



Heart to Heart

NEWS FROM ST. LUKE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

WRAP AROUND CARE

New programs support patients at home

AS HEALTHCARE SHIFTS from a fee for service model to a value based system, there are new “wrap around care” programs emerging which focus on prevention, disease management and mental health. St. Luke is committed to supporting patients in the best way possible and has implemented several services to meet our patients’ needs. Chronic Care Management, Collaborative Care, and Wrapped in Hope are some of these programs. Although the targeted population of each program differs, the goal of supporting the patient in their home environment remains the same. Chronic Care Management focuses on patients with two or more chronic conditions,

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ST. LUKE PHOTO

Chronic Care Nurse Britta Shirtliff, RN, provides care coordination and management for St. Luke’s wrap around care programs.

Married physicians bring dedication and caring to St. Luke

CHARISMATIC. That’s the word that best describes Drs. Joanna and Isaac Billings, married physicians working at St. Luke Community Healthcare. The pair married in 2018.

Their shared passion for working with underserved populations drew them to one another. The couple works to bring improvements to people’s lives through their health and by addressing accompanying social issues and challenges. Joanna and Isaac seek to help people who struggle with access not only to medical care but also to healthy food sources, medications and transportation to health facilities. They want to make a difference and plan to be involved in the community solving problems that impact people’s lives.

Joanna is from Tennessee and Isaac grew up in Michigan. While in Greeley, Colorado, and prior to dating, they worked together as student and supervisor in a medical facility. Each shared stories about their first interactions and what they most admire about the other.

As a resident at a facility in Colorado, Joanna supervised third year medical student Isaac. She recalls and he confirmed that she critiqued his discharge summaries and directed him to rewrite them. She laughed and says his discharge summaries are written well now.

In fact, she appreciates his dedication to excellence. His work to arrive at the right diagnoses and provide the correct treatment is thorough. She said, “He won’t stop until he gets the job done ... very inspiring.”

Isaac recollects an incident where his difficulty understanding her southern accent had him wasting some of his crucial time as a third year med student. In response to Joanna’s direction as his supervisor, he spent the better part of an afternoon trying to find information about a nursing home that didn’t exist. He’d simply misunderstood her.

“Joanna is very intelligent,” said Isaac. “She is in the top percentile in the nation.” He admires her academic scholarship and her ability to connect with people - physicians, friends and patients.

“She stays in touch with people

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FLU VACCINES MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

IT FEELS LIKE THE LAST SIX MONTHS have been the fastest and longest six months ever – and given the state of affairs in the world, six months into this COVID experience, that dichotomy seems appropriate. Here are some things to consider and information I want to share:

Thank you to all our staff, especially those on the front lines – our healthcare heroes continue to remain here for you, ready to meet your healthcare needs.

If you are battling a chronic health issue (i.e. diabetes, COPD, hypertension) our chronic care management program might be the right type of service you should consider. Reach out to your primary care physician or please call Britta, our Chronic Care Nurse, at 406-676-3600, to see if this service is right for you.

We held our first ever virtual fundraising event for the St Luke Community Healthcare Foundation in September. It was a great success, thanks to our staff and the great support from our business sponsors, donors and community members. The funds will go to support services and equipment for our maternal and children health programs.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Our new 3D mammogram with breast tomosynthesis is the most advanced diagnostic tool to help screen for early detection of breast cancer. Please call 406-528-5272 to schedule your mammogram today.

Flu vaccines are available and more important than ever. The flu vaccine will help protect you from the seasonal flu and reduce the potential of our healthcare delivery systems from getting overwhelmed by flu and COVID at the same time. Please don’t delay, get your flu shot by calling or coming in to any one of our primary care clinics.

Vote! Your voice is important. If you have already sent your ballot in – great! If you haven’t, please find it, fill it out and send it in.



One of the biggest challenges faced by healthcare facilities, across the state, as we’ve seen an uptick in COVID numbers, is the health of our staff. Even basic healthcare services can be a challenge when a healthcare organization doesn’t have the staff to provide it. Help us help you by wearing a mask, practicing good hand washing and hygiene, and adhering to social distancing.

The Montana Hospital Association recently held its annual healthcare convention in a virtual format during the first week of October. I am proud to announce that St. Luke Community Healthcare was recognized as a nominee for “Best Place to Work” and was only one of two hospitals in the state that received a quality improvement award from the Performance Improvement Network for the 12th year in a row!

Don’t delay your routine checkups and preventative services – there have been several stories of patients that have waited, as they were concerned about accessing healthcare during the pandemic, only to find that their chronic condition had deteriorated or a cancer had progressed.

Remember that having a family practice physician is the best bet for your health care dollar. If you have insurance, it typically covers a preventative visit 100% - that means no cost to you. For additional primary care physician services, the average cost is well under \$500 per year per person. Spend your health care dollar wisely.

Gratitude – Add a little gratitude to your life in everything you do. Studies show that people who practice gratitude routinely are healthier, happier and more productive. Take a little time each day to reflect and ask yourself what you are grateful for. Keep these things in mind as you go about your day and remember to share your appreciation with others.

Steve

married physicians
(from page 1)

from high school, college, medical school, her residency and patients. She really connects in a wonderful way ... she genuinely cares,” Isaac confided.

Isaac is excited to be here because moving to Montana has been a dream since childhood. As a 12-year-old young man, his family took a memorable trip to Montana, Glacier Park and Troy because as newlyweds, Isaac’s parents worked as wildland fire fighters in Troy.

Unlike Isaac, Joanna had only traveled through Montana on her way to Idaho, prior to working at St. Luke Hospital. She enjoys living in Ronan and “really loves the people ... great community.” After living in Colorado, she especially appreciates the area’s lack of traffic.

Joanna and Isaac appreciate Montana’s outdoor opportunities and particularly enjoy hiking, back-packing, horseback riding, skiing and canoeing. The couple are enjoying working more normal hours following medical school, appreciating more time together and getting involved in their new community.



Doctors Joanna and Isaac Billings look forward to making an impact in their community both at work and in their personal lives.

ST. LUKE PHOTO

Chronic Care Management is a critical component of primary care that promotes better health and reduces overall healthcare costs.

wrap around care (from page 1)

Collaborative Care works with patients dealing with increased mental health concerns, and Wrapped in Hope is designed to support pregnant patients.

Chronic Care Management (CCM) is a critical component of primary care that promotes better health and reduces overall healthcare costs. Chronic diseases and conditions are now the most common health problems in the United States. A chronic condition is defined as an ongoing medical problem that must be managed to maintain the best possible health. It’s reported that 65% of Medicare recipients have two or more chronic conditions, and 85% of healthcare spending is on patients with chronic illnesses. Every day patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, heart disease, hypertension, and depression come to St. Luke to learn to understand their chronic health condition and how to live successfully with it.

Improving care delivery and outcomes for persons with chronic illnesses is a high priority for both St. Luke Community Healthcare and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Chronic Care Management (CCM) was introduced by CMS in 2015 to improve the quality and coordination of care for chronically ill Medicare patients. Chronic conditions - such as diabetes, hyper-

tension, COPD, heart arrhythmias, and depression - are a CMS focus because of their high prevalence and related death rates, substantial health service delivery costs, and burden on patients and health systems.

The St. Luke CCM program is designed to help patients improve their health by simplifying their care and providing increased support to help manage two or more chronic conditions through a team-based approach looking to all members of the patient’s care team including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, behavioral health specialists, and care navigators to coach patients, promote self-care, and connect patients with resources and support. Patients who receive chronic care management experience less emergency room visits, fewer hospitalizations and less pharmaceutical complications.

Chronic Care Nurse Britta Shirtliff, RN is an integral member of the St. Luke’s primary care team and is responsible for providing care coordination and care management services to patients who are at risk for poor outcomes, health deterioration, comorbidities and preventable hospitalizations. CCM at St. Luke includes a range of activities intended to improve patient care and reduce the need for medical services by helping patients and caregivers more effectively manage health conditions. “St. Luke’s CCM program is a great way for people with multiple

chronic conditions to get help managing their health. It is very individualized to what the patient needs and is designed to offer extra support to what the physicians are already doing,” says Britta.

We hear some amazing success stories from Britta about patients as the result of receiving CCM services. One such story Britta recently shared was a 61-year-old diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and multiple other chronic conditions. Monthly CCM phone calls focused on improving food choices and medication education. As a result of working together, the patient was able to decrease his hemoglobin A1C from 10.7% to 7.0% in three months. For people with diabetes, the lower the A1C value, the better the diabetes control and the lower the risk of developing complications such as eye, heart, and kidney disease. The patient reported feeling better throughout the day, weight loss and improved self confidence. He’s also enjoyed increased endurance while hiking.

Some of the benefits to Chronic Care Management include:

At least 20 minutes of chronic care management services per month

Assistance from a dedicated health care professional who will work with patients to create a personalized care plan

Coordination of care between pharmacy, specialists, testing centers, hospitals, and more

Phone check-ins between doctor visits to help keep patients on track

Expert assistance with setting and meeting health goals

Help connecting to community resources and services

The CCM program focuses on keeping you healthier at home between your regular doctor appointments. Talk with your doctor and other members of the health care team at your next visit to see if CCM might be beneficial for you.

HEALTH WATCH

For those experiencing suicidal thoughts, or know someone who is: please reach out.

1-800-273-8255

[SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.suicideline.org)

Text MT to 741-741

FOUNDATION NEWS: First online fundraiser a success!

ST. LUKE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION would like to express our deepest appreciation to everyone who made our first ever, online fundraising event successful. From our Signature Event Sponsor, Glacier Bank, and all of our event sponsors, to those who donated items and those who participated by bidding on and/or purchasing auction items, we thank you. Our committee worked hard to change gears quickly, and provide an alternative to our “normal” event this year. We knew we had to raise funds for our maternal and child health services that have become far more urgent over

the past few years. Addressing underlying issues such as anxiety, depression, substance use disorders and other issues, we are far more likely to see positive outcomes for the children in those families as well. We have some exciting partnerships in beginning stages that will help us work toward improving outcomes for families, including keeping families together whenever possible, with the kind of strong supports they need. We are also a Safe Sleep certified hospital, and our focus is on ensuring safe sleep environments, through education and the provision of safe cribs where needed.

Funds raised this year are crucial

in our evolution in integrating social determinants of health into the way we provide healthcare. Statistics from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a health data organization, and other reputable sources underscore this point: A quarter of all parents raising young children are food insecure, 1 in 5 parents are concerned about their children’s safety, and 65% of families believe adult lifestyles in the home play a role in the health of young people. The more we know about what’s driving health issues, the more we can work toward providing healthcare that improves health and wellbeing for the whole family.

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Quarter 4:
Britta
Shirtliff
SLCC-R



Britta has taken on the role of Clinical Care Coordinator with incredible determination, positivity, and dedication. In conjunction with Behavioral Health, she has directly impacted the physical and emotional well-being of her patients and improved their quality of life. Thank you, Britta, for the time and effort you put into your work every day. The outcomes are rewarding and deserving of recognition!

Neurology
Kurt Lindsey, MD
406-752-5095

Sleep Medicine
Kim Damrow, MD
406-676-4441

ECF **PROFILE:** Marie Jensen Rustad

MARIE JENSEN RUSTAD WAS BORN IN 1924 “IN A SMALL CABIN BY A LAKE” in rural North Dakota. The oldest of 11 children, Marie grew up quickly, learning to care for her siblings at a young age. She even helped her mother deliver one of the babies! The children all walked five miles round-trip every day to school, if they had shoes to walk in. If not, they didn’t go to school that year.



Marie Jensen Rustad



Marie and Albert

independently for many years, supported by her loving family and her the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Polson, who all care about her dearly. Upon moving into the nursing home, Marie commented that “some might have seen it as a sad thing, but I didn’t. I just saw it as another move, like I did from North Dakota to Montana. Just another step.” Gifted with a sunny outlook, Ma-

rie started working when she was 15, as a nanny for local families. She also looked after the homes of her clients and tended to their livestock ... a Jill of all trades, to be sure! Marie married her neighbor, Albert, and they were happily married for 53 years. Together, they had three children, all boys ... Allen, Clayton and Steve.

Marie was a devoted wife and mother. She loved spending time her family and enjoyed gardening, canning and sewing. She humbly admits she was a skilled seamstress. “Some folks didn’t feel like their wardrobe was complete until they had something I’d made in it.” She raised animals alongside Albert, who was a hobby farmer and worked during the day for the city. They moved to Montana in 1975 “and I’m sure glad we did!”

Albert passed away in 1996 and Marie went on to marry Norman, an old friend from North Dakota. They split their time between the states and enjoyed travelling together. The couple were married for 7 ½ years before Norman passed. Marie continued to live

rie enjoys spending her time coloring – she’s colored more than 80 books! She likes to be “out and about,” not in her room too much, and she tries to exercise in the sun room every day. “Not bad for 96,” she says!

Marie prides herself on her large family. Her children all live locally and she has 14 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren! She adores them and they adore her as well. Marie loved having company frequently until COVID came around, but says she still enjoys the phone calls and the window visits. When asked what advice she might have for others, given that she’s made it almost a century in this world, Marie says, “Live one day at a time. Get up and enjoy the fact that you’re alive.” Marie says she leans on her faith as well, and that it helps her get through days that might otherwise be a struggle.

She’d like to tell her family and friends that she thinks of them all often and that she could use a few more coloring books. We would all be wise to follow in Marie’s footsteps. Don’t take yourself too seriously and don’t worry too much about coloring in the lines. Just enjoy the day and take it one step at a time!

Marijuana can be problematic for some users

A GROWING NUMBER OF STATES HAVE STARTED TREATING MARIJUANA LIKE ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO. Montana has now joined the list of states where voters will see adult use cannabis legalization on their ballots this November. Both advocates and critics present compelling arguments, but the evidence indicates that strong claims about cannabis legalization, whether by advocates or opponents, are still questionable. Moreover, there’s differences between legalization, commercialization, decriminalization and medicalization. But as health care providers, we’re concerned about the health risks for people who use marijuana, especially youth and young adults, and women who are pregnant or nursing.

Marijuana can have very complex effects on the brain and body. Some of the medical issues with chronic marijuana use that health care providers are concerned about include: cannabis hyperemesis syndrome; risks of smoking cannabis while using hormonal birth control; risk of psychosis from cannabis use; risk of cannabis use during pregnancy; and, cardiovascular risk related to cannabis use.

Views of marijuana are changing and increasing numbers of Americans support the legalization of marijuana, but recreational marijuana use can be problematic for some users. One of the tools our primary care providers use for facilitating early identification of risky substance use is Screening, Brief Intervention, and

Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) - a public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for individuals at risk of developing substance use disorders (SUDs) and those who have already developed these disorders.

Regardless of the referendum’s outcome, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld a lower court’s decision to dismiss a fired marijuana user’s lawsuit against his employer. The federal appeals court concluded that a state’s legalization of marijuana won’t necessarily override a company’s drug-free workplace policy stating that the Montana Medical Marijuana Act (MMA) “doesn’t prevent employers from prohibiting their employees from using marijuana.”

NUTRITION CORNER

Setting Your Family up for Success



AS CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL AND FAMILIES ESTABLISH new routines, this is a great time to step back and check our daily habits. The 5210 framework for healthy living is a simple tool that can help identify areas that may need special attention in order to set your family up for success. Ask yourself these questions each day: Did we consume **5** servings of fruits and vegetables? Did we keep our recreational screen time below **2** hours? Did we engage in at least **1** hour of physical activity? And did we drink **0** sugary beverages? If one of these goals was not reached, try to make a special effort to improve in that category the following day.

Given that many kids are learning virtually, and COVID restrictions may keep kids and adults from partaking in their usual activities (especially in the winter months), it is going to take a conscious effort to meet the activity and recreational screen time goals. Involve the whole family in planning and coming up with creative ideas in order to get everyone engaged and make it fun. Here are some tips to get you going:

Place a large calendar on the wall. This calendar will be just for planning activities and setting fun activity goals. For example, one day might have a goal of completing 500 jumping jacks, and another day’s activity plan might be to make an obstacle course around the house and to complete it five times successfully.

Set specific times for activity. This could be an hour from 5-6 pm every day or you could break activities up into smaller chunks and complete them during class breaks at home or before and after school.

Try new activities often. Variety is key to keeping the whole family interested and from feeling like a chore. Have each family member write suggestions on paper and draw ideas from a hat to mix it up.

Use what is available to you. With current restrictions, this could mean that you take advantage of free yoga classes on YouTube, use monkey bars at the park, or build a sledding hill together.

Schedule family time. Set aside some time each day where the whole family puts their gadgets and screens away. To avoid boredom, pull out a board game, cook dinner together, or go outside as a family.

Although it can seem challenging without the usual PE time, team sports, or gyms, it *is* possible to meet your activity goals. Get into your creative mindset and get ready to make lasting memories with your family. Shift to the positive by seeing this as encouragement to get out of our ruts and try new things!

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St. Luke Community Oxygen & Medical Equipment
St. Luke Community Hearing Center
St. Luke Community Healthcare Foundation
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www.stlukehealthcare.org
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