loneliness, grief, stress and major life transitions at any age and sometimes are taking care of everyone else while quietly running on empty.

Remember - you are allowed to take care of yourself before you are completely exhausted. Mental health IS health! Talk to someone; see your healthcare provider; move your body; sleep; stay socially connected; and ask for help. Strong women ask for help - that is wisdom, not weakness!

7. DIABETES & METABOLIC HEALTH

Risks include age, family history, excess body weight, physical inactivity, certain medications, and a history of gestational diabetes.

The good news - small changes can make a big difference… walk more, build muscle, eat more veggies and fiber, choose protein-rich foods and reduce highly processed foods and excess added sugar. Talk to your healthcare provider about screening or treatment if needed. There are SO many options available.

6. HEART DISEASE

This is the leading cause of death for women in the United States. Women's heart attack symptoms can be more subtle such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, unusual fatigue, nausea, sweating, and back, neck, jaw, or arm discomfort.

Know your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. Avoid smoking. Avoid physical inactivity. Move or keep weight toward an ideal weight. Care for your heart… after all, your heart has taken care of you all of these years and now you need to take care of it. Talk to your provider today and develop a plan based on your own personal risk.

5. CANCER SCREENING

Cancer screening is one of the most important tools we have. For women, screening conversations include breast cancer - mammography, cervical cancer - pap smear, lung cancer screening, colorectal cancer - options include stool-based test and/or colonoscopy. Screening saves lives. Colorectal cancer is on the rise and this is a very important screening.

ALL of the above screening measures can be done locally at Veterans Memorial Hospital and Clinics. Call and make your appointment because that appointment could save your life.

4. VISION & HEARING

Be sure to stay up on your vision exam. Eye health is critical and pressures within the eye need to be measured.

Adequate hearing is imperative. There is a lot of research showing relationships between decreased hearing and development of dementia.

3. BRAIN HEALTH & COGNITION

Forgetting someone's name is normal. Walking into a room and forgetting why is very common. Opening the refrigerator and staring inside is also common. But there is a difference between normal age-related changes and dementia. Warning signs include things like increasing difficulty managing finances, getting lost in familiar places, trouble completing familiar tasks, major changes in judgment, repeatedly asking the same questions, and significant changes in personality or behavior.

Brain health is connected to overall health. Exercise, managing blood pressure, managing diabetes, avoiding smoking, staying in good health, staying socially connected (which is very important), hearing care, staying mentally engaged, and learning new things.

Your brain likes to be challenged, so learn something new… take a class, play music, learn another language, travel, read, and look up Stephen Jepson on YouTube - "Never leave the playground."

And if you are thinking, "I cannot remember anything anymore," do not automatically assume it's dementia. Many medical issues can affect concentration and memory, such as sleep, medication, depression, and anxiety, as well as others. When in doubt, see your provider.

2. SLEEP

As we age, sleep becomes unpredictable. Sleep affects heart health, weight, mood, and memory. Sleep is complex. If you snore, wake up tired, or feel tired during the day, get checked.

1. HEALTHY AGING & INDEPENDENCE

Ultimately, all of these other issues come back to healthy aging and maintaining independence. How do we stay healthy enough to keep doing the things we love?

Healthy aging means protecting: your heart, your bones, your muscles, your brain, your relationships and your independence.

Women are incredibly good at taking care of everyone else. But your health matters too! Make the healthcare appointment, get the screening, eat the vegetables, take the walk, check the blood pressure, get some sleep, talk about symptoms you have been ignoring, and do NOT be embarrassed to ask questions.

Growing older is not about giving up. It's about living better, staying curious, keeping up with screenings and moving your body. Make your changes. Make your appointments. Be the best version of yourself!

New LifePak
QUICKLY SAVES A LIFE

The technology of the new Striker LifePak cardiac monitor and defibrillator can interpret a shockable rhythm even while CPR is in progress. Prior to this advancement in technology, rescuers would have to stop CPR while the monitor analyzed the patient to see if a shock was advised to be delivered. Now, CPR can remain in progress and keep "life flowing circulation" continuous at a very critical time.

This new LifePak serves not only as a defibrillator, but it also monitors vitals, reads 12 leads and performs EKGs, graphs ST elevations, and shows breathing and quality of air exchange, all while transmitting data back to the ER staff at the hospital.



LifePak

It can even pace the patient's heart during transport in addition to performing a cardioversion, shocking patients out of a harmful rhythm like ventricular tachycardia.

That is what saved the life of Erma Swenson, who lives between Luana and Waukon. In her own words, she explains.

"The first time I had the racing ventricular tachycardia (Vtach) rhythm, the provider thought it was a lack of potassium, but the second time I had to be airlifted to Mayo.

My home is near Luana and I had called 911. Because it was cardiac, the MFL ambulance called the Waukon ambulance for the assistance of paramedics. Waukon met us with the LifePak defibrillator and after just being there a couple of minutes, they used it on me.

I was fully conscious and would describe it as stepping on a bomb that exploded in your body, but everything was still intact. Then it felt like warm water was flowing out of my fingers and toes. The shock worked and that is why I am here today!

After being flown to Mayo in Rochester, they sent me home with a heart monitor and I went to stay at my daughter, Ronda's, in Madison. We were called at her home at 2:30 am to tell me I was in a V-tach rhythm again and I should get right to the hospital.



Erma Swenson pictured with McLain Swauger, Paramedic/EMS Manager, who used the LifePak on Erma, delivering the shock that saved her life.

Thankfully, I got there in time.

All three times I had this attack, I had no symptoms other than perspiring and feeling a warm, soft feeling on my chest. When I was in the hospital, they asked me where it hurt and I told them, it didn't, I just had this warm feeling, like someone was holding their hand over my heart. After a few months, I got thinking, that was the hand of God! I also had that same warm feeling when I left the hospital, only this time, His hand was on my shoulder.

There is no reason I should be here other than McLain and the helicopter and this incredible technology. I now have an implanted defibrillator. It is amazing what science and medicine can do...they are all very good things.

I was in four different hospitals in three states in five days! They kept

LifePack ... Continued on Page 18

McLain Swauger, EMS Manager, was on that initial call to intercept Erma that day. He states, "These new LifePaks provide so much more insight into cardiac data out in the field for the paramedic to evaluate and treat the situation. Thanks to them, we are actually doing the same things out in the field the hospital would do on site…literally bringing the ER to our patients!

We also provide interfacility transfers for patients requiring higher levels of care that are not available locally. These transports can require extended travel, and patients may remain in our care for several hours. During that time, dependable monitoring is especially important. The LifePak 35 allows crews to continuously assess patients and quickly recognize changes in condition throughout prolonged transports.

Medicine is constantly evolving and we are evolving with it with the most up-to-date technology and equipment; however, this technology is very expensive. Thanks to grants and donations like this to our hospital Foundation, we can purchase these advancements in technology as the funds allow."

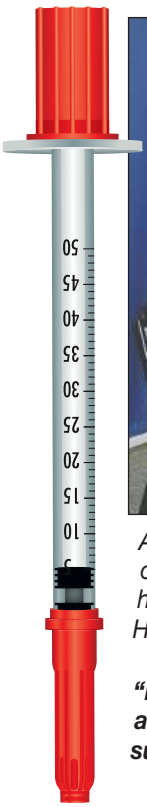
LifePak ... Continued from Page 17

saying they were treating me as a different age because even though my actual age is 85, the monitor stated I was like a 72-year-old. That is thanks to having always walked on my treadmill every morning and eating good foods. I am back on the treadmill every day, working my way up to 30 minutes, slowly but surely. I hope to be mowing my own lawn again next year. I'm going to the Christmas market in Frankfurt, Germany, with my daughter, Sabrina, in November, and then taking the Danube River Cruise in May.

After seeing what this can do and how it brings life back to you, I want everyone to know there is always hope. I have been given so many more years to watch my eight great-grandchildren's events! I am very lucky to be alive and very blessed. My message to everyone is to be positive. Every day is a beautiful day even when the sun is not shining!"



The Foundation's Caring for All Donor Wall has been completed and will soon be continued across the hallway with names of additional generous Foundation donors! The funds raised through these gifts help make important purchases, such as this life-saving LifePak cardiac monitor and defibrillator. Donors may also choose to restrict their donation to a specific department or piece of needed equipment. We are so grateful for our donors and the important impact these donations make!





Ann Fields of Lansing knows the importance of getting an annual flu shot. She is pictured here with Community and Home Care Public Health Nurse Brooklyn Grangaard, on the first walk-in flu shot clinic day held in October!

"I am a firm believer in getting the flu shot and especially for children. I enjoy being a substitute teacher in New Albin and the flu shot keeps me so much healthier!"

Protect Yourself & Your Family FROM THE FLU!

FLU SHOTS ARE AVAILABLE EVERY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

at Veterans Memorial Hospital Community and Home Care-Allamakee Public Health.

Call 563-568-5660 to Make an Appointment.

Influenza (flu), as described by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), is a potentially fatal, contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu vaccines prevent and diminish the severity of flu-related illness, reducing the need for clinical medical care and hospitalization. Flu vaccines are effective at saving and protecting lives. Vaccination is especially important in the fall and winter when respiratory diseases circulate in high volume across the country.

Veterans Memorial Hospital Community & Home Care
Allamakee County Public Health
12 E. Main St., Waukon

Hospital History - Brad Krambeer 1993-2026



Brad Krambeer, Athletic Trainer 1993-2026

Brad Krambeer began working for Veterans Memorial Hospital in September of 1993 and recently retired after 33 years of service to thousands of rehabilitation patients! Brad was a key in shaping what outpatient rehabilitation looks like today.

Brad is a Waukon native and was a multi-sport athlete in high school. He attended Winona State University, intending to become a history teacher, but his athletic injuries led him to athletic training instead.

In 1992, Brad came back home to begin working with Dennis Montet, physical therapist, and Betty Christianson, LPN, assisting patients with their therapy and working with athletes in the lower level of the Hagensick Chiropractic building in south Waukon (in the lower level of the current Hacker Nelson building where Allamakee County Extension is now located)



In 2005, Brad won the Iowa High School Athletic Association Sports Medicine Award in Des Moines and was the first athletic trainer to ever win the award! He is pictured here with his wife, Becky, son Konnor, and soon-to-be-born baby Kaitlyn.

In 1993, Veterans Memorial Hospital began leasing this center from Hagensick Chiropractic to begin offering outpatient rehabilitation. Before this time, the physical and occupational therapy services were primarily inpatient-based, provided by Dennis Montet and his brother Tom, Speech Therapist, and Sr. Rita, Occupational Therapist, who were all located in the lower level of the hospital. Patients were walked or wheeled down into this small room for their treatments with very little equipment available. With this new lease, Veterans Memorial Hospital could begin offering outpatient physical therapy services to the community and named the facility the "Healthy Lifestyles Center." This also served as the fitness location that community members could purchase memberships for working out.

Since Dennis served as the only physical therapist, he and Brad traveled back and forth to the hospital to care for the inpatients as well.

"I worked both outpatient and inpatient treatments along with managing the Healthy Lifestyles Center and coverage for the Waukon Indian football and wrestling practices and games. In the mid-90s, Amy Robinson, the current Rehabilitation Director, was hired to assist our therapy department. We have now been working together for 30 years."

In 1997, following the construction of the current Waukon Clinic, which was owned by Mayo at the time, this outpatient facility could be moved to its current location, offering much more space and room for needed, updated exercise equipment. The Veterans Memorial Hospital Rehabilitation is conveniently located just inside the main entrance of the hospital and serves more than 80 patients every day.

Brad never missed a Waukon football game, except for one due to his son's birth and one scrimmage due to his daughter's birth. Brad worked his last Waukon football game on November 20, 2020, the same day the Waukon Indians won the Class 2A State Championship game with Brad's son Konnor, a starting defensive back on the team. Austin Troendle, Physical Therapist and Athletic Trainer has been filling his shoes ever since.

"When you work with someone every day for over 30 years, they stop being just a coworker and become a fundamental part of your daily life. Brad has been good at convincing patients to get up and move, and for years we worked together getting inpatients moving after a surgery, a stroke, a fracture, or another health problem," states Amy Robinson, Rehabilitation Director. "Brad has recently taken the lead on inpatient rehab, working closely with the nursing staff and the entire team to provide the best possible care to our patients. He will be missed by someone in every hospital department because he has touched so many people here."

Not only have these services grown, but the number of rehabilitation staff have as well. Currently, the Veterans Memorial Hospital Rehabilitation Department consists of six physical therapists, two occupational therapists, one speech therapist, three physical therapy assistants, and one occupational therapy assistant. They know they have big shoes to fill with his retirement!

"I survived four administrators, plus two interim administrators over my 33 years, with Mike Myers being the most respected and considered a dear friend. I stayed here for the simple reason of wanting to take care of and give back to my community while watching my kids spend time with my parents while growing up."

Brad has served his community in many more ways in addition to rehabilitation. He has been a volunteer firefighter for over 30 years and became an Emergency Medical Technician in recent years. He has assisted on many ambulance calls, even recently helping to save a life by performing CPR.

"I have enjoyed the countless football games I covered, including the two state championships I witnessed. I will miss the people on staff, but everyone is replaceable. I know the department will continue to give excellent care," states Brad. "I look forward to spending more time outdoors and continuing to follow both of my children, Kaitlyn, who is playing softball at Luther College and Konnor, who is a state patrolman living in Fredericksburg."

Brad adds, "I want to thank Greg Hagensick and Dennis Montet for giving me the opportunity to start my career in 1992 here in Waukon. Without that chance, I would have taken that Athletic Trainer position in Vermillion, South Dakota!"



Pictured, front row, left to right: Alana Gavin, Physical Therapist; Patrick Suttie, Physical Therapist; Austin Troendle, Physical Therapist; Amy Robinson, Physical Therapist and Rehab Director; Abie Daniel, Physical Therapist; Alyssa Snitker, Speech Therapist; Melissa Clarke, Occupational Therapist; Sara White, Physical Therapy Assistant; and Amy Ghelf, Physical Therapy Assistant. Back row, left to right: Laurel Hagensick, Physical Therapist; Amy Evanson, Occupational Therapy Assistant; Dacia Johnson, Rehab Office Manager; Tami Gebel, Occupational Therapist; Shelly Valley, Physical Therapy Assistant; and Brad Krambeer, Athletic Trainer.

MEDICAL STAFF

Dave Schwartz, MD
Olaitan Akinboboye, MD
Susan McMillan, ARNP
Minji Ransom, ARNP
Alex Berns, ARNP
Katy Maker, ARNP, CNM
Hannah Kelly, ARNP
Mason Kerian, ARNP
Tara Fink, PMHNP
Janet Hunter, PMHNP
Angela Taylor, PMHNP
William Specht, ARNP (ER)
Becky Krambeer, ARNP (ER)
Robert Giese, PA (ER)
John Kelly, ARNP (ER)
Isidora Luther, ARNP (ER)
Robyn Brown, ARNP (ER)
Raquel Ristau, PA
Chelsey Sherburne, ARNP
Laura Keatley, ARNP
Halie Ruff, ARNP
Katy Grangaard, ARNP
Mathew Snitker, ARNP
Sherri Schilling, MD
Catherine Nelson, MD

Optometry
Morgan Smerud, OD

Pain Clinic
Shawn Blake, CRNA

Cardiology
Emplify Gundersen Cardiologists

Pathology
Emplify Gundersen Pathologists

Radiology
Emplify Gundersen Radiologists

Surgery
Phillip Yee, MD
Chris Winters, MD
Michael LaBelle, MD
Elleson Schurtz, MD

Dentistry
Jessica Wilke, DDS

Podiatry
Kristina Thompson, DPM
Greg Valkosky, DPM
Craig Sullivan, DPM
Brooke Tappe, DPM

Anesthesiology
Mark Bishop, CRNA
Skip Loebig, CRNA
Shawn Blake, CRNA
Ben Levinson, CRNA
Todd Schissel, CRNA

Sleep Study
Courtney Whitney, DO
Adriana Escandon Sandino, MD

Telemedicine Services
ER Telehealth
Telepsyche
Telestroke
NeoNet
Pediatric Critical Care

Veterans Memorial Hospital
40 First St. SE
Waukon, IA 52172

PRSRT STD
EDRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

We're Here for You!



WAUKON CLINIC



POSTVILLE CLINIC



VMH

VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & CLINICS

"Our Family Caring for Your Family"

www.veteransmemorialhospital.com

MISSION: VMH enhances the lives of those we serve by providing an exceptional healthcare experience with compassion.

VISION: VMH will be a premier health facility and a leader in fostering a healthy community through innovation, excellence, stewardship, and commitment to the people we serve throughout their lifetime.

Find Us On Facebook!