

THE pulse



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Sue LaFayette's Story

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Letter from the CEO

Dear reader,

As we embrace this winter season and enter a new year, I invite you to read our latest edition of The Pulse. This issue is filled with stories that reflect Syracuse Area Health's unwavering dedication to providing compassionate care and creating healthier communities, and I'm proud to highlight some of the recent accomplishments and new services that will further enhance the care we offer.

Featured is one of our Family Practice Medical Assistants, Shelly Wilson, MA, who was recently recognized with The Caring Kind Award for her unwavering commitment to providing compassionate care. This recognition is a true testament to the teamwork and excellence that define our organization.

You'll also meet our new Family Practitioner, Dr. Stuckey, who is already making a significant impact within the Syracuse Clinic. We're excited to welcome him to the team and spotlight our dedicated Family Practice providers at our Syracuse and Weeping Water clinics.

This edition also highlights our Swing Bed Program, offering skilled rehab services that allow patients to stay close to home and family while receiving extended care at Syracuse Area Health.

You'll hear the ever-inspiring story of breast cancer survivor Sue LaFayette. She received life-saving care from SAH, and we are honored to have been part of her journey to recovery. Her story is a powerful reminder of the impact early detection and expert care can have on a patient's life. Be sure to check out the article on the importance of breast MRIs and how this advanced screening tool plays a critical role in identifying cancer early, improving outcomes, and offering hope to patients like Sue.

Our specialty clinic continues to grow, with expanded ENT services that now include pediatric care. Additionally, we've introduced behavioral health services, reflecting our commitment to whole-person care. And don't miss learning about our Wellness Lab, which offers affordable, no-referral-needed tests to help you proactively manage your health.

This year, SAH has earned several prestigious awards, a reflection of the dedication and hard work of our entire staff. I hope you enjoy reading this issue, which showcases our ongoing commitment to delivering compassionate care to Southeast Nebraska. I'm incredibly proud of our entire team, and I'm deeply grateful for the trust you place in us.

Best wishes for the year ahead,
Michael Harvey, President & CEO



Michael Harvey
President & CEO



Honoring Excellence with the Caring Kind Award

Shelly Wilson, MA, Recognized for Outstanding Service

Syracuse Area Health is proud to announce that one of our Family Practice Clinic Medical Assistants, Shelly Wilson, MA, has been honored with the Caring Kind Award. This esteemed award recognizes healthcare employees who exemplify compassion for patients, teamwork with colleagues, and an unwavering commitment to quality care.

In her role, Shelly embodies true compassion and care, making her a valuable part of the clinic team. Known for her remarkable kindness and dedication to both her patients and coworkers, she is known for thoughtful gestures like surprise cards on difficult days. Shelly takes the time to get to know her colleagues and patients personally, always offering a listening ear and genuine care. She goes above and beyond—whether making follow-up calls to ensure patients understand their care or staying late so a coworker can attend a family event.

Congratulations to Shelly Wilson on her well-deserved Caring Kind Award. Her dedication to both Syracuse Area Health and the larger community is a shining example of the compassionate care we strive to deliver every day.

Syracuse Area Health Recognized for Patient Excellence and Employee Engagement



2023 Guardian of Excellence Award®

As a winner of the 2023 Guardian of Excellence Award® by Press Ganey, SAH is among the top 5% of healthcare providers nationwide that deliver an excellent employee experience.



2024 Top 20 Critical Access Hospital

For the third consecutive year, the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) named SAH a Top 20 Critical Access Hospital (CAH) for Patient Satisfaction in the U.S.



2024 Best Places to Work in Healthcare

SAH was recognized as one of the 2024 Best Places to Work in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare, highlighting employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention.



2024 Excellence in Healthcare

SAH was selected by Huron as a 2024 Excellence in Healthcare award winner, chosen as their sole winner in the Patient Excellence category, credited to innovative care delivery models resulting in excellent patient satisfaction scores across all 10 HCAHPS domains.





A Life-Saving Breast Cancer Journey

Sue LaFayette's Story

Three years ago, Sue LaFayette and her family moved to Cass County, Nebraska, drawn by the strong sense of community and beauty of the area.

What Sue didn't expect to find was top-quality healthcare close to home in our rural setting. For Sue, staying proactive about her health has always been a priority. With a family history of breast cancer, she has been vigilant about scheduling annual screenings. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she began to notice that her Omaha-based clinic wasn't meeting her expectations.

For two years, Sue brought up concerns about a noticeable area of questionable tissue but was repeatedly told it was nothing to worry about—without any follow-up imaging or biopsy.

"I felt I really didn't matter as an individual as I was limited to five minutes with each doctor or technician," Sue shared. "I thought 'Certainly there has to be a better place for women's health?'"

Discovering Syracuse Area Health

Unsatisfied with her experience, Sue decided it was time to seek better care. That's when a neighbor recommended Syracuse Area Health's North Clinic, located near Weeping Water on Highway 50. She scheduled her next annual exam with a family medicine physician at the clinic, with a mammogram scheduled soon after.

"My mammography technologist Stacey took care to make sure I was at ease and had as little discomfort as possible. The images she took were very precise, providing vital information for treatment."

A Life-Changing Diagnosis

Sue's mammogram at Syracuse Area Health's Radiology Department confirmed the need for further investigation. Mammograph technologist Stacey Siefken, RT (R) (M) ensured Sue was comfortable throughout the process, and the precise images taken that day were critical to her diagnosis.

"My mammography technologist Stacey took care to make sure I was at ease and had as little discomfort as possible. The images she took were very precise, providing vital information for treatment."

A few days later, her physician called with news that an area on the mammogram required further evaluation. She quickly arranged for a biopsy at one of Syracuse Area Health's trusted partners in Lincoln. The biopsy revealed what Sue had long feared: breast cancer.

Sue was referred to a breast surgeon with Advanced Medical Imaging, and an oncologist with Cancer Partners of Nebraska—both part of Syracuse Area Health's network of specialists. Together, these healthcare professionals developed a comprehensive treatment plan for Sue, which included a lumpectomy and radiation therapy.



A Positive Outcome

A year after her surgery, on September 15, 2024, Sue received the news she had been hoping for: her follow-up tests were cancer-free. Sue has been celebrating her remission with her husband, family, and community of friends.

Sue's advice for others facing healthcare challenges is simple: "My recommendation to anyone seeking medical care, listen to your inner voice. If it's telling you something isn't right, make a change. Thank you Syracuse Area Health!"

Breast MRIs

A Critical Tool for Early Detection and Diagnosis

Breast MRIs (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) are a powerful diagnostic tool, often detecting abnormalities that may not be visible through other imaging methods. Breast MRIs are recommended for:

High-Risk Patients: Individuals with a 20% or higher lifetime risk of breast cancer.

Evaluation of Implants: FDA recommends evaluating breast implants every two to three years.

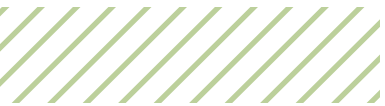
Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer: Helps determine the extent of the cancer.

Further Investigation: Used when other imaging results are inconclusive or additional information is needed.

Pre-Operative Planning and Staging: Assists in treatment planning, staging, and assessing response to treatment.

Learn more about SAH's MRI services at SyracuseAreaHealth.com/our-services/mri/.





Introducing Behavioral Health Services

Now Available at Syracuse Area Health



Syracuse Area Health (SAH) is proud to offer behavioral health services as part of our integrated clinic model. This means you can now access both mental health care and substance use support close to home.

We're excited to welcome Nicole Maher, LIMHP, LADC, to our team. Nicole is a licensed mental health therapist who's also certified in drug and alcohol counseling. Whether you're dealing with anxiety, depression, stress, or challenges with substance use, Nicole offers compassionate, judgment-free support to help you feel your best.

"I work with clients to recognize unhelpful behaviors and understand the emotional impact of life events, relationships, trauma, and other challenges," Maher explains. "Then, I help them develop new ways of coping and improving their lives holistically."

Our integrated clinic model brings all aspects of healthcare together. This approach allows Nicole and our primary care providers to work side-by-side, addressing your physical and emotional health as part of a complete plan. We're committed to ensuring you get the care you need, all in one place, with a team you know and trust.

One of the great things about this new service is that Nicole's expertise covers both mental health therapy and substance use counseling. Whether you need help working through life's stresses or support on the road to recovery, she's here for you.

At Syracuse Area Health, we're committed to providing compassionate care centered on you. If you or someone you know could benefit from behavioral health services, we're here to help.

To learn more about behavioral health services available at SAH, please call 402.269.2011.



Nicole Maher
LIMHP, LADC



Dr. Todd Stuckey
MD, FAAFP

Syracuse Clinic Welcomes Dr. Todd Stuckey as Family Medicine Physician

Homegrown Care for Your Family

Syracuse Area Health (SAH) is excited to announce the addition of Dr. Todd Stuckey, an experienced Family Medicine Physician, to the Syracuse Clinic. Dr. Stuckey is originally from the Plattsburgh area and is returning to his roots to serve the local community.

Dr. Stuckey earned his medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha and completed his residency at the Lincoln Family Practice Residency Program. Prior to joining Syracuse Area Health, he practiced at York Medical Clinic, P.C. for over 22 years, and gained extensive experience covering emergency department shifts at York General.

“Syracuse Area Health’s reputation for excellence and patient-centered care aligns with how I desire to practice medicine. There are many factors drawing me back home, and meeting the team here gives me peace that Syracuse is where I belong. I am looking forward to serving this community for years to come.”

As a board-certified Family Practitioner and active member of numerous medical associations, Dr. Stuckey’s deep connection to the region and passion for delivering patient-centered care make him a valuable addition to the Syracuse Area Health team.

“There are many factors drawing me back home, and meeting the team here gives me peace that Syracuse is where I belong. I am looking forward to serving this community for years to come.”

Comprehensive ENT Care

Advanced Ear, Nose, and Throat Treatment, Along with Audiology Services, for All Ages

Persistent ear infections, allergies, loss of hearing, and sinus issues can significantly impact your quality of life, affecting your ability to work, concentrate, and enjoy daily activities. Syracuse Area Health is here to provide a solution with the expansion of Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) services with the addition of Jason Talmadge, MD who offers treatment for both adult and pediatric ENT patients, and Nicole Weyers, Au.D who offers Audiology services, including hearing tests and hearing aid application.

Our ENT and Audiology services cover a wide range of conditions, including sinus and allergy issues, ear infections, hearing loss, tonsil and adenoid problems, and other concerns affecting the head and neck. Both surgical and non-surgical treatments are available, ensuring patients receive the most appropriate and effective care.

When Should You See an ENT Specialist?

- Persistent sinus infections
- Frequent ear infections
- Hearing loss
- Difficulty breathing through your nose
- Throat discomfort
- Allergies affecting breathing or causing ear and throat irritation
- Frequent earaches or tonsil issues in children

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 402.269.7636.



Dr. Jason Talmadge
MD



Nicole Weyers
Au.D

Syracuse Area Health Family Practice Clinics

Your Partner in Lifelong Wellness

With convenient locations in Syracuse and Weeping Water, Syracuse Area Health's clinics offer you and your family care for a wide variety of medical challenges, illnesses, and injuries. Both clinics offer same-day care, lab services, and X-ray services. Our team of family practice providers offers a comprehensive range of services, from routine check-ups and preventative care to management of chronic conditions and urgent medical needs.

Services Include:

- Comprehensive Family Medicine services for all ages
- Preventive care and wellness exams
- Same-day or next-day appointments often available for urgent needs
- Chronic condition management
- On-site lab and radiology services
- Experienced, compassionate healthcare providers



Syracuse Clinic

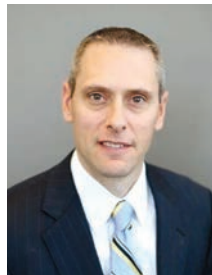
402.269.2411
2731 Healthcare Drive
Syracuse, NE 68446



Randy Bain
DO, FAAFP



Doug States
MD, ABFM



James Steckelberg
MD



Todd Stuckey
MD, FAAFP



Molly Skomer
APRN



Nicole Maher
LIMHP, LADC



North Clinic

402.267.5330
7512 Highway 50
Weeping Water, NE 68463



Brett Copley
DO

“This opportunity to serve the community where I grew up is incredibly rewarding.”



Lindsey Eggers
APRN



Heather Noerrlinger
APRN



Swing Bed Program for Skilled Rehabilitation



Recovery Close to Home

At Syracuse Area Health (SAH), we know how important it is to receive high-quality care during recovery—without needing to travel far from loved ones. That’s why our Swing Bed Program provides skilled rehabilitation services right here in your community. Our skilled team is here to provide the rehabilitation support you need, ensuring you or your loved one can heal comfortably and confidently.

What Is the Swing Bed Program?

The Swing Bed Program is designed for patients who no longer need acute hospital care but still require additional recovery time and rehabilitation before going home. Whether recovering from surgery, healing from an injury, or managing a chronic illness, this program offers a higher level of support to help patients regain their strength.

Personalized Therapy Sessions

During their stay, patients benefit from daily, customized therapy sessions that focus on improving mobility, building strength, and restoring function. These stays can vary in length—from just a few weeks to a few months—depending on each patient’s recovery needs and progress.

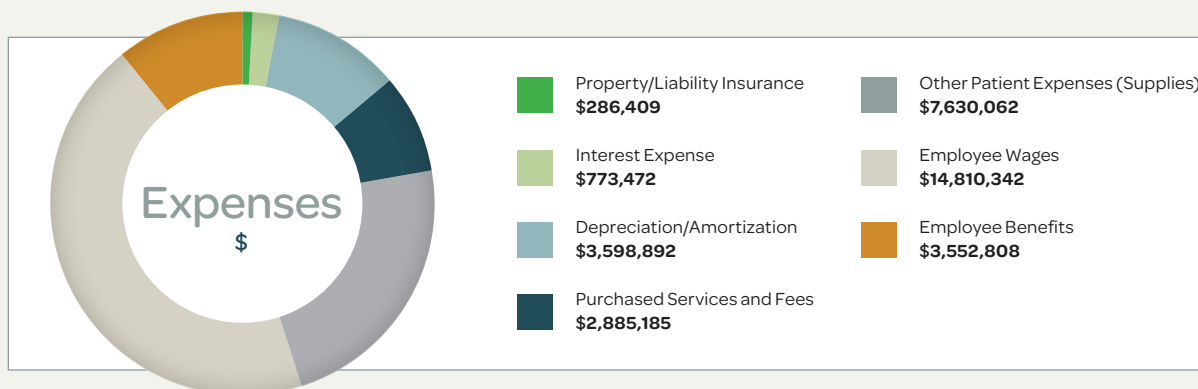
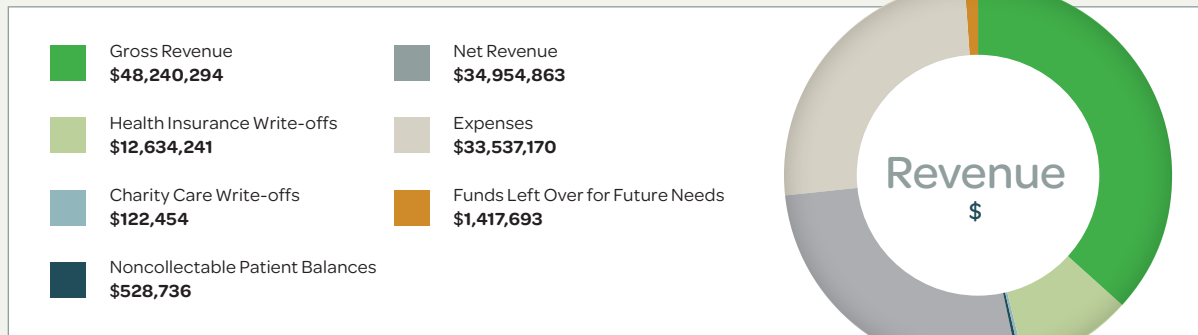
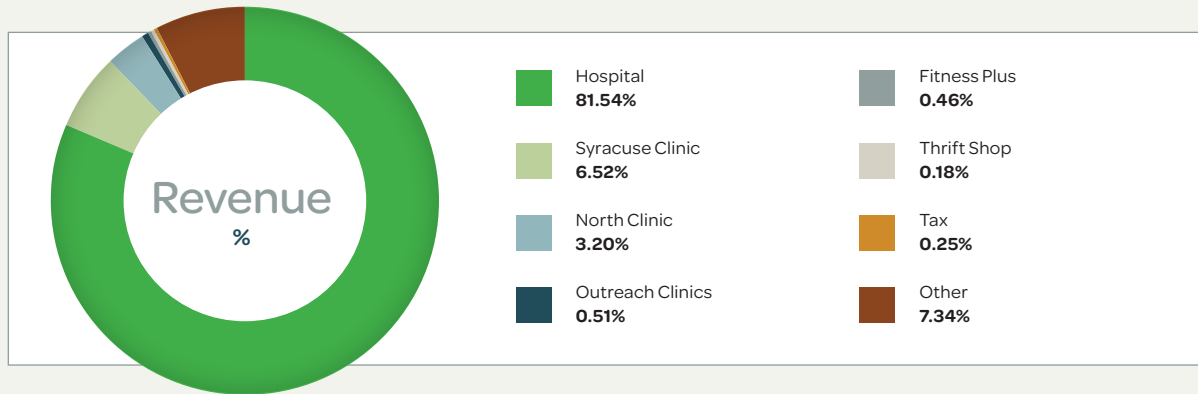
A Familiar Environment for Healing

A key advantage of the Swing Bed Program is that patients can recover at their own pace in a comfortable and familiar environment. Being close to family and friends provides emotional support and encouragement that can make all the difference in the healing process. Our skilled team is here to provide the rehabilitation support you need, ensuring you or your loved one can heal comfortably and confidently.

Learn more about SAH’s swing bed services at [SyracuseAreaHealth.com](https://www.SyracuseAreaHealth.com) or by calling 402.269.2011.

Annual Report

2024 Fiscal Year-End
Syracuse Area Health



	2022	2023	2024
Inpatient/Swing Bed Days	609	632	808
ER Visits	1,716	1,836	1,955
Surgical Procedures	302	304	287
Syracuse Clinic Visits	9,898	10,287	10,747
North Clinic Visits	3,509	4,158	5,137
Specialty Clinic Visits	3,270	3,555	3,505
CT Scans	1,214	1,705	2,101
MRI Scans	171	326	399
Laboratory Tests	30,038	34,867	37,039
Physical Therapy Sessions	11,399	13,023	13,640
Occupational Therapy Sessions	6,150	6,296	7,026
Cardiac Rehab Visits	649	701	635
Pulmonary Rehab Visits	206	134	178
Respiratory Treatments	546	848	844



2731 Healthcare Drive, Syracuse, NE 68446
SyracuseAreaHealth.com



Wellness Lab at Syracuse Area Health

Take charge of your health with affordable lab tests at Syracuse Area Health's Wellness Lab—no referral needed! Our discounted services are available to anyone, including those with high deductibles or no insurance.

Appointments: Tuesdays & Fridays, 7 a.m.–5 p.m.

Call to Schedule: 402.269.7636

Scan the QR code for pricing and more info!

