

Insight



**State Champs Put
Their Trust in FHN
Sports Medicine Team**

**'Sometimes You
Need a Crisis to
Change Your Life'**

**Family Birthing
Center's 'Top-Notch'
Support for Moms**



We're here, for you.

FHN

'Nothing Endures but Change ...' Heraclitus



We certainly are living with rapid change, and we all look forward to the speed and volatility beginning to settle. Whether you think of the ancient Stoic saying as a good or bad thing, it really means that change

should be accepted as a constant thing.

FHN welcomes the start of the year with cautious optimism and an ongoing commitment to improving the health of our communities. We are with you as families struggle with the many impacts of this virus on our lives, and we see the many kindnesses, big and small, that you and the people of our communities extend to each other and to the members of our FHN family. I'd like to thank all of our FHN team members for the compassionate care that they provide and for the sacrifices many have made in the past year caring for our families. We learned a great deal again last year about our resiliency and ability to adapt while continuing to provide superior, quality care in the midst of an ever-changing pandemic, and I am confident that we can do so again this year with your ongoing support. We will do better than simply enduring change, we will use it to make us stronger together.

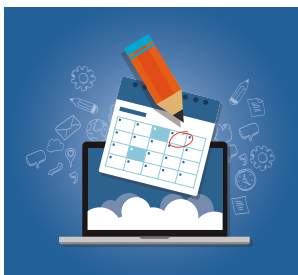
We're excited to share some good news from our patients in this INSIGHT, from the State Champion Le-Win Panther football team and the care they've received from the FHN Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Team to Farfalena Rahn's successful journey toward better health. We're

continuing our focus on your path to better health, too, with a spotlight on just two of our many rural area physicians.

We're pleased to introduce our new Family Counseling Center Director. We welcome two new physicians to our Ob/Gyn Hospitalist team and take a look at how our Women's Health Team is doing a great job caring for new moms and their families. We're also proud to honor my predecessor, Dr. Michael Perry, who has been named a co-recipient of the Freeport Community Foundation's 2020/2021 Matthew Marvin Community Impact Award!

You'll meet our Facilities Director, who has experience in places as far-flung as DeKalb's Egyptian Theatre, O'Hare Airport, and the Lyric Opera House in Chicago! Mike and his team have had a busy winter keeping FHN's facilities warm and safe. We are also sharing some news on the COVID-19 pandemic in our area. We continue to offer free regular vaccination and booster clinics, and we also serve as a Freeport location for free saliva-based CovidSHIELD testing. For the very latest information, you can always go to www.fhn.org/coronavirus. If you haven't received a COVID-19 vaccination or a booster, I urge you to make an appointment and we will help you get it done. It is, quite simply, the best way to help keep yourself and your family from becoming seriously ill from the virus.

Finally, please know we are filled with gratitude for the privilege of being your healthcare partner, so please continue to stay well, and **thank you for choosing FHN!** ■



Some Classes and Groups Returning

As pandemic restrictions ease, FHN is proud to offer a number of small-group opportunities for you to learn about health and wellness or find support. You'll find a full listing and information for classes and groups ranging from first aid to a healthier lifestyle to grief support on our online calendar at www.fhn.org.

Thank you
TO OUR TEAM OF TALENTED STAFF COMMITTED TO
DELIVERING HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

FHN is an award-winning regional healthcare system committed to the health and well-being of the people of northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Organized in 1995, non-profit FHN is comprised of FHN Memorial Hospital, the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, and 13 family healthcare centers in 5 counties spanning northwest Illinois offering primary and specialty medical care, hospice, and outpatient mental health services. For more information about us please visit www.fhn.org.

Note: Photographs taken during the pandemic have followed proper safety protocols.

PAVING NEW PATHWAYS FOR TOMORROW'S MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

ERTMER SHARES HER JOURNEY AS AN APPRENTICE

ALEX ERTMER, RT(R), CMA was ready for a change. And she found it at FHN.

In 2020, the Iowa-based x-ray technician moved back to her hometown of Lena and launched a new chapter in her life with FHN's Medical Assistant (MA) Registered Apprenticeship Program.

"I wanted to do more than x-ray, so I joined the program in August 2020," Alex says. Medical Assistants provide services ranging from administering vaccines, sutures, and casts to office work and general physician support. Their influence in the clinical setting is far-reaching.

This innovative approach featured advantages beyond a conventional MA education. Alex received on-the-job training at FHN, along with a paycheck, while attending college classes locally. She even obtained an FHN scholarship to pay for her education while securing a future job as a medical assistant at FHN.

"The confidence you gain by applying what you learn in the classroom to real-life situations sets you apart. By the time you graduate, you are comfortable in the healthcare setting."

By May 2021, Alex had graduated and began her externship. Today, she's part of FHN's Orthopaedics team,

serving both as a Certified Medical Assistant and an x-ray technician, though she loves floating to other departments as well.

INTRODUCING A GROUNDBREAKING CMA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

FHN developed the Medical Assistant Registered Apprenticeship with the Department of Labor through a partnership with The Workforce Connection. Participants typically attend classes two days a week and work at FHN two days a week.

"FHN was incredibly supportive of my education," Alex says. "They adjusted my schedule to accommodate my classroom needs."

FHN hired Alex as an MA student. Her paid on-the-job training reinforced her education. At work, she was supported by preceptors who mentored her as she learned the ins and outs of the job.

"My preceptors were experienced and knowledgeable, as well as welcoming. They were phenomenal to work with, and even though I've graduated, I still check in with them," Alex says.

Alex is now one of more than 40 FHN Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs) who are filling a growing need in the healthcare industry by providing a diverse array of both office and medical services.

"Our CMAs are a key part of the care team here at FHN," says FHN Innovative Learning Team Leader Karen Kryder, MBA.

Once their education and training are completed, CMAs have more growth opportunities at FHN.



GROWING WITH MY CMA CAREER PATH PROGRAM

FHN's **MY CMA** Career Path Program is a professional development program that recognizes benchmarks in experience, performance, professional growth, and engagement. Through this program, CMAs can achieve Level II or III status and receive corresponding wage increases.

"This program opens the door for our CMAs to pursue career advancement and highlights the important work they're doing," Karen says. "Many of our CMAs were already going above and beyond to broaden their skills and serve as leaders in their field. We want to recognize and reward their achievements."

Alex is close to achieving Level III status and is excited for what the future holds for her at FHN.

"It wasn't always easy, but in the end, I am so thankful for these programs. I'd definitely recommend them to aspiring CMAs, and tell them to not be afraid of jumping in, because they're going to be better off in the end."

Visit www.fhn.org/careers for other career opportunities at FHN!

STATE CHAMPS Get Medical Expertise

from Former Panther Quarterback



He heard it happen – CRACK – and just like that, Casey Klever’s clavicle was broken from an opponent’s tackle.

Football injuries are part of the game – it’s a long, rough season. Even the best of teams, like the Illinois State 1A Champion Le-Win Panthers, deal with broken bones, torn ligaments, and dislocated joints as they battle through their weekly schedules. To perform at their best, these athletes need prompt and professional care when they get hurt.

FHN’s Greg Dammann, MD – a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon – is committed to helping these young competitors. Along with a talented team of medical professionals from a variety of specialties, he applauds these athletes for their dedication and accomplishments.

And, as a Le-Win quarterback himself, back in the day, Dr. Dammann also understands the athletes’ desire to bounce back quickly and their commitment to their teams and communities, no matter where they reside.

In the past two “seasons” – during the spring and fall of 2021 – Dr. Dammann and the FHN Sports Medicine team treated four wounded Panthers football players for a variety of maladies. All have come out ready to play, and full of appreciation for their medical team.

MAREY ROBEY

Running Back and Cornerback

Injury: Fractured fibula and ligament damage in ankle

Marey remembers his leg slipping under the opposing tackler’s body on the second play of the spring season. He hoped it was only a sprain, but it ended up being more serious.

“Dr. Dammann put a plate and screws in the fibula and repaired my ligament injury,” Marey says. “It took some time

to get past some weird pains and discomfort, but I was very determined to get back in shape. My surgery went well and I worked hard to get better. Now I think I might want to pursue kinesiology or physical therapy, based on my experience. I want to help others, like Dr. Dammann and the physical therapists helped me.”

Marey’s family was very familiar with Dr. Dammann, since he also had helped two of Marey’s brothers, Rahveon and Ronnie Valentine, bounce back from football injuries. According to Marey’s dad, Dan Brown, “I think it is great that Dr. Dammann literally got Marey back on his feet, and now Marey is looking to do the same for others. Up to a couple of months ago, he had no idea what to major in. Sometimes a scary experience can provide the motivation for something good. Dr. Dammann and FHN have been great for our family and helped us get through some hard times.”

JAKE ZEAL

Running Back and Defensive Back

Injury: Broken collarbone

It wasn’t too painful at first, but by halftime, Jake was pretty sure he had suffered a broken bone during a routine play at a game in Dubuque. His parents drove him to the Finley Hospital Emergency Department there, where they confirmed he had a broken collarbone and suggested he see an orthopaedic specialist. Though the family’s primary healthcare providers aren’t part of FHN, they received numerous suggestions to see Dr. Dammann at FHN, where they went the following Monday.

Surgery was scheduled quickly, and Jake admits he was anxious about the procedure. “I was pretty nervous,” he shares, “but I could tell Dr. Dammann really cared about me personally. He put his hand on my shoulder and said a prayer, and that gave me confidence and put me at ease. All went well – in fact, it was better than I expected and I regained my strength fast. Being around the high-tech equipment and healthcare professionals has me thinking I might pursue pre-med when I head to college.”

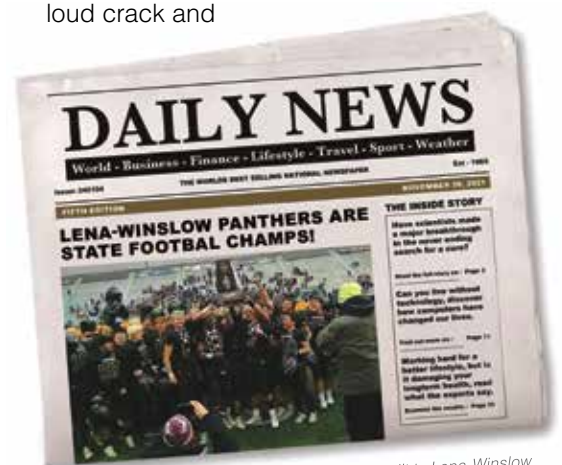
His dad agrees that the experience was positive. “Dr. Dammann and the entire FHN team were great to work with. The Lena office simplified followup, and there was great communication every step of the way. So when the Klevers needed orthopedic help, we were quick to suggest Dr. Dammann and FHN. Plus, I played against Greg Dammann when I was a Galena Pirate, so that was a fun coincidence.”

CASEY KLEVER

Tight End and Linebacker

Injury: Broken collarbone

It was a pretty typical play that broke Casey Klever’s collarbone – one clean break and another fragment. “I heard a loud crack and



Team photo credit to Lena-Winslow High School Football Facebook page



▲ Shown here left to right are Dr. Greg Dammann, Henry Engel, Jake Zeal, Marey Robey, Casey Klever, Coach Ric Arand

then I couldn't move. I knew it wasn't good, and when the trainer said he saw a bump, I realized I might be out for a while. My mom and Jodi Zeal took me to the ER at FHN, and since the Zeals had such good luck with Dr. Dammann, they suggested we see him, too. I went on Monday and had surgery a few days later. Thinking about it was unnerving – I don't even like needles! But it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I honestly don't remember much until getting some graham crackers in the recovery room!"

Christal Klever remembers a few more details from the day than her son. "Dr. Dammann was amazing. He provided us with tremendous access during the whole process," she explains, "and his communication was exceptional. One of the nurses, Amanda Paulsen, really helped out, the anesthesiologist was so professional, and all the staff was great."

Casey's recovery has gone well and his strength and mobility are returning quickly – enough so that he has been cleared to play basketball. Just a sophomore, he is thrilled to continue his high school sports career without restrictions.

HENRY ENGEL **Offensive Guard and Defensive End** **Injury: Knee inflammation, pain, and limited mobility**

He didn't have a broken bone, but he did have a lot of pain. Inflammation from repeated impact was taking a toll on Henry Engel's leg and it restricted his mobility and range of motion. "My knee locked up at practice and it was awful," Henry explains. "I couldn't extend my knee fully and it really hurt. Dr. Dammann spent a lot of time examining me and gave me some medication that helped with soft tissue swelling and discomfort. It made it much better and got me back on the field."

Henry's mom, Tabitha, was concerned that continuing to play the game he loves might cause her son permanent damage. She shares, "Dr. Dammann was thorough in his evaluation and clearly communicated our options moving forward. I needed reassurance we weren't turning a temporary injury into a lifelong problem by letting Henry play, and he gave us straightforward and honest information. He was very accommodating with his time, and

I was impressed. We already knew Dr. Dammann by reputation, and he lived up to the exceptionally high expectations that accompanied it."

Henry, who has now moved on to wrestling, continues to perform well and has minimal problems with his knee. According to Tabitha, Henry and his other injured teammates enjoy a friendly rapport with Dr. Dammann that makes their treatment easier. "He is relatable – the kids all feel comfortable with him," she says. "He takes a minute away from being a surgeon to just be a friend. That makes a big difference."

As for Dr. Dammann, he is just pleased to help young athletes, like those on his former team, stay in the game and excel. "I am honored that Coach A and the parents trust me to treat these athletes – I care for them like they are my own kids. As the father of two former Freeport Pretzel swimmers and a Rockford Christian School quarterback, all of whom went on to participate in collegiate athletics, I am very invested in local high school sports and am proud to play a small role in their success."

Family Birthing Center Offers ‘Top-Notch’ Support for Moms



▲ FHN’s Women’s Health Team includes four providers who see patients at the FHN Family Healthcare Center - Burchard Hills in Freeport. Left to right, they are: Lee Christine Sessler, MD, FACOG; Keith Martin, MD, FACOG; Sara Smith, WHNP-BC; and Danielle Siedschlag, WHNP-BC.

When moms-to-be come in to the FHN Family Birthing Center at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport, they probably aren’t noticing the small changes we’ve made, like fresh paint and local artwork and photography on the walls for a cozier atmosphere.

Those changes count, says FHN Women’s Health Service Line Director Linnette Carter, MSN, APN/CNS-BC, NEA-BC, but they aren’t nearly as important as the unit’s team of talented, dedicated caregivers.

“We’re happy to support our laboring moms to achieve the birth experience they desire. That hasn’t changed, and we’re very proud to be among the top community-based hospitals in the state in terms of helping moms bring their babies into the world as they had hoped.”

Linnette Carter

The Birthing Center team prioritizes vaginal births whenever it is possible for the health of moms and babies, and the team is part of three different state-led quality initiatives, one of which

is focused on just that, promoting vaginal deliveries, and we have the statistics to prove it.

The Healthy People 2030 (a U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion initiative) and ILPQC (Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative) Promoting Vaginal Birth Initiative’s goal is to keep Cesarean births for a mother’s first delivery when full term, to less than 23.6 percent. The FHN Family Birthing Center’s 2021 rate was 23.53 percent for mothers within this group.

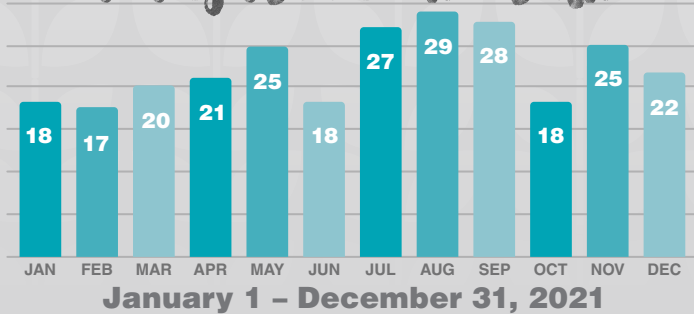
“The number is important – it means that our physicians and nurses are doing everything we can to assure you a safe and healthy birth experience,” Linnette says. “But what that number really shows is our team’s dedication to helping each mom have the birth experience she wants.”

The Birthing Center nursing team, she explains, have labor support training that includes classes that promote comfort measures and labor positioning strategies to aid in realigning the baby during the labor and birth process to work toward the goal of a safe and successful vaginal delivery.

The nurses and care team support an impressive team of OB Hospitalists, all board-certified OB/Gyn specialists and dedicated solely to helping laboring and obstetrical patients. “Our moms love our OB Hospitalists,” Linnette says.

FHN Family Birthing Center Births in 2021

babies born each month



268 deliveries and **271** babies
with **3** sets of twins

122 girls  **149** boys

THREE
most popular names
by gender

girl names
Aurora, Olivia,
and Adeyn

boy names
Jaxon, Oliver,
and Owen



HEIGHT

17 in.
shortest

21½ in.
tallest



WEIGHT

3 lbs. 12 oz.
smallest

10 lbs. 14 oz.
biggest

"We've got a top-notch team, and we're so proud of the work we've done in supporting our moms," she says. "This exceptional care is a team effort, from our physicians to nurses and other supporting staff. We are one of the leaders in the state in terms of the quality of care we give as well as truly caring about you and your baby, and we're always working to get better!"

Welcome
to our new OB Hospitalists



**Bishara D. Baddour,
MD, FACOG**
OB Hospitalist



**Karenmarie Meyer,
MD, FACOG**
OB Hospitalist

2022

Welcome FHN New Year's 2022 Baby Melani Neuro Thomas!

Amber Barkley and Romero Thomas of Freeport welcomed their daughter at 5:56 a.m. Jan. 1. She weighed 6 lbs, 8 oz and and measured 19 inches long. The Family Birthing Center at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport presented the new family a fun wagonful of gifts. Welcome to the world, Melani, and congratulations, Mom and Dad!





DESIRE FOR DOUBLE KNEE REPLACEMENT TRANSFORMS WOMAN'S HEALTH JOURNEY



'SOMETIMES YOU NEED A CRISIS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE.'

- FARFALENA RAHN



▲ Farfalena feels great appreciation for her healthcare team, who she says, “Gave me back my freedom.” Shown here left to right are Misty DeHaven, FNP-BC; Megan Christensen, MSN, RN, CNL; Tamisha Bonvillain, FNP-BC; Judy Cullor, FNP-BC; Farfalena (seated); Keri Wall, RN, BSN, CPAN; Greg Dammann, MD; and Brittany Mordini, RN.

Farfalena Rahn's first name means “butterfly” in Italian. This symbol of transformation and hope well represents the past two years of her life, as she has gone from relying on a wheelchair to walking again, thanks to strong support from FHN, her family, and her friends.

In 2019, Farfalena was unable to walk and required a wheelchair or walker on and off for mobility. She had pain and weakness from “bone-on-bone” arthritis in her back and knees, and depended on friends and family to help her complete almost every task of daily life.

When she decided to pursue double knee replacement surgery, FHN orthopaedic surgeon Greg Dammann, MD, did not feel she was up to the challenge. He urged her to make

significant changes first, like losing weight and focusing on her fitness levels to increase her chances of success.

Dr. Dammann shares, “Extra weight can sometimes cause surgical complications, risk of infection, and less successful outcomes. In Farfalena's case, I truly thought immediate surgery was not the best approach.”

ROADBLOCKS PRESENT CHALLENGES

For Farfalena, it was a frustrating situation. Her knee pain made it impossible to exercise. Sometimes the challenge felt overwhelming.

FHN rheumatologist Rovinder S. Singh Saini, MD, helped her take the

first steps toward a new tomorrow. “I prescribed medical cannabis to ease her unrelenting pain after traditional medications proved unhelpful, and to help ease her anxiety and improve her sleep,” he explains.

He also suggested a personalized weight-loss plan to get her started. “Pain, anxiety, mood, and sleep are all



▲ Farfalena and FHN Rheumatologist Rovinder S. Singh Saini, MD.

interrelated, and can impact weight loss and motivation.”

These changes helped Farfalena lose 30 pounds and she was feeling enthused, but then the pandemic struck: Farfalena caught COVID-19. She was hospitalized and on a bi-pap ventilator that provided two-level positive airway pressure for two weeks, and on oxygen for several more weeks. In her words, “It was pretty rough. I was just so sick. Sometimes you need a crisis to change your life. This was my turning point.”

As she started to feel better, Farfalena felt like she had been given a second chance. She emphasizes, “I didn’t want to suffer in silence any more. I needed – and wanted – to do something to improve my life.”

As a person with diabetes, she continued her weight loss journey under the guidance of FHN Diabetes Program Coordinator Megan Christensen, MSN, RN, CNL, who provided instruction and support that helped her lose 30 more pounds and dramatically improve her test results.

DIABETES EDUCATION CHANGES THE TRAJECTORY

Farfalena says, “Megan was instrumental in helping me understand good choices and provided tremendous support. I learned to concentrate on what I COULD eat – a nice variety of foods – rather than focus on what I was omitting. I gained confidence, continued to lose weight, and decided to consult again with Dr. Dammann, who agreed my progress greatly increased my odds of a favorable outcome. He



felt I was ready to proceed with surgery, and his staff, including Nurse Navigator Keri Wall, RN, thoroughly explained everything I needed to know. With their help, I felt prepared and ready.”

Farfalena had total knee replacement arthroplasty on both knees, six weeks apart. She distinctly remembers standing up soon after surgery and says, “I was just thrilled to be able to walk. The team had given me exercises to start before the procedure, and that strength training really made a difference ... I was up and moving again! I was very motivated and followed directions to the T.”

Thanks to regular check-ins with her primary care provider Tamisha Bonvillain, FNP-BC, continued therapy at FHN’s Burchard Hills Rehabilitation Center, and encouragement from many professionals on her physical therapy team, Farfalena increased her strength, improved her balance, and fine-tuned her flexibility.

GRATEFUL FOR ‘A WHOLE NEW LIFE’

Now, Farfalena’s future is extremely bright and she is thrilled with her progress:

- She has lost a total of 95 pounds
- Her A1C dropped from 10.2 to 5.4
- She no longer requires insulin
- She no longer needs her CPAP machine for sleep apnea
- She is ambulatory. She has gone from a wheelchair to a walker to a cane to needing no support much of the time. She can even go up and down stairs.

Farfalena is ecstatic about her transformation. She enthuses, “I feel

◀ Counseling played a key role in helping Farfalena regain her strength and positive outlook, and she credits FHN psychiatry nurse practitioner Misty DeHaven, FNP-BC, for providing incredible support throughout the process. “I know there is a future out there that is meant to be mine,” she says. “Misty helped me learn to look forward and focus on the good things to come.”



▲ Walking up and down the aisles on her own two feet feels great to Farfalena, who loves grocery shopping on her own after double knee replacement surgery at FHN. She has learned to make healthier choices at the store, too, with the help of diabetes educator Megan Christiansen.

so energized! I am constantly on the go and I feel amazing, both physically and mentally. I am so grateful to do all the simple things I couldn’t do before, like cook, go grocery shopping, do the dishes, make my bed, take a shower, and get dressed.

“I so appreciate everybody who helped me get to this point: Dr. Dammann, Dr. Singh, Misty DeHaven, Megan Christensen, Tamisha Bonvillain, Keri Wall, Judy Cullor, Brittney Mordini, and all the nurses, therapists, and receptionists who were so kind and helpful. And, of course, my children, my siblings, and my friends Pamela Jacobs and Marie Liddell – I couldn’t have done it without them. I feel incredibly lucky, and proud of myself, too. What a blessing!”



Pandemic Update

FHN Offering Vaccination and Booster Clinics, SHIELD Testing in Fight Against COVID-19

This spring, we'll mark an anniversary that no one will be celebrating – it has been 2 years since COVID-19 appeared in northwest Illinois.

Though there still is no cure for COVID-19, we have learned a lot about the virus. Scientists have figured out how the virus spreads (and how we can slow down that spread), doctors and other caregivers are learning more ways to treat patients with the virus, and best of all, researchers have given us three safe, effective vaccines that can help keep people from getting critically ill or dying from COVID-19.

You've heard it for going on two years now, but it's true: **The most important step you can take to protect yourself, your family, and your community from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated and boosted as soon as you are able.**

"The vast majority of our hospitalized patients, and those needing the Intensive Care Unit, are unvaccinated," says FHN Chief Hospitalist Clarence Parks, MD.

The proof is in the numbers: We began sharing FHN-only COVID-19 statistics each week on Facebook last December. Information is shared each Wednesday on FHN's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/FHNhealth), presented as percentages only to guard patient privacy. (The patients represented as hospitalized with COVID-19 on these weekly counts all have a primary diagnosis of and are being actively treated for COVID-19. The main reason they are in the hospital is for COVID-19.) Since then, the percentage of unvaccinated people being treated for COVID-19 hasn't dipped below 68 percent.

Beginning in late January, we broke out the information even further to

show how many currently hospitalized patients being treated for COVID-19 were unvaccinated, how many had been vaccinated (had received 2 shots of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 1 Johnson & Johnson shot) and how many had been boosted with a third shot. In the short time we've been keeping those statistics as of press time, zero patients who have received a booster shot have needed care in the FHN Memorial Hospital ICU.

VACCINATION AND BOOSTER CLINICS

FHN is offering free adult Moderna COVID-19 vaccination clinics through May 2022 at its 1763 S. Dirck Drive, Freeport location. Individuals can sign up online for initial vaccinations or booster vaccinations.

"These clinics are free and open to any adult," says FHN President and CEO Mark Gridley, MBA, FACHE. "If you haven't been vaccinated, sign up to get your first and second shot. If you have received your first vaccination doses (or single Johnson & Johnson dose) and just need a booster, you can sign up for that on the same page. The following month's registration will open up after the current month's clinic date has passed."

UPCOMING CLINIC DATES ARE:

Friday, March 11
Friday, April 8
Friday, May 6

You also can get vaccination or booster shots at many pharmacies in northwest Illinois. Visit www.fhn.org/coronavirus for information on how to find and schedule a vaccination.

FREE COVIDSHIELD TESTING IN FREEPORT

We are proud to have been named a location for CovidSHIELD saliva-based COVID-19 testing in Freeport. Developed by the University of Illinois, the CovidSHIELD test bypasses the complex ribonucleic acid (RNA) extraction step that is part of most tests, which speeds up the test process, reduces the cost, and avoids supply chain challenges. The process requires individuals to simply deposit a small amount of saliva in a vial, which usually takes less than five minutes.

Testing is free and open to the public and will be offered via appointments from 7 – 11 a.m. Mondays and from 2 – 5:30 p.m. Thursdays at FHN's COVID-19 vaccination site, 1763 S. Dirck Drive in Freeport.

In order to get tested, first create an account on the SHIELD Illinois portal located at www.shieldillinois.com and schedule your test appointment. (Please use **df5brbrj** for the Agency Code.) Call 217-265-6059 for help setting up an account, creating appointments, and accessing results.

Test participants must present an ID and the QR code provided when the appointment was scheduled and should not eat, drink, or put anything in their mouth for an hour before taking the test. That includes smoking, drinking, chewing gum, and using mouthwash.

Results are available within 72 hours and will be posted in the SHIELD patient portal after the lab results are completed. FHN will not be made aware of nor have access to your results; please refer to the SHIELD portal for your results. By law, positive test results are reported to the relevant public health department(s) for contact tracing.

A Focus on Rural Healthcare

FHN’s primary care providers are close to home— no matter where you live in our area— with offices throughout northwest Illinois. These dedicated professionals have one goal in mind: To maximize your personal wellness throughout your lifetime.

This issue of Insight focuses on two primary care providers who have a special affinity for rural health – one from Forreston and one from Pecatonica. When you entrust your care to them, you get a dedicated team ready to help you and your family with everything from a minor injury to a major illness.



APRIL MOORE, MD, FAAFP

Board Certification: Family Medicine

Location: FHN Family Healthcare Center – Forreston

Phone: 815-938-3130



CALLINA ELGAR, DO

Board Certification: Family Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment

Location: FHN Family Healthcare Center – Pecatonica

Phone: 815-239-1400

WHY DO YOU THINK PRIMARY CARE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT?

I love family medicine because I get the privilege of caring for my patients across their spectrum of health. We take the time to talk about options. This kind of collaboration leads to informed and shared decision-making as we work together to find the path that suits them best. I find that when patients understand the reasons behind lifestyle modifications and use of medications, it leads to better outcomes in acute and chronic disease management. That is always our goal.

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO WORK AT FHN?

I was born at FHN, and I worked in the record room when I was a teenager. I earned my CNA and worked in the specialty clinics until entering medical school. Joining FHN in 2012 as a family medicine doctor was like coming back home.

I also enjoy teaching, and I am especially thrilled to host 4th year RMED students from the University of Illinois – Chicago (UIC). The Rural Medical Education Program (RMED) is one of the strongest programs in rural medicine in the nation and is a supplement to the regular medical school curriculum. Forreston is a great place to show students the aspects of rural medicine. Our whole team is amazing, and we’re passionate about providing quality care.



WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES OR SKILLS OUTSIDE WORK?

My hobbies are reading, baking, and doing yoga. I enjoy family time with my husband and our two children. We also have two rescue dogs, Scarlett and Darwin. I’m a Girl Scout leader and school board

member in Forreston. My husband and I are the organizers of the American Legion Riders Sauerkraut Day Car and Bike show in August.

WHY DO YOU THINK PRIMARY CARE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT?

Besides being a gateway to specialists, I think the best part of primary care is the ability to get to know patients and treat their entire families. There is no “one size fits all” approach, and although I know anatomy, patients know their bodies. I think it is important to listen to them and provide options, including osteopathic manipulation and homeopathic options, if that works best with their lifestyle.

Even though I focus on primary care, I also feel passionately about psychology and women’s health. I was a grief counselor going through college, and I frequently attend continuing education conferences on women’s health.

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO WORK AT FHN?

I love working in a small-town clinic, and Pecatonica is a great place – everybody knows everybody! We get people in and out of appointments quickly, yet we take the time to fully meet patient needs. I also enjoy the opportunity to partner with area schools to help educate students on healthcare topics, and look forward to doing more of that after the pandemic is controlled.

Since FHN is an independent healthcare system, it has more autonomy to make local decisions and cater care focused on our region. That is a wonderful asset for providers, and ultimately the entire community.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES OR SKILLS OUTSIDE WORK?

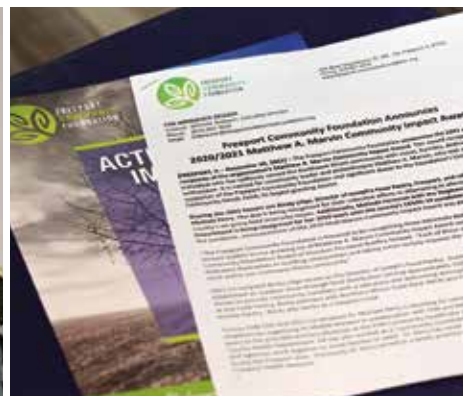
When I get free time, I love to travel. I enjoy hockey and was thrilled to get to see the Stanley Cup. Perhaps my two favorite pastimes are my rescue dogs, Xiamara and Zanaya. I also embrace Halloween! Last year my sister and I dressed up as the Sanderson sisters from Hocus Pocus. I like to go all out!



Contact one of these primary care physicians today to set up a consultation – you may just change the trajectory of your healthcare journey! See the complete list of FHN office locations and providers at www.fhn.org/locations.

'Dr. Perry has never stopped promoting, caring for and loving the Freeport area.'

Freeport Community Foundation Honors Michael Perry, MD



Dr. Perry received his award from Freeport Community Foundation Executive Director Michelle DeHaven, who says, "The myriad projects and initiatives Dr. Perry was involved in during his career with FHN was enough to make him an ideal candidate for the Matt Marvin Community Impact Award. But, in the spirit of a true servant leader, Dr. Perry carried that dedication and devotion into his retirement."

We're very proud to share that FHN's own Michael Perry, MD was one of the recipients of the Freeport Community Foundation's 2020/2021 Matthew Marvin Community Impact Award!

The award, named for community leader and philanthropist Matthew Marvin (1914 – 2013), recognizes an individual or individuals who have selflessly served the Northwest Illinois community with vision, humility, dedication, and enthusiasm.

Dr. Perry was honored for his work in helping to alleviate Stephenson County's ongoing food insecurity issues with award co-recipient Joseph's Food Pantry Director Bindy Lillge. Dr. Perry worked with Bindy and the Northern Illinois Food Bank to organize biweekly Rx Mobile Pantry Markets in Freeport, offering healthy pantry staples and fresh meat, cheese, and milk to those in need.

Dr. Perry served not just as the founder but the main FHN organizer for the markets, enlisting volunteers to help deliver food to recipients' cars in a pandemic-safe manner.

He's a Freeport native – in fact, he was born at FHN Memorial Hospital – and served for years as the Family Medicine physician at the FHN Community Healthcare Center at the Stephenson County Health Department in Freeport.

He also continues to serve as a "community connector," working with FHN's Connect the D.O.T.S. (Doors of Team Support) to help organizations and agencies in the area work together to help families in need.

After graduating from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield, Ill. and completing his residency at Union Hospital in Terre Haute, Ind., Dr. Perry began caring for patients in Freeport in 1980. He became FHN's Executive Vice President/Chief Physician Officer in 1999 at Family Medical which later became FHN Family Healthcare Center – Highland View Drive, and was named FHN's President and CEO on Jan. 1, 2006. He served in that role until Jan. 1, 2017.

“His commitment to alleviating our region's food insecurity issues are truly inspiring – working with various organizations to better help our neighbors in need. Dr. Perry is a perfect example of the type of person the Freeport Community Foundation looks for in a Matt Marvin Community Impact Award recipient – a true servant leader striving to improve the quality of life for everyone in our community, our region.”

*Freeport Community Foundation
Executive Director Michelle DeHaven*

As his nomination notes, "Dr. Perry has never stopped promoting, caring for and loving the Freeport area." We agree, and we're honored and proud of him. From the bottom of our hearts, **Congratulations, Dr. Perry!**

Getting to Know FHN's Facilities Director

Whether you own a home or live in an apartment, you are well aware of the importance of good maintenance. Staying on top of repairs and keeping your environment at its best is important to your convenience, comfort, and pride in ownership. At a multi-location, multi-function health facility like FHN, this discipline becomes even more critical.

Michael Kuropas, CPMM (Certified Professional Maintenance Manager) oversees facilities management at FHN through a contract with Aramark. He's in charge of all of our buildings' heating, cooling, snow removal, lawn care, and general upkeep – that's a big job! Keeping calm and tapping into an "even keel" personality help him succeed.



A Team Effort

Mike is keen on Freeport and FHN. He says, "I feel good working at FHN and appreciate the staff's camaraderie. We work hard, but the people I partner with make my job easy. We are all dedicated to the organization and everyone takes pride in their skills. It is a true team effort."

Another plus? "The community 'feel' is very real here," Mike shares. "I think it comes from being so focused-in as a community hospital. I see decisions being made every day that show how the area and its people are central to our priorities."

Problems Solved

Taking care of multiple buildings in numerous locations is especially challenging for the facilities group.

“Aging infrastructure at our older sites requires tenacity and creativity when replacement parts are not available or hard to locate. Recent supply chain issues have only magnified those issues, and other aspects of our job, too. But FHN's leadership has been extremely supportive and that helps us plan ahead and minimize those challenges. We are problem solvers by nature.”

Michael Kuropas, CPMM

Mike has been involved in facilities management since his first job at the Egyptian Theatre in DeKalb, Illinois, an Egyptian Revival theatre listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. Early on, he ran the projector in addition to making general repairs and overseeing maintenance.

Since then, he has learned the ropes at several interesting venues: The Lyric Opera House in Chicago – one of the leading opera companies in the United States – which also produces shows and concerts in the opera off-season; O'Hare International Airport, now the second-busiest airport in the world; and Milliken University, a private university in Decatur, Illinois.

Keeping it Clean, Comfortable, and Community-Focused

"Facilities management is 90 percent the same wherever you work," Mike claims. "Keep it clean, keep it comfortable, and keep it customer-focused. At FHN, my team's customers are the staff, the patients, their families, and our visitors. They are our priority," he emphasizes.

"Right now, we feel especially committed to supporting the doctors, nurses, and clinical staff who are working so hard to conquer the COVID-19 epidemic. We are on point so they can do their incredibly important jobs. They deserve the best we can offer."



▲ It's not an area of the hospital that you'll ever see, but its smooth operation impacts your comfort every visit. Here, Facilities Administrative Assistant Kelly Murray, Mike Kuropas, and Groundskeeper Dave Vrtol take stock in the boiler room.



From Al Evon FHN Foundation Director

Thanks to your generosity, one year ago FHN embarked on a new initiative to improve the care provided to individuals facing a mental or behavioral health crisis – the **Dr. Ravi and Mrs. Minu Vyas Crisis Stabilization Center (CSC)**. As we wrap up the first year of service for this facility, we wanted to provide you with an update regarding its operations and the positive impact it is making in the lives of people in our community.

The CSC was and continues to be envisioned as a way to provide 24-hour care 7 days a week for those in need of these services, but who are not in need of a full, inpatient psychiatric hospitalization level of care.

Unfortunately, one of the impacts FHN has experienced as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a shortage of healthcare workers to fill the needs of this 24-hour facility. We recognize that FHN is not alone in its workforce shortage, as many companies and industry sectors have been negatively impacted by a decrease in available workers.

However, the FHN Family Counseling Center team has recognized the increased need for mental health services that may not require 24-hour care and made it a priority to utilize our current staff and the beautiful space at the Crisis Stabilization Center. Through internal collaboration and input from

those we serve, opportunities and inspiration have arisen from the difficulty of current challenges and we have pivoted in order to provide appropriate care to those patients in need.

The result of the collaboration and brainstorming is that the CSC is now offering group therapy sessions to patients in need of this additional level of care. Each group is led by one of the Family Counseling Center's trained staff members and is comprised of individuals facing similar difficulties and challenges. Thus, besides learning from the staff member, the participants can learn from and support each other. This care is provided in an appropriately pandemic-safe way for the participants and staff.

In the first month and a half that this change was implemented, 35 sessions of group therapy were offered, accommodating 39 unique patients. We expect these numbers to significantly increase as additional groups are launched in 2022.

One of our current group participants shared the following about their experience at the CSC: ***"It has been a tremendous help for me not only to get an impartial perspective from the counselors on different challenges in my life, but also to understand that other people are facing struggles very similar to my own, and to learn new coping skills to help manage my***

anxiety from other clients in group therapy. I have a renewed sense of hope, and really feel that I am not alone in my struggles."

Additionally, Behavioral Health Tech Christopher Chisom, one group leader, stated, ***"Several clients have thanked us for offering this group therapy, and expressed how helpful it has been, both as an opportunity to discuss their problems and feel unburdened of emotional weight, and as a chance to learn coping skills and new perspectives on the problems with which they are struggling. It is encouraging to hear that people really are being helped by attending these groups, and I look forward to the chance to help others as the program continues to gain momentum."***

Though the CSC is operating in a different manner than originally intended, it is helping patients facing mental or behavioral health crises to get the care they need in an appropriate environment and therefore fulfilling the intent of improved care provided locally. The CSC will continue to evolve in a way that best serves families throughout our community.

Thank you again for your gifts to FHN and the difference you are making in health and wellness in northwestern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

Leading the ongoing efforts will be FHN's new **Family Counseling Center Director Clayton Cunningham, MS, LPC, CHC**. Clay shared the following about his background: "I began my professional career in Wyoming in 2007 as a licensed



professional counselor predominantly serving patients dealing with a serious mental illness. I led a team of therapists and case managers beginning from 2009-2012 at a small mental health Center in Wyoming until I moved to Colorado in 2012. I worked at a large community mental health center in North Metro Denver, as the Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance, and got my certification in healthcare compliance at that time. I took over as Chief Operating Officer of that mental health center, where I held the role from 2016-2021."

We wish Clay the greatest success in his new role at FHN and in the continued development of the Crisis Stabilization Center.

Featured in the next issue of **INSIGHT**

FHN's Cardiac Cath Lab Expanding Services and Enhancing Care

Your heart, your kidneys, your feet, your skin, and your veins all benefit!

Patients can expect exciting new upgrades in cardiology, nephrology, and vascular studies at FHN. New, state-of-the-art catheterization and fluoroscopy equipment will give providers better image quality, improved patient positioning, and lower doses of radiation as they evaluate heart and vascular conditions.

Director of Imaging Services and Cardiac Services Katie Alvarado says "This equipment provides high-definition images and gives our experienced team better diagnostic capabilities

and interventional tools. We are fortunate to have a comprehensive cardiology service line right here in our community!"

Providers will gain in-depth information and detailed images to aid in your care. In addition to cardiology and nephrology, this innovative equipment will allow us to offer advanced treatments in wound care, podiatry, and vascular disease.

"This is a large-scale project," adds Katie, "and the new equipment is in place and being utilized. We will put



the finishing touches on the space in the next few months."

Watch this space for more information about our Cath Lab enhancement! ■

Congratulations to Our Healthcare Scholarship Winners!

An outstanding group of students pursuing a wide variety of healthcare careers applied for this year's Healthcare Scholarships, and we are proud to introduce you to our three recipients!

Scholarship applicants wrote an essay about their career path along with strengths and personal goals to support the healthcare needs of FHN's service area. The top candidates were invited to a virtual interview with the committee.

After the interviews, our committee chose three \$1,000 Healthcare Scholarship recipients. The 2021 Healthcare Career Scholarships winners are:



HALEY BRUDI

of Stockton, who is pursuing a degree in physical therapy at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Ill.



JORDAN STRECKWALD

of Lena, who is working toward a pharmacy degree at the University of Iowa in Iowa City.



ZOIE BARDELL

of Freeport, who is pursuing a degree in nursing at Highland Community College.

Congratulations to all our scholarship winners, and good luck in your studies! You can view a video of our virtual presentation ceremony at [fhn.org/scholarshipaward21](https://www.fhn.org/scholarshipaward21).



IT ALL
STARTS WITH
YOUR HEART

FHN IS OFFERING TWO \$119 HEART TESTS DURING AMERICAN HEART MONTH!

For American Heart Month in February, we're offering special pricing on two tests that can give you a good look at your heart health if you have no known coronary artery disease and no prior heart issues.

\$119 FHN'S CALCIUM SCORING CT HEART SCAN uses CT scanner technology to detect calcified plaque in arteries, an indication of potential heart issues.

\$119 STANDARD WALKING TREADMILL STRESS TEST helps determine artery condition and may be right for you if you have risk factors for heart disease such as high cholesterol, existing or borderline high blood pressure, a history of smoking, diabetes, or family history of heart disease.

Call by Friday, February 25 to schedule tests at the special \$119 price. The tests must be performed by Friday, May 27, 2022.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **815-599-6860**. During American Heart Month – and every day – your heart is in good hands at FHN.

These tests should not replace consultations with your healthcare provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, we will work with you to determine how to handle your test results when we communicate them to you. Payment (cash, checks, credit card) due at time of service.

FHN is COVID Safe: Our processes ensure that our hospital and offices are safe for you and your family. Learn more about our COVID-19 safety measures at www.fhn.org

Become Your Best YOU!

There's still time to sign up!

- FREE 12-week Wellness Program
- Nutrition & Exercise Tips
- Healthy Recipes
- Fun Activities & Prizes

www.fhn.org/getfit



Insight



We're here, for you.

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