

THE pulse

 **syracuse**
AREA HEALTH



WINTER 2022
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



LEARN ABOUT SKILLED
**REHABILITATION
SERVICES**



MEET OUR NEW
GENERAL SURGEON



GET MOVING WITH
FITNESS PLUS

LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear Friend,

I'm excited to share the newest issue of The Pulse with you. This issue contains our 2022 Annual Report, providing a snapshot of financial performance for the year.

As everyone knows, this has been a challenging year for everyone from an economic perspective. The high inflation rates have created one of the most difficult years for the healthcare industry in recent history, causing rapid increases in the costs of labor and supplies. Due to these changes, healthcare organizations across the nation have been impacted negatively and Syracuse Area Health is no different.

However, at the same time, there have been some great things happening here at Syracuse Area Health! Over the last year, we have made significant investments in the addition of our first permanent MRI, as well as opening the new North Campus Clinic & Retail Pharmacy. We are just now starting to see return on those investments with very rapid growth on those new areas. We are also seeing some great growth trends in other areas of the organization and the future is certainly very bright for Syracuse Area Health!

Also in this issue, we are excited to share our 2022 Caring Kind winner and a patient testimonial about the benefits of our Skilled Rehabilitation Services.

Next, we highlight Cardiopulmonary which includes Sleep Study Services. I am pleased that these services are here and accessible for people in the communities we serve.

As part of our continued effort to provide the best possible patient experience, we have formed a Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Learn how these council volunteers provide invaluable insight into ways SAH can improve.

And rounding out this issue, we introduce a new General Surgeon and the new Director of Fitness and Wellness.

I'm also proud to announce that Syracuse Area Health was just awarded the 2022 Provider Excellence in Quality Award for ranking in the Top 10 Critical Access Hospitals in Nebraska for Quality!

As always, I'm so grateful to this community for your continued support.

**Sincerely yours,
Michael Harvey, President & CEO**

Congratulations to **Sandi Rippe** 2022 CARING KIND AWARD WINNER



Sandi Rippe is pictured with some of the Caring Kind nominees.

Syracuse Area Health is proud to announce the 2022 Caring Kind Award recipient, Sandi Rippe.

Sandi is the Director of Community Outreach and Patient Relations and has been at Syracuse Area Health for six years. She shows daily how deserving she is of the recognition.

The Caring Kind Award, bestowed by the Nebraska Hospital Association, recognizes healthcare employees who have risen to the top by providing service excellence and dedication to their profession. They commit themselves to the betterment of their hospitals and health systems, patients, coworkers and their communities.

After nominations are made, past

Syracuse Area Health Caring Kind Award winners vote to determine the next award recipient. "It's really special to win this award, but I am the one that is privileged to work at this hospital with an incredible team." Sandi explained.

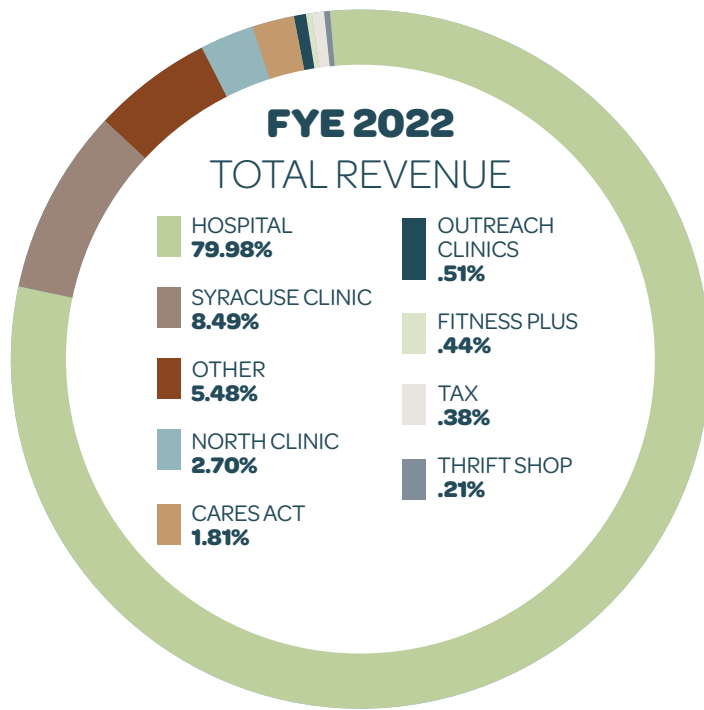
And when asked what it meant to receive the honor, Sandi summed it up like this:

"I believe so strongly in this hospital—the culture, patient care, staff and leadership. I'm truly blessed to be a part of it and love coming to work every day to positively impact patients' lives."

Annual Report

by the numbers

2022 FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Gross Revenue:

\$30,967,373

Health Insurance Write-offs:

\$4,376,537

Charity Care Write-offs:

\$108,734

Uncollectible Patient Balances:

\$520,413

Net Revenue:

\$25,961,689

Expenses:

\$26,534,985

Gain (Loss) on Operations

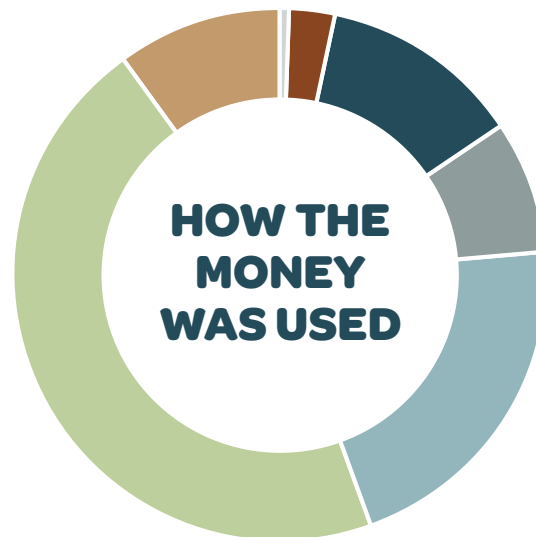
(\$573,296)

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022

STATISTICS

	FY 2021	FY 2022
Inpatient/Swing Bed Days	482	609
ER Visits	1,408	1,716
Surgical Procedures	343	302
Syracuse Clinic Visits	9,862	9,898
North Clinic Visits	2,920	3,509
Specialty Clinic Visits	3,306	3,270
CT Scans	1,040	1,214
MRI Scans	173	171
Laboratory Tests	26,394	30,038
Physical Therapy Sessions	11,092	11,399
Occupational Therapy Sessions	4,858	6,150
Cardiac Rehab Visits	848	649
Pulmonary Rehab Visits	110	206
Respiratory Treatments	368	546

- PROPERTY/LIABILITY INSURANCE
\$210,030
- INTEREST EXPENSE
\$737,431
- DEPRECIATION/AMORTIZATION
\$3,199,960
- PURCHASED SERVICES AND FEES
\$2,128,258
- OTHER PATIENT EXPENSES (SUPPLIES)
\$5,537,172
- EMPLOYEE WAGES
\$12,070,617
- EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
\$2,651,517



Numbers are based on draft audited financials



How Skilled Rehabilitation Services Helped One Patient Safely Transition **From Hospital to Home**



Barb Hillman experienced firsthand how top-notch care made all the difference in her recovery after a nasty fall.

“I had gotten up in the middle of the night when it was storming to turn off our computer,” Barb shared. “And when I was walking back to the bedroom the lights flickered out and I lost my balance and fell down the basement stairs. When I couldn’t get back up, I knew something was really wrong.”

Barb’s husband called 911, and the Syracuse EMTs arrived quickly to help.

“They were so professional. They talked to me like they knew me,” Barb said. “I could tell they were trying to make me comfortable.”

Once at the hospital, Barb learned she fractured her pelvis in four places. Unfortunately, her injury would require specialized care to heal before she could return to her previous quality of life.

“They initially told me I wouldn’t be able to go home for four to six weeks,” Barb said. “But I ended up going back home in just 17 days.”

Scan code to learn more
and view video! ▶



Barb's transition from acute hospital care to home was facilitated by Syracuse Area Health's Skilled Rehabilitation Services (also known as Swing Bed). Skilled Rehabilitation allows patients to get additional care and safely regain independence before returning home.

Emily Iske, LCSW, LMHP, Care Transitions Coordinator, works with patients, including Barb, to coordinate all aspects of care—even upon returning home—and notes how the level of care by the Syracuse Area Health Skilled Rehabilitation Services team goes beyond other similar facilities.

"Our program is unique because we can offer a higher level of medical care than many other skilled rehab facilities," she explained. "We have advance practice providers and RNs present 24 hours a day and our therapists work with patients seven days a week."



"Being able to get the care I needed in Syracuse made all the difference. If anyone needs special care as I did, I would definitely tell them to stay in Syracuse. They will get exceptional care."

-Barb Hillman

For Barb, skilled rehabilitation was a perfect solution. She had a private room and worked one-on-one with physical and occupational therapists. They helped her regain strength and learn how to move in her post-injury body with exercises tailored specifically to her needs.

"It certainly wasn't easy, but I got through it," Barb

shared. "They helped me learn how to do everything from taking a shower and getting dressed to how to walk with my walker. The most important thing was just that they got me up and out of bed. I was determined to get it all done at Syracuse Area Health and then go home."

Barb's tenacious spirit—and the specialized care from her providers—helped her meet her health goals and reduce the time required before returning home.

"The entire staff was so friendly and always checking in on me," Barb said, "They'd bring me books to read or newspapers—one of my therapists even went out of their way to get a more comfortable chair for me. That's just what they do to take care of their patients."

Skilled Rehabilitation Services was also integral in helping Barb return home sooner because of the staff-to-patient ratio—which means she received more personalized care than larger facilities.

"In nursing homes, there are easily 15-20 patients to one nurse," Emily said, "But we have 10 beds total. And each patient receives very personalized care."

There is also a continuity of care at Syracuse Area Health that is unique from many healthcare systems. The Syracuse Area Health team coordinates care from admittance to the Skilled Rehabilitation program through discharge, and then to follow-up care needed—even visits with specialists.

"We can offer all primary care needs in one facility," Emily explained. "If you doctor at Syracuse Area Health, then your own physician will follow you during your Skilled Rehab stay and visit you in your room, so there is no need to travel anywhere else. If you

see a family medicine provider elsewhere, you can rest easy knowing that the same level of care is offered to you here."

For Barb, the benefits of the Skilled Rehabilitation Services at Syracuse Area Health are unmatched.

"It sounds weird to say it, but it really was a positive experience. Everyone was wonderful," Barb said. "Being able to get the care I needed in Syracuse made all the difference. If anyone needs special care as I did, I would definitely tell them to stay in Syracuse. They will get exceptional care."



Cardiopulmonary Services

Patients Breathe Easier with Cardiopulmonary Services from Syracuse Area Health



For those living with an illness of the heart or lungs, the cardiopulmonary team at Syracuse Area Health is here to help.

They can educate patients and treat a wide range of conditions locally—something that members of the community might not be aware of.

“We have offered cardiopulmonary services for years right here in Syracuse,” Shannon Hoffman, MHA, RRT, Director of Cardiopulmonary, said, “So we really want people to know they can get the care they need without traveling in most cases.”

There are many illnesses that require cardiopulmonary services, including:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Emphysema
- Asthma
- Sleep Apnea

Shannon Hoffman, RRT, Director of Cardiopulmonary, is pictured with Pulmonary Function Testing (PFT) equipment, which measures how well a patient's lungs are functioning.

To help patients living with—or at risk for—these illnesses or others that affect the heart and lungs, respiratory therapists work with specialty and primary care providers to perform the testing needed to create personalized care plans.

“We provide acute care on the hospital side,” Shannon explained, “but also provide diagnostics, rehab and education as part of ongoing management of cardiopulmonary conditions. It’s all centered around trying to help these patients regain their quality of life and then maintain it as long as possible.”

The full range of cardiopulmonary services available at Syracuse Area Health includes:

- Cardiac Monitoring
- Cardiac Rehab
- Pulmonary Rehab
- Respiratory Therapy
- Pulmonary Function Testing
- Sleep Studies

PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTING & PULMONARY REHAB

Pulmonary function testing (PFT) shows how well lungs are functioning to help diagnose and treat lung disorders. Syracuse Area Health has the latest PFT technology to ensure that results from the test are accurate and provide the best insight into lung health.

“We encourage anyone who needs a PFT to get it done here in Syracuse,” Shannon said. “It’s a non-invasive test that tells us a lot about what kind of care the patient needs going forward.”

Once diagnosed with a cardiopulmonary condition, each patient works with their provider to develop a care plan tailored to their specific needs.

These plans will include, but are not limited to, pulmonary rehab sessions to educate the patient on medications they need to take, exercises to help with breathing, and more – plus help acquiring any medical equipment needed and scheduling visits with specialty providers.

“We provide hands-on care that is personalized for each individual based on their diagnosis,” Shannon explained. “Typically, for pulmonary rehab, patients attend appointments two to three times a week for a few months. And the end goal is for them to feel confident continuing their rehab exercises at home to maintain their quality of life.”

STRUGGLING WITH SLEEPING?

If you’re not sleeping well, it can affect many aspects of your life—from your mood to your physical and mental health. To help you find the underlying cause of your sleep issues, Syracuse Area Health is accredited through the American Association for Sleep Medicine (AASM) and partners with Rural Sleep Solutions to offer both in-lab and at-home sleep studies.

These studies track brain activity during sleep, which is then analyzed to help diagnose various sleep disorders. The most common diagnosis is sleep apnea, which is a condition where breathing stops repeatedly throughout the night. If left undetected and untreated, some sleep conditions can lead to more dangerous health conditions, so it is important to speak to your healthcare provider if you think you have a potential sleep disorder.

“Sleep studies aren’t often discussed until a person has been struggling with sleep for a long time,” Shannon said. “But they are a great diagnostic tool, and we’re fortunate to be able to offer them in Syracuse.”

EXPERTS WHO CARE

If you—or someone you love—have ongoing breathing issues, get the help you need. Ask your provider for a referral to pulmonary rehabilitation at Syracuse Area Health. Shannon Hoffman, MHA, RRT, is SAH’s Director of Cardiopulmonary and leads our skilled teams. Hoffman provides treatments and collaborates with providers including Sean Barry, MD, FACCPC, and Michelle Tyser, PA-C, who specialize in pulmonary disease and sleep medicine.



Sean Barry, MD, FACCPC



Michelle Tyser, PA-C

If you struggle with breathing or sleeping issues or other cardiopulmonary problems, talk to your healthcare provider about your options. The care you need to regain a better quality of life may be closer than you think.



Compassionate Care, Healthy Communities



Meet the Council Working to Make Syracuse Area Health the Best it Can Be

In October of 2021, the Syracuse Area Health Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) was created. This council is made up of five volunteer members and partners with the doctors, nurses, and the hospital leadership team to improve the quality of care provided for all patients and their family members.

“These five members come from different backgrounds and experiences, so that we have various perspectives to provide insight into ways we can improve upon the safety and quality of care at SAH,” Emily Iske, LCSW, LMHP, Care Transitions Coordinator, shared.

The Syracuse Area Health patients or family members who make up the council provide a layperson perspective on healthcare that can better help providers and the entire staff understand the needs of patients and improve the care they provide. The council meets bi-monthly and members volunteer their time to help with various projects initiated by council discussions.

“The PFAC helps us make healthcare more accessible to patients,” Emily explained. “For example, we had the council review some

marketing materials we were working on for the hospital. They immediately identified an acronym that they didn’t recognize, but that we as healthcare workers know instantly. This helped us adjust the materials and make them more beneficial for patients.”



“With the help of our council members, we can take feedback and turn it into actionable solutions for our patients.”

- Emily Iske

PFAC is a nationally recognized group that follows certain guidelines and standards. There is an official Syracuse Area Health PFAC Seal of Approval that indicates that an initiative or procedure has been vetted by the group for safety and quality to ensure it's beneficial for the patient. PFAC member, Brett Dettmer, designed the seal for Syracuse Area Health.

“Our members take great pride in what they’re doing,” Emily shared. “They’re here because they want to improve care for other patients.”

Currently, the PFAC is working on a health insurance FAQ brochure, to help make the ins and outs of insurance easier for the average person to navigate. The council hopes that the brochure will give patients a better understanding of when and why they will be billed for certain services.

“With the help of our council members, we can take feedback and turn it into actionable solutions for our patients,” Emily said.

“The community involvement really is key,” Sandi Rippe, Director of Community Outreach and Patient Relations, added. “This group really goes above and beyond to help make the patient experience the best that it can be.”

If helping patients and their families isn’t enough of a reason to join, Sandi has an additional one: “One of our members said if we have pie they will come,” she shared with a chuckle, “So now the dietary staff always serves pie at the meetings.”



In loving memory of Brett Dettmer. Your talents and passion to help the patients of Syracuse Area Health will never be forgotten.



Welcome to Syracuse Area Health!

New General Surgeon Joins Provider Team

Syracuse Area Health is excited to introduce Weston Keller, MD to the community! He is a member of General Surgery Associates and is providing general surgery services every other Wednesday right here in Syracuse. He joined the surgical team in September.

Dr. Keller grew up on a farm just outside of Eustis, NE. "Growing up in a small town, I recognize the importance of providing care in the local community and I am excited to be able to provide that in the Syracuse area," he said.

Being raised in a rural community with small town values means Dr. Keller is a great fit for Syracuse Area Health.

"His personality, values and demeanor are consistent with our community," Rachel Werner, Director of Specialty Clinics, shared.

After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Keller earned his medical degree at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed his general surgery residency at the University of Kansas. He then continued his education by completing a fellowship in Minimally Invasive Surgery where he trained under world-renowned surgeons.

Dr. Keller practices all aspects of general surgery and is well versed in laparoscopic and robotic surgical techniques that allow him to tailor the procedure to a



"Growing up in a small town, I recognize the importance of providing care in the local community."

- Weston Keller, MD

patient's specific needs. His practice has an emphasis on laparoscopic hernia procedures and advanced treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease, including colonoscopies and upper endoscopies.

"He brings general surgery expertise to our small-town operating room," Erica Searcey, Surgical Director at Syracuse Area Health, said. "This allows patients to have their surgery in Syracuse instead of having to go to Lincoln or Omaha for the procedure."

Outside of providing expert, compassionate surgical care, Dr. Keller loves spending time with his wife and two daughters, relaxing by the lake, or visiting his family's farm. He's also an avid Husker football fan—GBR!

To learn more about surgery services, contact the Surgery Scheduling Team at 402-269-7544. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Keller, call the Specialty Clinic Scheduling Team at 402-269-7636.

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR

Fitness & Fun



Syracuse Area Health’s new Director of Fitness and Wellness, Kristin Walters has always had a passion for staying active and finding ways to make healthy living fun, so taking on this role was a natural fit for her.

“Our Fitness Center is a great place to bring everybody together and I wanted to be a part of that,” Kristin shared.

After more than a decade of teaching group fitness classes and earning a degree in Health and Nutrition Sciences from University of Nebraska – Lincoln, she felt ready to jump into this new and exciting position.

“I truly want Fitness Plus to be a transformation-type gym,” she said, “We have the resources people

need to live healthier lives, and I want to see it be a place people in the community are drawn to.”

Even though Kristin has only been part of the Syracuse Area Health team since June, she’s already added some exciting new equipment to the facility.

“We purchased two new racks and dumbbells from five to 100 pounds, so people can work their muscles in different ways. We have also added a lot of new classes for our members to take advantage of.”

“Having a fitness center this nice right here in Syracuse is amazing,” Kristin said, “It’s a place to get healthy, socialize, and come together in our community. I want everyone to feel included and I think Fitness Plus does just that.”

At Fitness Plus, there is something for everyone plus great amenities:

- Indoor Track (19 laps to a mile)
- Cardio Machines
- Weight Racks
- Dumbbells
- Landmine
- TRX Bands
- Multi-purpose Room
- Spin Bikes
- Sauna
- Shower Rooms
- Group Fitness Classes

Weightlifting
TRX
Kickboxing
HIIT
Yoga
FIRE
Bootcamp
Silver Sneakers



To sign up for a membership to Fitness Plus, call 402-269-3760 or find out more at syracuseareahealth.com.



For the most updated information about Fitness Plus and class schedules, follow our Fitness Plus Facebook page: www.facebook.com/syracuseareahealthfitnessplus

5

Simple Tips for Staying Healthy & Active All Winter Long

It can be tempting to use the chillier winter months as an excuse to ditch your favorite physical activities in exchange for cozing up on the couch with a cup of cocoa, but that won't do you—or your health—any favors.

Instead, try these simple tips for staying active and eating nutritious foods, even as the snow starts to fly (while enjoying the occasional cookie and cocoa too—it's all about moderation).

Get out and enjoy nature (safely) with a winter walk, snowshoeing, ice skating and more. With the proper equipment, you'll stay warm and get a good workout.



Instead of busting out the snowblower, shovel your driveway—and even volunteer to tackle your neighbor's too.

Spring isn't the only season for cleaning! On those days when the weather simply calls for staying indoors, tackle some chores around the house—you'll get your heart rate up and check some things off your to-do list.



Enjoy holiday favorites like cookies and pies in moderation. When you know you will be indulging in festive foods, be sure to eat some lean protein and veggies to round out your meals.



Take advantage of local fitness centers, which provide access to professional workout equipment year-round. Syracuse Area Health's Fitness Plus is a great place to keep active!



It's Soup Season Keto Meatball Soup is Hearty and Delicious!

Recipe submitted by Kristin Walters,
SAH Fitness and Wellness Director



This keto meatball soup is flavorful, packed with veggies and will warm you from head to toe. It's easy to make and perfect for dinner—or anytime at all.

Ingredients

MEATBALLS

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 2 handfuls fresh spinach
- 1 small onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 3/4 tsp. sea salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground pepper
- 2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 Tbsp. parsley
- 2 Tbsp. coconut cream or heavy cream

SOUP

- 1 Tbsp. coconut oil or oil of choice
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves, garlic, minced
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- 2 tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 3/4 tsp. thyme
- 32-oz. can of diced tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 32-oz. low sodium beef or chicken broth
- 1 medium zucchini, chopped into halves or quarters
- 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar

Instructions for meatballs

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a 9x11" baking dish with parchment paper.
2. In food processor, add spinach, garlic and onion and process until everything is in very small pieces.
3. Add spinach/onion mixture to a large mixing bowl along with the ground beef, sea salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, parsley and coconut cream or heavy cream. Mix well.
4. Roll meat into balls and place into prepared baking dish.
5. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until cooked through.

Instructions for soup

1. Add oil to a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven and heat over medium heat.
2. Add onion, garlic, carrot, and celery. Sauté until veggies are slightly soft, around 4 minutes.
3. Add basil, oregano, and thyme. Cook for 1 minute.
4. Add diced tomatoes, tomato paste, bay leaf, chicken or beef broth and zucchini.
5. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer 20-25 minutes.
6. Add salt, pepper, and balsamic vinegar. If soup tastes flat, add more salt.
7. Add the meatballs to soup and serve!



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Visit syracuseareahealth.com or scan the QR code to sign up and get Syracuse Area Health news delivered right to your e-mail inbox!

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e-newsletter
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SYRACUSE AREA HEALTH Recognized for Quality Excellence

by Nebraska Department of Health and
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NEBRASKA

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