

Retiring Chief Medical Officer Says Personal Connections Will Be Missed Most (pg. 3)

Wound Care Clinic Coming to Greene County Medical Center (pg. 4)

New General Surgeon Joins Specialty Team (pg. 5)

& MUCH MORE!



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

A SEASON OF GROWTH

Expanding services for our communities



As we step into the warmer months of spring and summer, I am excited to share some wonderful updates about the growth of services at Greene County Medical Center. Our mission, "to enrich our community by providing quality, compassionate care to every patient and contributing to the well-being of every family," is met when we provide access to even more high-quality healthcare options close to home.

In response to the identified needs of those who live and work in our communities, we have recently added to our specialty services, which includes Oncology, Colorectal Surgery and Clinical Gastroenterology. We have been able to bring back Cataract Surgery with an interim provider until our new surgeon joins us this fall and we have welcomed a new General Surgeon. We are also thrilled to announce a partnership with Healogics® that will result in a Wound Care Clinic opening this spring at Greene County Medical Center.



The benefits of local healthcare are many, including that of fewer long trips for specialized care and more convenience for you and your family.

Looking ahead, we are committed to continuing our momentum by enhancing patient experiences and exploring even more ways to serve you. Your health and well-being remain our top priority, and we are grateful for the trust you place in us.

As the seasons change, we encourage you to take advantage of preventive care opportunities, wellness checkups and enjoy outdoor activities to stay active and healthy.

Thank you for being a part of the Greene County Medical Center family and we look forward to a bright and healthy season ahead.

Chad Butterfield

Chief Executive Officer

Foundation GOLF TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH, 2025

REGISTER NOW!

Scan the QR Code OR Contact:



Nancy Houska, Foundation Director 515-386-0108 | nancy.houska@gcmchealth.com

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WILL BE MISSED MOST

Dr. Laurie Connolly appreciates interactions with all during her years as a medical provider

This past fall, Dr. Laurie Connolly, Chief Medical Officer at Greene County Medical Center, announced she would be retiring effective May 2.

Having spent the past 35 years of her life either working to become a physician or practicing as one, she is grateful for being welcomed into so many

people's lives. "I have been blessed to serve people in these communities

serve people in these comm since 2002," she said. "They have trusted me to deliver their babies, care for their children, address their acute, emergent and chronic medical issues and to be by their side when they are dying. I will be forever grateful for the trust this community has had in me to provide those cares."

However, it isn't only patients that come to mind. "We are fortunate to have people who live in our communities caring for others in these communities when they are sick," she explained. "There is a lot more pressure and stress – in a good way – when you are caring for someone you know and like. That is the beauty of receiving care locally. We also have employees who have been with Greene County Medical Center for decades, which says a lot for the work environment."

Dr. Connolly's work as a physician and leader at the medical center has been pivotal in creating an atmosphere of inclusion and teamwork and she is proud of how the staff has pulled together to implement initiatives and programs for the benefit of all; programs that build the foundation for a healthy future. "For the last several years we have had a large focus on quality cares, patient safety and patient satisfaction and those are values that are unlikely to diminish with time," Connolly said.

This type of crossroad is one of those unique times where we look back as we also look forward to the next chapter. Dr. Connolly reflected on what she will miss most on a day-to-day basis. "I will miss the people I work with, community members that I interact with regularly and being able to make a difference in this community," she said as she also considers what retirement has to offer. "I am excited to be able to spend more time with my husband [David Ohrt] and grandchildren," she said. "I've been working, outside of

babysitting, since I was 14 years old, so it will be nice to see what relaxing and retirement are all about."

Dr. Connolly grew up in the eastern Iowa community of Commanche before leaving to attend college. She earned her medical degree from the Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa.

BOARD-CERTIFIED COLORECTAL SURGEON **SERVES AREA PATIENTS**

Dr. Alex Menning brings highly specialized service to Jefferson

"Colorectal surgery is a very specialized field and we are excited to be able to offer these services to patients in our region," Dr. Laurie Connolly, Chief Medical Officer at Greene County Medical Center said about the new services at the Jefferson medical center. "In many instances, patients must drive hours to see a boardcertified colorectal surgeon, costing them time and money. Having Dr. Menning available to perform outpatient procedures in Jefferson provides ease of access to exceptional care for those patients."

Dr. Menning, with the Iowa Digestive Disease Center, began his outpatient clinic at Greene County Medical Center in January. Some of the procedures he will perform locally include: anoscopy and proctoscopy; hemorrhoid banding; condyloma treatments; suture, drain and port removals; abscess drainage; seton removal and tightening; tumor biopsy; skin tag/papilla excision; fissure management; stoma evaluation; and post procedure follow-up.



Dr. Menning is at Greene **County Medical Center on the** third Wednesday of each month and sees patients on a referral basis. Call 515-386-2114 for more information.



WOUND CARE CLINIC COMING TO GREENE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

Partnership to Find.Treat.Heal ® brings weekly wound care services to Jefferson

Healogics

Greene County Medical Center leadership is pleased to announce a partnership with Healogics, the nation's leading advanced wound care provider. This collaboration will lead to the opening of the Greene County Medical Center Wound Care Clinic in early May.

"Family Medicine Clinic provider, Kaitlyn Bravek, PA-C, is undergoing specialized training to treat a wide variety of common, chronic wounds," said Greene County Medical Center Chief Nursing Officer, Amanda Lass. "With one in four families having a member suffering from

a chronic wound that is infected or won't heal, this clinic will bring a vital and valuable service that addresses these specific healthcare issues to those

families in the communities we serve."

Care will be available for patients suffering from skin or pressure ulcers, diabetic foot ulcers, burns and surgical or trauma wounds. More details on the clinic opening will be released in the coming weeks.



NEW GENERAL SURGEON JOINS SPECIALTY TEAM

Dr. Mark Abraham now serves patients at Greene County Medical Center

Dr. Mark Abraham now sees patients in both the clinical and surgical settings at Greene County Medical Center on the first and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

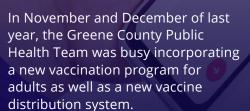
"We are excited to welcome Dr. Abraham to our impressive team of visiting specialists," said Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Laurie Connolly. "He will be able to perform surgeries and preventive care procedures right here in Jefferson, on patients of all ages. His expertise is a great asset to our medical center and community."

Dr. Abraham's Jefferson surgical services include: gallbladder surgery; hernia repair, laparoscopic abdominal surgery; skin and soft tissue biopsies; breast cancer care; vascular access procedures and endoscopy services.



Greene County Public Health Enhances Vaccination Services

VaxCare and the Vaccines for Adults rolled out in late 2024



The first to be implemented was the Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program. "There is a similar program we were already doing, Vaccines for Children (VFC)," explained Public Health Director, Shelby Cooklin. "The state decided they wanted to do something similar for adults who are uninsured or underinsured. It is a way to open more doors for people to get their vaccines without

having to worry about how much it is going to cost."

Cooklin said they are able to provide flu, COVID, Tdap and MMR and select other vaccines for qualifying adults. She also indicated more will be added as time goes on.

In December, Public Health installed a VaxCare system, which monitors stock vaccines. "It tracks our inventory and will automatically generate a shipment when needed," said Cooklin. ""VaxCare also allows us to vaccinate more people, both children and adults, because they have the capability of billing more private insurance companies than



Public Health

In addition, the system indexes the vaccine to ensure it is not out of date and is appropriate for specific age ranges.

Cooklin does want patients to be aware that if insurance is billed their Explanation of Benefits (EOB) will list VaxCare as the service. Any additional costs associated with the distribution will then be billed by VaxCare as well.

For more information on the Vaccines for Adults or VaxCare programs, contact Public Health at 515-386-3228.

CLINICAL GASTROENTEROLOGY SERVICES

Karen Luken, ARNP Treats patients monthly in Jefferson

Patients who suffer from chronic abdominal pain, bowel and liver diseases and disorders as well as acid reflux, hepatitis and chronic constipation or diarrhea can now see a gastrointestinal specialist at Greene County Medical Center

Karen Luken, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, has more than 25 years of experience in working with patients; 15 years with the Iowa Digestive Disease Center and prior to that with Gastrointestinal Associates and the Veterans Administration. "We are pleased to have a provider with an extensive background in gastrointestinal medicine joining our list of specialists at Greene County Medical Center," said Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Laurie Connolly.

Luken is in Jefferson on the third Wednesday of the month seeing patients between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Call 515-386-2488 for more information or to schedule an appointment.



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IN THE SCOPE OF THINGS, IT WAS AN UNBELIEVABLY EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE

Greene County Medical Center is Best Place Between Here and California for Outpatient Procedures

About 15 years ago, Ronny Whitehead entered a California healthcare facility for a routine colonoscopy. He said the experience was not a great one; not at all what he had expected. Because of that, he hesitated to have the screening done again. "They found polyps and told me I should come back in two or three years," Whitehead said. "There were a couple of things that went wrong during that first one, so I kept putting it off."

This continued until Whitehead and his twin decided it was time for a change and to be closer to family. The brothers were raised in Las Vegas and Whitehead worked in California for 12 years before moving to Jefferson. Upon arrival, he became a patient of Dr. Thomas Fagg at the Family Medicine Clinic. Fagg told Whitehead it was time to talk about another colonoscopy. "Dr. Fagg explained to me that it was important to have the testing because when detected early, colon cancer is more curable," Whitehead said. "I also had a family member who lost her husband at a young age, he was about 48, to colon cancer. So, I told myself I would do it again."

The 72-year-old Whitehead followed Dr. Fagg's orders and underwent a preprocedure physical, complete with blood work and an EKG. Everything came back clear and the colonoscopy was scheduled. Whitehead said even though he was nervous, the entire Team put him at ease and made him feel comfortable before he even arrived at Greene County Medical Center. "I spoke with the surgeon's nurse

on the phone and she was extremely nice and helpful," he said. "Then the day of the procedure, they explained what would happen and that it generally only takes about 10 minutes if nothing abnormal is found. The anesthesiologist and nurses were also awesome. They put me at ease and got me comfortable."

The care Team talked to him the entire time and were all very professional and friendly and Whitehead was thrilled with the post-procedure news. "I was happy to hear that everything was fine," said Whitehead. "They gave me some pictures of my colon and said they wouldn't need to see me again for 10 years."

Because he had such a positive experience at Greene County Medical Center, Whitehead has been highly recommending the colonoscopy services. "I am a happy camper," he said. "This has been the best colonoscopy experience between here and California. If your provider says you need this screening, it is a no-brainer. Go and get it done and come here to do it."



Talk with your primary care provider about scheduling your colonoscopy.

Call 515-386-0500 to schedule with a Family Medicine provider.

ONCOLOGY SERVICES

Dr. Joseph Merchant seeing patients two days per month

In February, Dr. Joseph Merchant with the McFarland Clinic relocated Jefferson services to Greene County Medical Center. This change in location now allows patients the ability to receive infusion and chemotherapy treatments closer to home.

"A cancer diagnosis can be devastating and we want to ensure we are able to support patients as much as possible throughout their treatment," said Dr. Laurie Connolly, Greene County Medical Center Chief Medical Officer. "We are pleased to partner with Dr. Merchant and the McFarland Clinic to expand options available for routine appointments and cancer treatments. Having these services in Jefferson with Dr. Merchant facilitates healing in a comfortable environment nearer to the patient's home."

Dr. Merchant sees patients two Wednesdays per month on a referral basis. Call 515-239-4401 for more information.

CATARACT SURGERIES

Dr. Steven Anderson Performs Cataract Surgeries in Jefferson

Dr. Steven Anderson with the Wolfe Eye Clinic of Ames is performing cataract surgeries at Greene County Medical Center on an interim basis.

"We are thrilled to announce that a new Wolfe Eye Clinic Provider will be starting in the early fall, replacing our previous cataract surgeon who moved last year," explained Dr. Laurie Connolly, Chief Medical Officer at Greene County Medical Center. "In the interim, Dr. Anderson will be treating patients through early fall."

Cataract surgeries require a referral from your primary eye care provider or the Wolfe Eye Clinic. Call 515-386-2114 for more information.



REWARDED WITH STRENGTH & STAMINA

from Cardiac Rehabilitation

Tom Custer and his wife, Laine, of rural Jefferson are no strangers to healthcare. Tom spent nearly all of his working career as a pharmacist and Laine served patients locally as a registered nurse. However, an early morning incident in mid-July was an eye-opening experience that has led to long-term changes for the Custer family.

Tom woke up around 1 a.m. on that morning with pain in his upper chest. He had suffered from heartburn in the past, and was usually able to relieve it with antacids. "The pain didn't go away," Tom said, "and I had some pain in my arms." The couple decided it was time to go to the emergency room at Greene County Medical Center. Even though medication had knocked down the pain, the provider kept him overnight for additional testing. "The lab tests they ran indicated I was having heart problems," Tom said. "They started me on some medications and transferred me to Des Moines. I had a heart catheterization on Monday morning and they put in a stent in one coronary artery and ballooned another one, thinking they would stent the ballooned artery later."

When it was time for Tom to return home, arrangements were made for him to go to the Cardiac Rehabilitation department at Greene County Medical
Center. He met with Kelli
Farley, RN and Certified
Exercise Physiologist, Emily
Ostrander and put on therapy
sessions three days per week.
Baseline vital signs were established
in the first session and he continued
with an exercise regimen to
strengthen his heart.

Healthcare providers told Tom to be aware of any chest pain and to get to an emergency room if it recurred. He admits he was nervous and conscious of even the mildest of symptoms. "I didn't recognize a specific pain that occurred when I had the initial heart pain that I could think, 'oh, this is my heart and I need to go to the ER.' After I started rehab, I told Kelli and Emily that I was having symptoms and wondered if they were caused by my heart." After checking his vitals, Tom was told there were no changes and that it is not at all unusual for people to be apprehensive and nervous after a heart intervention. "As time went on and medications were changed, I became less anxious," he said.

He and Laine also worked with Greene County Medical Center Dietitian, Erica Vandenberg on heart healthy changes for his diet. "She really listened," said Tom. "She wasn't trying to tell me to change

everything. We discussed options and now I have a combination of medications, diet and exercise in place." Armed with the information on where his heart rate should be at rest and during exercise and what food choices are best for his heart health, Tom said he is thankful that Greene County Medical Center is a part of this community; and he is grateful for the employees that make it an exceptional healthcare organization. "I have worked in hospitals in the past," he explained. And, as an employee, I enjoyed having nice surroundings and equipment. As a patient, I also wanted these things. But when it comes down to it, it is the employees that make the hospitals the caring places they are. Emily and Kelli were a good source of information and compassion for me in the Cardiac Rehab department. Dietary and the ER department personnel performed with great care and professionalism. Thank you all."



Financial counselors help you navigate government and local assistance options

Greene County Medical Center's Patient Financial Services Supervisor, Maddy Smith, explains the many assistance options available to patients. Her team is here to answer questions about billing, assist with determining eligibility and applying for state, federal and local programs.

Q: WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

A: Anyone who meets plan qualifications, whether insured or not, may be eligible.

Q: WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?

A: We help patients apply for:

- Medicaid, a joint state/federal public health insurance program for those with limited income resources.
- Hawki, a state Medicaid program for uninsured children of working families.
- Greene County Medical Center Financial Assistance Program, free or discounted healthcare on a sliding scale based on household size and income.

• Discounts from 20% to 100% on services provided at Greene County Medical Center.

Q: HOW DOES THE GREENE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WORK?

A: A Financial Counselor assists with the application, which is submitted for review. If approved, a percentage discount is determined. There are a couple of different scenarios:

- A patient has insurance that is billed first and the discount applied to the balance owed for Greene County Medical Center services.
- A patient is uninsured an automatic reduction in charges is applied and the discount applied to the balance.
- Example: A patient is billed \$100, but is uninsured.
 The bill is reduced by the automatic reduction.
 Discount percentage is then applied.

Q: WHAT IF I AM ELIGIBLE FOR YOUR PROGRAM, BUT I AM SEEING A SPECIALTY PROVIDER?

A: Any services billed by Greene County Medical Center

are eligible for discount.

It is important to note, services billed by other agencies are NOT eligible for a discount.

• Example: You have an orthopedic appointment at Greene County Medical Center and get x-rays on site. Medical center bills for appointment and x-rays - discount is applied. X-rays go to radiologist for reading. Their office sends bill - no discount applied.

Q: WHO WILL KNOW THAT I REQUESTED **ASSISTANCE?**

A: All information and applications are confidential.

O: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET APPROVAL?

A: It can take up to 45 days for Medicaid approval but it is a guick process for the Greene County Medical Center program.

Q: WHAT WILL I NEED FOR THE APPLICATION?

A: Supporting documents:

- Past three months' bank statements
- Past three pay stubs (all working household) members)
- Most recent tax return
- Notice of decision from Medicaid (whether approval or denial - even if denied Medicaid coverage, you may be eligible for our program)

Q: HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION OR START THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

A:

- Call **515-386-0278** during regular business hours
- Come to the medical center and request to speak to a financial counselor
- Print applications and payment plan request from website: gcmchealth.com/patients/patientsbusiness-office

Financial counselors are here to answer any of your billing questions and translators are available upon request. Maddy wants everyone to know, the most important thing is that you and your family get the care you need, when you need it.

WELCOME TO MEDICARE

Hosted by the State of Iowa's Senior Health **Insurance Information** Program (SHIIP)

A Free Seminar

Tuesday, June 17

6 PM to 8 PM

Greene County Medical Center Education Center

Registration required by June 9, call 515-386-2114.

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FOUNDATION SEES BOARD

CHANGES FOR 2025

Dave Pedersen Retires and Max Neese Accepts Seat on Board of Directors

After a little over nine years, several of which he served as chairman, Dave Pedersen retired from the Greene County Medical Center Foundation Board of Directors at the end of 2024. He said he was proud to serve, through the easy times and the challenges and walked away with a sense of gratitude.

"It all comes back to me as personal relationships," he said, "the

people we get to work with on the board. Friendships grow from that too."

He said it has been an easy role to advocate for Greene County
Medical Center and the Foundation because the hospital, the facilities and the people that work there are top of the line.
As he retired, he asked the other board members to stay focused on their mission. "You're

doing it all in the realm of helping people and our community," Pedersen said. "What could be better than that? Just keep doing what you're doing for all the quality people that work here and the people they serve."

At the January meeting, Max Neese was sworn in. He was born and raised in Greene County and the medical center is a special place for him. Both grandmothers, his mother and many others close to him worked at Greene County Medical Center and he is passionate about seeing it continue to thrive. "I was honored to be asked to serve and I am excited to be involved in the future of our communities," he said. Neese looks forward to getting acclimated and feels certain strengths will be assets for the board.



Certified Financial Planner, he is an excellent

active listener and is able to ask great open-ended questions. He can drill down to the core instead of relying on surface level details. Neese is the youngest member of the board and hopes to bring a different perspective to the group. He also refers to himself as a "glue guy." "I want others to be involved and realize their purpose and I like working to pull that out of people," he explained. Neese also values the educational aspect. "I hope to be able to use that experience in learning, in using that in our decisions and then educating others about what the medical center and Foundation do because this hospital is important to me, my family and the entire Greene County community."



Building Purpose, Fulfillment and Connections Through Volunteerism

Make a difference as a member of the Greene County Medical Center Auxiliary

Volunteering as an Auxiliary member at Greene County Medical Center fills a vital role in supporting the needs of our patients and staff. We rely on these volunteers to give their time and talents to assist with equipment, program and scholarship needs and for the extras they bring daily to our Team Members.

Auxiliary members assist in various capacities and offer their support to different departments for the benefit of our patients. Their hard work is a welcome facet of our focus on patient-centered care as they partner with us in our mission to enrich our community by providing quality, compassionate care to every patient and contributing to the well-being of every family.

The benefits extend beyond the immediate needs of the medical center. Our volunteers gain invaluable experience and learn important skills. For many, it also fosters a sense of fulfillment, knowing that their time and efforts are improving the quality of life for others.

Moreover, volunteering helps bridge gaps within communities, strengthening the connection between Greene County Medical Center and the people we serve. Whether you're assisting in the Gift Garden gift shop, providing support to patients and families, hosting a blood drive or organizing fundraising initiatives, the role of an Auxiliary member is integral to our success and has a lasting impact on the lives of patients and their families.



Auxiliary Gift Garden

Learn more about becoming an Auxiliary member by logging on to GCMCHealth.com and clicking on Volunteer at the top of the page.

BE A GREENE BACKER

Contact Nancy Houska,

Together, We Are **Ensuring Access to the Highest Quality of Care**

Foundation Director 515-386-0108

QUESTIONS?

Thank you to all Greene Backers!

It takes all of us, caring for our families, friends and neighbors, to ensure access to the highest quality healthcare for all. Each year I am moved by the collaborative efforts of our community members and organizations as they show their support for Greene County Medical Center during our Greene Backer annual campaign.

The 2024 campaign has come to a close, with an impressive total raised of more than \$55,000 and I want to extend a very heartfelt thank you to all of you who gave. A special thank you to our Greene County Medical Center Team Members who showed how important your care is to them with the donation a \$16,277 of that total.

This year's campaign funds will be allocated to offset

a portion of the purchase cost of new scopes and the associated technology. Your thoughtfulness is a lifesaving gift, aiding our providers in detecting and preventing deadly diseases.

Thank you for making rural healthcare a priority and allowing us to be Always Here, Always Caring.



Nancy Houska | Director **Greene County Medical Center Foundation**

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QUESTIONS? Call 515-386-0108



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Diana Smith, DNP Family Medicine



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH 515-386-2488



Heather Wilson, DNP, **PMHNP-BC** Behavioral Health



Bonnie Riphagen, **LMSW** Behavioral Health



Mary Jo Koch, MS, LMHC. NCC. CCTP Behavioral Health



Madisyn Behrens, Behavioral Health

A complete listing of providers and services is available at GCMCHealth.com or by scanning the QR code.



SPECIALTY CLINICS & SERVICES

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Cardiology 515-386-2488

Cataract Surgery Referral Only

Chronic Care Management 515-386-0526

Colorectal Surgery 515-386-2114

Cosmetic Clinic 515-386-2488

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