

Your Family Practice Providers



Pictured left to right:
 Jay Brooks, PA-C
 Connie Novak, MD
 Amy Fischer, PA-C
 Kurt Schmeckpeper, PA-C
 Trisha Sams, MD
 Brandon Henley, DO
 James Plasek, MD
 Joel Gabriel, MD
 J.B. Ketner, MD
 Jason Summa, MD
 Meghan Schildt, PA-C
 Robert Wergin, MD
 Jacqueline Hobbs, MD
 Natasha Andersen, PA-C

It is not always easy to find a good fit for your health care. At Memorial Health Care Systems, we have 9 local family physicians and 5 family practice physician assistants giving you many options so you're sure to find a health care provider that meets your care needs!

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Summer 2022



Care you can count on!

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has touched all our lives. For Jeannie Koski a diagnosis of COVID-19 led to an incredible journey of recovery. On December 26, 2021, Jeannie tested positive for COVID-19 and was quarantining at home trying to manage symptoms. By New Year's Day her oxygen levels dropped and every breath became more and more labored. She was transported by ambulance from her home in Utica to Memorial Hospital in Seward. She and her family had a long-term relationship with Memorial Health Care Systems receiving care at the Utica Family Medical Center.

Jeannie arrived in the emergency room and the team of doctors, nurses, radiologist and respiratory therapist quickly assessed her condition and set in motion the needed treatments. She was admitted to Memorial Hospital and the medical team kept close care of her progressing condition. As her health continued to decline it was imperative that Jeannie get access to specialized medical care, but finding availability for COVID patients in larger facilities proved to be a challenge. "At one point they thought I might need to go to Kansas City as there were no open hospital beds," Jeannie said. "The staff were doing all they could to get me the care I needed, contacting facilities in Nebraska and surrounding states." Over the next six days the virus continued to weaken her. Finally the care she needed became available and she was life flighted to Mary Lanning Hospital in Hastings, NE.

Jeannie said she doesn't remember much of what happened after she left Memorial

Hospital due to needing to be on a ventilator. There were times it was not clear if she would survive. Once she was stable, she wanted to return to Memorial Hospital but remaining on a vent required her to continue recovery in a rehabilitation hospital in Omaha. "In Omaha I could not speak or even move, after being in bed and on machines to help me breath for so long, it seemed impossible," Jeannie shared. "Once I began to relearn how to breath on my own, I began asking if I could go back to the hospital in Seward."

On March 16, Jeannie's request was granted and she was transferred to Memorial Hospital. "It felt like coming home," Jeannie said. "It lifted much of my anxiety as I was in a familiar place, surrounded by people I knew and closer to my family. Plus they had all the services I needed to complete my recovery through therapy." Jeannie explained they wasted no time and even began working with her exercising in bed to strengthen her body.

While Jeannie felt motivated to get well for her family, there were days she was discouraged and tired. The MHCS team working with her gave her inspiration and the determination to press on in her recovery. "There were times when I felt the staff had more faith in me than I did in myself. They made me believe I could get better. Because they had so much faith in



Above: Jeannie having ice cream with her daughter, Amanda, and grandkids, Harper and Hudson. The wall in Jeannie's hospital room decorated with pictures from her grandkids.

my recovery, I wanted to do all I could to get well," Jeannie expressed.

When asked, who made a difference in her care? Jeannie just smiled and said, "Everyone at MHCS. From the people who clean the room, to the nursing assistants and nurses, the medical technicians, all the therapy services, Dr. Sams, they were all wonderful. You combine that with great food and social services and all I can say is, if you have to be in the hospital, you want to be here in Seward." Jeannie said even in preparing to go home the staff were helpful with resources she might need and an occupational therapy home visit to ensure her success in returning home.

On May 6, after battling COVID, fighting to stay alive, determined to recover and restore her life, Jeannie returned home to her husband, children and grandchildren. It was a day of celebrating not only for her family but for her medical family as MHCS employees applauded her healing cheering her on as she left the hospital. Thank you, Jeannie, for letting MHCS be a part of your success story of hope, healing and restoration.

300 N. Columbia Ave.
 Seward, NE 68434

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 Health Care Systems



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Mental Health Support for Area Students

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- flu
- fever
- allergies
- insect bites
- rash
- UTI
- ear pain
- pink eye
- diarrhea
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Visiting your local family medical centers for urgent care needs gets you experienced providers right in your home town. Best of all, all your health history is in one record.

The 2022-2023 school year is fast approaching and a mental health program, Wellness 4 ALL, will be added into the three Public Schools in Seward County. Through collaboration efforts, Memorial Health Care Systems, Seward, Milford and Centennial Public Schools, will implement the Wellness 4 ALL program. Licensed Mental Health Providers (LMHPs) will be working in each of the schools. The program aims to help students and staff create goals, set healthy boundaries, and help empower students, educators, and administrators. Jen McNally, Director of Mental Health and Wellness/Psychotherapist explained, “Wellness 4 ALL’s success is due to having mental health available in student’s social context of their school. It helps destigmatize mental health and makes it a visible thing. The program is proactive in networking with all students in the hallways, integrating in classrooms as well as offering one-on-one meetings and support.”

There are roughly 155,400 children ages 12-17 years in the state of Nebraska (census.gov). The annual average percentage with a major depressive episode in the past year from 2016-2019 was 13.6% (or about 21,000), approximately double the children experiencing major depressive episodes from just ten years earlier. In the same study, only 39.7% of those children with major depressive episodes had actually received depression care (SAMHSA-Substance



Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Behavioral Health Barometer – NE, Volume 6).

Seward County is not immune to the challenges that mental health problems cause students. Memorial Health Care Systems of Seward, Milford, and Utica has experienced an increase in youth mental health needs and mental health needs for all ages. Mr. Fields, Seward Public Schools Superintendent stated, “Whenever we have the opportunity to develop a partnership between Memorial Health Care Systems, Seward Public Schools, Milford Public Schools, and Centennial Public Schools to provide more support for our students and staff in the area of mental health through the successful Wellness 4 All Program it is a huge asset for our communities in Seward County.”

Lori Williams, Director of Social Services at MHCS had begun an interdisciplinary project over 4 years ago to study the growing mental health needs of patients. Through this internal study, support and education has been implemented and increased measures and support have been given to patients and staff. In addition to the results we are seeing of patients seeking care, especially in the Emergency Department, a county wide survey was recently conducted which continued to shed light on the growing concerns community members have about mental health.

Memorial Health Care Systems conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years, which includes surveying the county on various health related topics. In this year’s county survey, mental health became the leading health concern for our county members who responded. This continual focus on mental health needs

led Seward County Schools to work with Memorial Health Care Systems to fill a void in behavioral health services inside the public-school setting.

Combined, the Seward County Public Schools serve around 2,700 students. This program will promote consistent vocabulary for students and teachers to recognize and support one another’s needs. “Mental health of students is something that gets brought up at nearly every district superintendent meeting,” Mr. Wingard, Superintendent of Milford Public Schools stated. Mr. Dominy, Director of Curriculum at Seward Public Schools added, “We are seeing more anxiety and depression in students and we are looking for ways to collaborate to support students and also our educators with resources geared to promote a safe and open environment to talk about mental health.”

“The big thing we were excited about at Centennial is how their program is proactive instead of letting something build and build,” said Seth Ford, the Centennial Public Schools superintendent. Roger Reamer, CEO of Memorial Health Care Systems also shared this sentiment, indicating, “The Wellness 4 ALL program seemed like a good fit for not just the schools but for MHCS to partner with because of the proactive approach. Students and staff will receive ongoing communication, training, and mental wellness before they ever reach a crisis or need ER care.”

“We’ve seen the success of this program for ESU 5 schools and wanted to find a way to bring it into our school district. This program is so unique because it integrates the LMHP into the hallways, classrooms and creates a comfortable approach to mental wellbeing,” said Mr. Wingard, Superintendent of Milford Public Schools. Cole Stark, LIMHP echoed this sentiment by sharing that, “When the mental health providers in Wellness 4 ALL come to school, they truly become a part of that school family which is so important in smaller schools and smaller communities.”

There are four pillars of the Wellness 4 ALL program

- Educator Wellness
- Student Well-being
- Professional Development
- School Climate and Culture

The 4 pillars of the program are guided through education for students and faculty on QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) and TF-CBT (Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). QPR



is a training to recognize the warning signs of suicidal thinking. TF-CBT is an evidence-based treatment that helps children discover skills and build coping strategies to better respond to reminders and emotions related to traumatic events.

Wellness 4 ALL is a proactive approach in mental health that can help students before they are in crisis. This program for Seward County Public Schools is made possible by a community focused collaboration between those three districts and the Memorial Health Care Systems to ensure health and wellness are readily available to students.

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MHCS Mission: We enhance the quality of life for individuals in our communities by providing excellence in health care services in the most appropriate settings.

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Financial Assistance Available. Memorial Hospital is committed to caring for our patients, including patients who financially are unable to pay for hospital services. We encourage patients to apply for financial assistance if they believe that they are unable to pay all or part of their hospital bills. Learn about our Financial Assistance Program by contacting the hospital patient accounts department at Memorial Hospital, 300 N. Columbia Ave., Seward, NE, 68434 or call (402) 646-4704.