

THE pulse

 **syracuse**
AREA HEALTH



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LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear Reader,

It is hard to believe we are halfway through 2023 already – time flies when you are part of an amazing community like Syracuse, I guess! And with this new season comes a new issue of The Pulse, where we share the latest and greatest happenings at Syracuse Area Health with you.

Up first is an exciting introduction to our newest family medicine provider, Doug States, MD, ABFM. He brings a wealth of knowledge to SAH that will build upon the already exceptional care our team provides, and his passion for rural healthcare makes him the perfect addition to our providers. Please be sure to give him a warm welcome to our community.

Next is a feature on our partnership with Strasburger Orthopaedics, which outlines the incredible work Dr. Strasburger and his team do when it comes to orthopaedics care, addressing patients' needs and assisting with pain care and management.

In this edition, we're also highlighting an exciting new project SAH is kicking off, thanks to a partnership with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. We'll be revamping our landscape and establishing an arboretum to enhance the beauty of the area outside the hospital and create a naturally healthy and healing environment for patients, visitors, and our community.

Finally, we wrap up this issue with an article all about lymphedema management and treatment from our highly skilled therapy team. This one-on-one care can be life-changing for those coping with lymphedema, and I am thrilled we are able to help patients achieve the quality of life they deserve.

Thank you for reading and for your support of Syracuse Area Health. Without the support of our community, we wouldn't be able to provide the services that we do. I'm grateful to work with and serve such amazing people.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Harvey, President & CEO

SYRACUSE AREA HEALTH NAMED TOP 20 CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL Best Practice in Patient Satisfaction



Syracuse Area Health is recognized out of 1,353 critical access hospitals for the second year in a row!

Syracuse Area Health is thrilled to be a recipient of this prestigious award – and honored to have ranked in the top 1.47% of critical access hospitals for patient satisfaction.

“Syracuse Area Health is proud of the efforts of the physicians and staff who have contributed to our hospital achieving this designation, once again,” said Michael Harvey, Syracuse Area Health CEO. “It’s especially humbling to receive this award for the second year in a row and I could not be more proud of our team who directly contributed to SAH being honored with this prestigious ranking. Each day, we make it our primary goal to provide the best possible care for each patient we serve and I am very grateful that our efforts have been recognized.”



Meet Dr. Doug States

Syracuse Area Health's Newest Family Medicine Provider

Since February, Doug States, MD, ABFM, has been providing part-time family medicine services to Syracuse Area Health. He brings nearly 30 years of experience to his patients, and SAH is grateful to have him as a member of their provider team.

Dr. States has been in practice since 1995 and ran a private practice in North Platte. Dr. States has also been a faculty teaching member at the Lincoln Family Medicine Residency Program for the past seven years, and continues to serve in that role today.

An affinity for science, combined with a desire to help people, inspired his career in family medicine.

"I was always good at science, and I graduated in Mechanical Engineering at UNL. But I was drawn to healthcare as an opportunity to combine science with the opportunity to be personally involved with patient care," he shared. "Family medicine was a natural choice for my desire to live in a rural community and provide a broad scope of practice to my community."

While his first passion is family medicine, Dr. States also has a special interest in endoscopy, which will help SAH provide patients with the expert care and procedures they need close to home.

"I have done thousands of endoscopic procedures, both upper endoscopy and colonoscopy in my years of practice. I teach endoscopy to my residents at Lincoln Family Medicine," Dr. States said. "My other special interest is teaching. I have developed an interest in academic medicine and learning science,

and I am excited to continue improving and implementing what I learn."

With his decades of experience and passion for providing compassionate, personalized care, Dr. States is an amazing asset to the SAH team and the greater team. In his few short months with the facility so far, he has loved his new role.

"I enjoy working with rural residents because I feel they are more appreciative of excellent care provided in their community," he explained. "I'm fortunate to be here. While I was born and raised in North Platte, I was able to connect with Syracuse on establishing a rural practice through my daughter-in-law Emily Zahn."

As his new practice continues to flourish, Dr. States is excited to contribute to the excellent healthcare services provided by SAH and to help his patients on their health journeys.

"Family medicine provides great value for patients and our goal is to help our patients improve and maintain their health over time," he said. "Southeast Nebraska is very fortunate to have such an excellent facility. I should know. I have already been a patient in our own office, and I received excellent care. If you are not established with one of our providers, I would encourage you to give us a try."

Syracuse Area Health is excited to have Dr. States as part of the provider team. If you need a family medicine provider and would like to connect with him, please call the clinic at 402-269-2411.

Putting Medicine In Motion

with Strasburger Orthopaedics
at Syracuse Area Health

Living with a family history of crippling arthritis, 63-year-old Gary Wenzl has made it a priority throughout his life to stay active and take care of his joints.

He was doing all the right things: cycling to avoid bearing unnecessary weight, going to physical therapy, and doing every bit of at-home work that was recommended. He was also getting regular

steroid injections to control pain, and he would occasionally get fluid drained from his knee joints.

Yet, it wasn't enough.

Wenzl works four 10-hour days a week as a Mechanical Planner at Cooper Nuclear. His knee pain had gotten so bad that he would spend his weekend resting up for his next week of work. Despite being an upbeat, outgoing person, his chronic pain was starting to take a toll.

"I didn't feel like going anywhere or doing anything," Wenzl shares. "I got to a point of being more withdrawn. It was so much work to get in and out of the car. My energy was drained just trying to get through the day."

His life revolved around his knees...until he met Dr. Strasburger and chose robotic-assisted knee replacement surgery for both knees.



Scott Strasburger, MD, is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon with more than 20 years of experience. SAH – Strasburger Orthopaedics was one of the first facilities in the region to use the CORI◇ Robotics-Assisted Surgical System and remains one of the few facilities to utilize this technology today.

This surgical system is the future of total and partial knee replacement. As opposed to traditional surgery, the CORI◇ Surgical System creates a moving, virtual depiction of a knee. It allows Dr. Strasburger to view the size, alignment, and soft tissue balance of each patient's knee in real-time, allowing him to choose and place implants with increased precision.

"To me, putting medicine in motion means optimizing results, while providing a personalized experience throughout the process," says Dr. Strasburger. "We are proud to offer such advanced technologies to help patients break through barriers and achieve their goals."

For Wenzl, he realized he needed to dream bigger with his post-surgery goals.

"I remember thinking, if I could just ride for 10 miles post-surgery, it would feel so good!" recalls Wenzl. "I was underestimating myself and the procedure. Now, I've done things I never thought possible."

Wenzl recounts the first time he tried a long bike ride after surgery. "I asked my

daughter to be on-call to come pick me up, so I could test how far I could ride. My goal was to ride 35-40 miles one way to Lincoln, but I made it all the way there and told her I wanted to keep going. I made it all the way back, too!"

Since then, Wenzl has completed multiple long-haul races and rides, including a two-day, 202-mile event.

Wenzl also experienced countless other benefits. He has lost weight, sleeps better, and no longer wears out his shoes so quickly from an uneven stride. He tells everyone he meets who is considering a knee replacement to check out SAH – Strasburger Orthopaedics.

"I have friends who chose traditional knee replacement over robotic-assisted surgery and didn't have as good of results," he says. "My recovery was smooth, and they worked with me to manage pain without addictive medications, giving me a nerve block and instructions on home care. I would visit friends after their surgeries and give them advice about recovery they hadn't gotten from their own providers. I just knew what it was like to be treated correctly at SAH."

Learn more about how Dr. Strasburger puts medicine into motion by visiting strasburgerorthopaedics.com/video-library. Get to know our entire orthopaedics team at syracuseareahealth.com.

Athletic Training Program at Syracuse Area Health



What is an Athletic Trainer?

An athletic trainer is a healthcare professional specializing in the prevention of injury. If an injury occurs, an athletic trainer can diagnose and treat the athlete, while also creating a rehabilitation plan. They play a critical role in determining when an athlete is ready to return to practice or play. Common conditions they treat include:

- Overuse injuries
- Sprains and strains
- Concussions
- ACL tears and other significant injuries (identification and ruling out)



Concussion Care

SAH's athletic trainers are committed to protecting young athletes against concussion damage. We've implemented a clear approach toward minimizing concussion risk:

- Administer a baseline imPACT test before participation in sports and repeat every two years, beginning in 7th grade
- Recommend proper gear for athletes
- Educate coaches and athletes on safety protocols
- If concussion is suspected, remove athletes from play for evaluation
- Provide guidance on recovery
- Monitor improvement and supervise the athlete's return-to-activity



Easy Access and Communication

SAH's athletic trainers hold office hours at schools and use the Healthy Roster app, so athletes, parents, and trainers can document and communicate about injuries and treatments. Parents can report their child's off-field injuries via the app, so trainers can check up on them before the next game or practice and manage their participation in physical education.

SAH is proud to have built a robust athletic training program that includes Megan Neemann, MS, ATC, LAT and Martika Baratta, MS, ATC, LAT, as well as Scott Strasburger, MD, a sports medicine specialist who supports young athletes needing orthopaedic care or surgery.

Learn about SAH's Sports Outreach and Athletic Training Program at syracuseareahealth.com.



MEGAN NEEMANN,
MS, ATC, LAT



MARTIKA BARATTA,
MS, ATC, LAT

UTILIZING NATURE

to Inspire a Healthy and Healing Environment



Syracuse Area Health is kicking off an exciting new project!

Landscaping enhancements will soon be underway, thanks to a partnership with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. It is also supported by the Nebraska Forestry Service, the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy.

The landscape and arboretum project will enhance the current walking trail and healing garden at SAH and provide a beautiful area for patients, visitors, and the entire community. Enhancements to the existing area include adding native plants, trees for a windbreak, and gardens with “comfort stations” around the facility's exterior. There is also a sundial planned, which will have a pedestal made of bricks from the old hospital.

“We’ve identified our vision statement for this project as ‘Utilizing nature to inspire a healthy and healing environment for our patients and community,’” said Jill Ford, Vice President of Marketing and Development for SAH. “We’re excited to partner with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and are thankful for our volunteers who are a huge asset to this project.”

Syracuse residents Julie Zahn, Carol Thomas, and Brianne Wilhelm have

stepped up to help this project come to life. Zahn is the President of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, and Thomas is serving as Treasurer.

Brad Kindler, the project’s Sustainable Landscape Specialist and Coordinator, has been working with the project committee to identify ideal plants based on soil, irrigation needs, and environmental factors.

The team will also consider when each plant blooms, so some will bloom in the spring, while others will fill in during the summer or fall.

“Having multiple seasons of flowers is beautiful for humans, but it’s also helping nature,” Kindler explained.

This fall, Phase 1 will begin with tree planting and hardscape enhancements. Next spring, Phase 2 will include the planting of many different plants and flowers.

“Putting native plants back into the landscape provides an opportunity for people looking for solace, healing, or beauty,” Kindler said. “When we reintroduce species back into the landscape, we’re supporting the whole ecosystem of pollinators, so it’s an opportunity to provide a little bit of healing to the landscape, too.”

Beyond serving as pollinators, the chosen plants often require less water and less overall maintenance.

In addition to these benefits, SAH hopes to become part of the Nebraska Arboretum Network. Michael Harvey, CEO at SAH, shared: “We’re very excited about the arboretum and how it will help us meet our mission as a healthcare organization.”

The arboretum project committee and the SAH Foundation invite you to contribute to their fundraising campaign. They’re asking for donations and volunteers to bring the vision to life. Matching grant funds are available, and the committee hopes to raise \$25,000 for phase 1 and 2. In-kind donations, which include goods, services, and time, are also welcome.

To volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation, please contact the SAH Foundation at 402-269-7658, or a member of the project committee.

**Donations can be made at www.syracuseareahealth.com/foundation or mailed to:
Syracuse Area Health
Attn: Jill Ford
2731 Healthcare Drive
Syracuse NE 68446**

Living More Comfortably with Lymphedema

Experts estimate that up to 10 million Americans suffer from lymphedema. But what is it?

Your lymphatic system plays an important role in collecting excess fluid from tissues and organs, as well as clearing away waste from cells. When the lymphatic system isn't working properly, fluid can build up, causing discomfort, significant swelling, and higher risk of infection.

"In basic terms, lymphedema is an abnormal accumulation of lymphatic fluid in any part of your body," explains Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema & Wound Therapist Crystal Bennett, OTR/L.

This accumulation often looks like one very swollen arm or leg, and it can cause a variety of symptoms, including:

- Pain and discomfort
- Feeling of heaviness or tightness of the affected limb
- Restricted range of motion
- Recurring infections or inability to clear an infection
- Hardening or thickening of the skin

Specialized Services at Syracuse

"I think people assume they need to go to a bigger hospital to get the specialized care needed to treat lymphedema," says Bennett. "The truth is we have more advanced training for this condition here at Syracuse Area Health than most big-city hospitals."

Bennett learned about lymphedema during her student rotations in San Diego more than 20 years ago.

After coming back to Nebraska, she recognized the condition in patients who had never been diagnosed. Nobody in the area was treating it at the time, so she became certified in 2008 and started traveling around the region, treating patients and showing providers proper lymphedema care. Today, roughly 80 percent of her caseload is lymphedema patients and wound care.



"The truth is we have more advanced training for this condition here at Syracuse Area Health than most big-city hospitals."

-Crystal Bennett, OTR/L

Take the Initiative to Ask for Help

Left untreated, lymphedema continues to get worse, making it more difficult to find relief as time goes on. But, with early intervention, progression can be slowed down and, sometimes, the condition can even be reversed.

According to Bennett, the earlier the better. But any time is better than nothing. Occupational Therapy can improve your quality of life at any stage of lymphedema.

Ask your provider for a referral to Syracuse Area Health Occupational Therapy. Learn more at syracuseareahealth.com or call 402-269-7622.





2731 Healthcare Drive
Syracuse, NE 68446

fitness+

Join us for a wide variety of fitness classes that are included in the price of your membership!

Fitness Plus offers 24-hour access for qualified members.

We are also now offering healthy snacks and supplements for purchase.

Stop by Fitness Plus, and see what's new!



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SYRACUSE AREA HEALTH AUXILIARY THRIFT SHOP

There is always a new treasure to be found at the Thrift Shop!

Stop by during our shopping hours:
Monday 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday & Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Donations are accepted Monday,
Friday & Saturday 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

All proceeds from the Thrift Shop support Syracuse Area Health.



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