Heeding the Warning Signs
In this issue of the Pacesetter you will read about the results of the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment for Webster County, as well as some of the actions we are taking to address these needs.

Many of these action plans have been in place for several years, such as our Healthy Living and THRIVE programs. For over a decade these two programs have brought health and wellness into the public sector. From free blood pressure checks for adults, to teaching children in the classroom what foods nourish their bodies so they can be at their best. We also provide a prediabetes program that has seen great success with participants making lifestyle changes.

Through the Community Health Needs Assessment survey, you shared that you are concerned about the mental health of our community, please know this is a priority for us as well. With the leadership of Aaron McHone, Executive Director of UnityPoint Health - Berryhill Center, over the past five years the Berryhill Center team has added providers, including tele-health options in psychiatric care, as well as expanded their foot print. We have also taken mental health into our area schools and clinics. Additionally, there is a primary care provider now at the Berryhill Center in order to care for the medical conditions of our patients on-site, providing a full scope of care.

This type of health care focuses on the whole person; taking care of their physical and mental well-being. Science proves these two go hand-in-hand.

Which brings us to the second part of the survey, where you have stated you want to become healthier. Whether that means, losing weight or excising more, it also means a healthy work and lifestyle blend. Stress invades all our lives, and how we handle that stress can make or break our success in other health areas. That is why we are committed to providing programs and opportunities for you to care of your whole self.

We believe you deserve a partner you can trust for exceptional care, an outstanding experience and engagement in your personal health. Thank you for entrusting us with your health and the health of our community. It is a responsibility we take to heart and work at every day to help you be your best self.

Suzi Rickels, President & Chief Executive Officer
UnityPoint Health - Fort Dodge
UnityPoint Health Proudly Welcomes Our Newest Physicians

David Ilceski, MD
UnityPoint Clinic® OB/GYN
Dr. Ilceski received his undergraduate degree from Brock University, Ontario, Canada and went on to receive his Medical Degree from St. George’s University, St. George’s, Grenada. He completed his residency at Ascension St. John’s Hospital, Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Ilceski specializes in obstetrics and gynecology.

John Pymm, DO
UnityPoint Clinic® Family Medicine – Buena Vista
Dr. Pymm received his Medical Degree from Des Moines University. He completed his residency with the Broadlawns Medical Center, Des Moines, IA. Dr. Pymm is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. He specializes in family medicine and has clinical interest in obstetrics.

Bradley Kliewer, DO
Iowa Radiology
Dr. Kliewer received his Medical Degree from Oklahoma State College of Osteopathic Medicine in OK. He completed his residency at Hemet Valley Medical Center in Hemet, CA. and St. Anthony Hospital, Oklahoma City, OK. Dr Kliewer is Board Eligible.

Elizabeth Dupic, MD
UnityPoint Clinic® Family Health Center – Storm Lake
Dr. Dupic received her undergraduate degree from Buena Vista University and went on to receive her Medical Degree from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. She completed her residency in Des Moines, IA at Broadlawns Medical Center. Dr. Dupic specializes in family medicine and has clinical interests in primary care, pediatrics, obstetrics and women’s health.

Richard Lawton, MD
UnityPoint Clinic® Orthopedics in partnership with CNOS
He completed his residency at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, which is consistently ranked among the top orthopaedic surgery training programs in the world. He then completed his fellowship at Steadman-Hawkins Clinic in Vail, Colorado, where he served as an assistant team doctor for the Denver Broncos, Colorado Rockies, and U.S. Ski Team. He specializes in orthopedics and sports medicine. Dr. Lawton is a fellowship-trained, board certified orthopedic surgeon.

Trinity Pain Management Center

Welcome new providers to UnityPoint Health – Fort Dodge

Mary Lynn Papin, ARNP
UnityPoint Clinic – Palliative Care

Bobbi Thacker, ARNP
UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine – Kenyon Road

Grant Wilson, PA
UnityPoint Clinic Orthopedics in partnership with CNOS

Amberlyn Dillon, PA
UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine – Kenyon Road – Walk-In

Kelsey Redmond, ARNP
UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine – Second Avenue North

Scott Houghton, ARPN, CRNA, BLS, ACLS, PALS

Damiun Bassandeh, ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C

Chris Hanson, ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C

Brian Jacobs, ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C
Celebrating Our Employees

At UnityPoint Health - Fort Dodge, we know it is our employees that are making a difference everyday in the lives of our patients and their families. We celebrate the following employee anniversaries from July through December.

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If you have ever needed a pre-employment physical, chances are you had the opportunity to meet Michelle, CMA(AAMA), BAT, C-OHC, and 25-year team member at Trinity Occupational Medicine. You were more than likely put at ease with her cheerful smile, and her ability to make you feel welcomed. Michelle has been a Certified Medical Assistant with Trinity Occupational Medicine since they opened.

A normal day for Michelle, is never normal, which is one reason she loves her job. “We all work as a team,” shares Michelle, “whether its helping to cover at the front desk, ordering supplies or working along side the providers, I enjoy doing it all. What I love most is helping our patients. Some of our patients have been coming to us for so long that it is like an old friend coming to visit.”

One such patient came back about a year after first meeting Michelle and she had something to share. Michelle explains, “I knew I was making a difference when I connected with a young gal, who was struggling to find a good job. I shared with her how I had lost my job in a factory, and I had a choice at that time; go to work in another factory or go back to school. I first went back to school for business. But through the encouragement from some professors, I decided to go into the medical field.” Michelle continues, “The young gal came back to share with me that after our conversation, she decided to go back to school to be a nurse and was loving it. You never know how a simple conversation can change a person’s life.”

While Michelle shares that between working with a great bunch of people and work that is so versatile it makes her job enjoyable, but what really keeps her at Trinity Occupational Medicine is, “doing what I love to do.”

“\[You never know how a simple conversation can change a person’s life.\]”
Webster County Community Health Needs Assessment – 2019 survey

As a result of health care reform legislation, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years. This information guides us in determining the best way to direct our community benefit activity. Armed with this information, we work with our community partners to develop needed programs, education and services.

Webster County Population 37,000

- 87.8% White Non-Hispanic
- 4.5% Hispanic/Latino
- 4.5% Black Non-Hispanic
- 2.4% All Others
- 1.3% Asian

17.8% of those living in Webster County are 65 years or older
(national average is 16.4%)

The median household income in Webster County is $42,196 compared to the statewide median household income of $54,570.

90.6% of residents are high school graduates, while only 20.6% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. (United States Census Bureau, 2012-2016)

558 Confidential Responses to a 14-question survey

- 460 Female
- 93 Male
- 97.56% with health insurance

One-on-one interviews with

- 18 Business/Community Leaders
- 5 Area School Leaders
- 4 Primary Care Providers

What you told us about your concerns for our community’s health:

- Mental/Behavioral Health 62.91%
- Substance Abuse 49.14%
- Access to Care 48.37%
- Obesity/Weight Control 45.32%

Access to Care 48.37%
According to County Health Rankings, in 2017 there was 1 primary care physician per 2,320 Webster County residents, Iowa average is 1 for every 1,360 residents. Iowa ranks 47th out of 50 states in the number of psychiatrists per capita.

Obesity/Weight Control 45.32%
32.1% of adult Iowans are considered obese and 13.6% of children 10-17 years of age are obese (Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2017 Key Health Indicators). County Health Rankings (2017), 29% of Webster County adults aged 20 or over reported no leisure-time physical activity.

What you told us about your health:

What you also asked what causes problems for your health:

- Bad Eating Habits 37.76%
- Putting other’s needs before your own 37%
- Cost of Healthy Food 36.24%
- Stress 33.78%
- Motivation 31.88%

And what do you want to do to become healthier?

- Eat Healthy 71.74%
- Exercise 70.46%
- Lose Weight 67.34%
- Manage Stress 40.73%
- Sleep 33.21%
How we are responding
As a health care organization, we took into consideration the responses that received the most comments and of those which ones we have the ability to address.

- **Eliminating Barriers to Care** – Sometimes the biggest barrier for someone to receive care is transportation. With financial support from Trinity Foundation’s generous donors, those barriers have been eliminated for many. Trinity Foundation has helped patients get to and from their place of care with gas cards and bus passes. Trinity Foundation also assists patients with the costs of medications, co-pays, co-insurance and medical expenses. In 2018 Trinity Foundation donated:
  - Patient Transportation $6,684
  - Patient Assistance $4,475
  - Breast Cancer Awareness $8,425
  - Cancer Center Patient Assistance $26,799

Encouraging healthy behaviors and disease prevention

**Healthy Living Programs** – Community involvement is important to Trinity Regional Medical Center. Trinity prides itself in its ability to offer health services that go beyond the hospital to help produce a healthy community. Trinity Healthy Living offers a variety of community health programs for individuals, families, companies and community organizations to help achieve an overall healthy lifestyle and reduce the risk of developing a chronic disease.

**FREE Blood Pressure Screens**
- EVERY Tuesday, 8 – 9:30 AM at the Crossroads Mall
- 2nd Tuesday of the month 10 – 10:30 am, Deercreek Apt. (Community Room)

**Stroke Check**
Stroke, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, Peripheral Vascular Disease & Osteoporosis – $115
- 2nd Monday of the month, Trinity Cardiovascular Lab
- 3rd Monday of January, April, July and October at UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine in Pocahontas
- 4th Monday of March and September at Humboldt Community Hospital

**Community Blood Profile - $25**
- 2nd Thursday of the month 7:15 to 9:30 am Trinity Diabetes Center

Contact Trinity Healthy Living at (515) 574-6187 if you would like additional information about the programs and services offered.

**Reaching our Kids**

**THRIVE** - For over a decade, Trinity dietitians and nurses have taken wellness and nutrition lessons into the classrooms of our local schools. The program focuses on obesity prevention, targeting students in kindergarten, third and fifth grade. During the summer months, the THRIVE team takes their educational program to local day care centers. Since this time of year is ripe with fresh produce, Trinity plants a garden then shares and prepares the produce, so children have an opportunity to try something new and healthy.

Since its inception, THRIVE also provides a free swim program for third and fourth grade students. The lessons provide an opportunity for children to learn how to swim as well as a form of great exercise.

On average the THRIVE program serves 1,600 students each year in the schools and 125 in the swim program.
After studying the results from the 2019 Community Health Needs Survey, one thing is very evident — you want to be healthy and you desire the same thing for your friends, family and neighbors. The word healthy, however, takes on many different forms. Whether it means you are living without an illness, living a healthy lifestyle or mentally healthy — you can’t separate one from the other. Our ‘total’ health encompasses taking care of our bodies and our minds.

In our survey, weight problems, anxiety and stress all ranked high for personal concerns. However, on the same question about personal concerns, ‘mental health’ only had a rating of 8.73%. Which begs the question, do the statistics show that we are not fully connecting the important role our mental health plays in our physical health?

We sat down with one of our experts, Jennifer Pullen, LMHC, to talk about this phenomenon. Jennifer is a therapist and clinic manager at the Berryhill Center and does speaking engagements around work and lifestyle blend, setting boundaries and taking care of ourselves.

When it comes to living a healthy lifestyle why don’t we classify dealing with stress and anxiety as a mental health issue?

I think partly because stress, anxiety and even mild depression have become part of our day-to-day living, especially stress. For the most part, we deal with a stressful issue for a short moment, it resolves, and we move on. It becomes a mental health issue, when it doesn’t resolve quickly, such as the death of a loved one, loss of a job or even a divorce. I like to refer to these type of life moments as ‘adjustments.’

A mental health ‘adjustment’ is when we are dealing with a life change. It doesn’t necessarily mean a person will become clinically depressed or even need medication. But sometimes it may mean they need someone to just to listen and talk things out. Many times, a person can do that with a loved one or a good friend. Occasionally it may be beneficial to get a little extra help from someone trained to help them walk through a life adjustment, such as a therapist.

How do you know when you may need to get professional help when dealing with a ‘life adjustment’?

If someone has signs and symptoms of depression and/or anxiety that last for at least two weeks AND its beginning to affect the person's emotions, thinking, behavior, and physical well-being; their ability to work and have enjoyable relationships; and impacts their ability to carry out normal daily activities.

I like to say – when symptoms/signs have lasted at least two weeks and affects our ability to live, laugh and love then it’s probably time to seek professional help.

How much does managing mental health issues (i.e. stress, depression etc.) play/correspond to maintaining a healthy weight?

Managing our emotional health is a vital part of helping us to stay at a healthy weight. When we are stressed we often use eating as a coping skill.
Additionally, when we are stressed our bodies produce cortisol, “a stress hormone”. This causes changes in our insulin levels and blood sugars which produces a craving for sugary and fatty foods. This often causes us to overeat and also makes it more difficult to take the weight off. More stress, equals more cortisol equals, increased appetite, equals more belly fat.

Often we choose comfort foods and unhealthy behaviors during a ‘life adjustment’ because we think they will make us feel better and yet those choices are often more harmful. What is the importance of taking extra care of ourselves during those times?

When you’re living with depression, it’s important to know that there’s also a physiological influence to the food you consume. The chemical structure of what you eat communicates with your body, which can affect cognition, influence mood and physical body states.

I recently read a quote by Dr. Fernando Gomez-Pinilla, Professor of Neuropsychology at the University of Southern California, stating, “Food is like a pharmaceutical compound that affects the brain. The more balanced you make your meals, the more balanced will be your brain functioning.”

We all know we need to eat healthy, maintain healthy weight and exercise to live a ‘healthy lifestyle’ but yet we don’t. Why don’t we do the very thing we know we should do?

Honesty, some people are excellent at exercising and eating healthy and others could care less about it.

Most people struggle with being motivated by motivation. Often, we may know the “right thing” to do, but at the same time other things can be motivating us in a different direction. For example “I should work out after work, but I also I just put in an 8 hour day, have to drive to work, make dinner when I get home and help the kids do homework, all I want to do is relax.” Or “It is just easy to pick up a pizza on my way home rather than cooking”.

Also, our motivation may be coming from others but not from ourselves. It is easier to develop good habits that are directed at our goals. For example: “no fast food”, “I will bring my own lunch to work”, “I will park in the far parking lot and walk further from my office.” Creating our own goals have greater potential of working than when someone else creates them for us.

Any last words?

If someone is dealing with a life adjustment, please know, its ok to get extra help. It doesn’t mean you can’t handle life or you’re weak. It just means your life has become a little overwhelming and there are great people out there that are more than happy to help you walk through some of those issues.

For more information about therapy services at the Berryhill Center, please call (515) 955-7171.

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### Improving access to health care services

We had increased provider availability at all sites of care, including mental health providers in family medicine clinics and family medicine at the Berryhill Center. We understand many individuals fail to seek out mental health care because they feel there is a stigma, or do not feel a provider fully understands their illness. By offering the two options, at both types of medical facilities, we are able to address the total health and well-being of our community.

The following UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine locations offer mental health options:

- Second Ave North - Fort Dodge
- Eagle Grove
- Sac City
- Storm Lake
- Humboldt
- Pocahontas

Over 62% of you ranked mental health as a main concern for our community. Considering Webster County is designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) for mental health providers, the strides Berryhill Center has made in the past five years to provide access has seen tremendous growth.

- December 2013 = Psychiatry 1.5 FTEs
  - Psychiatry Today = 8.3 FTEs
- December 2013 = Therapy 3.5 FTEs
  - Therapy today =10.8 FTEs
- Total people served in 2013 =2,500
- Total people served 7/1/18-6/30/19 = 5,107
- Days out for new patient evaluation
  - Psychiatry 2014 65 days | 2018 2 days (average)
  - Therapy 2014 34 days | 2018 6 day (average)

### Taking Mental Health Care to Our Schools.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 22.2% of U.S. adolescents, aged 13-18, had or have a severe impairment due to mental illness. The Berryhill Center has been very deliberate about providing mental health care professionals in the school setting. Berryhill has providers in 11 of our area school districts, serving over 200 students since 2017. These providers help students who may not have access to care outside of school hours due to lack of transportation.

The Berryhill Center also offers suicide prevention and mental health first aid training to schools.

### On-site Pharmacies

In 2017, UnityPoint Health – Fort Dodge opened two on-site pharmacies – one on the Trinity campus, the other at Berryhill Center, giving patients easy access to a pharmacy. This convenience is important for patients dealing with a chronic illness, whether it is diabetes or mental illness, by being compliant with their medications they are likely to keep their health on track.
Taking Care of the Whole Person

“I have learned in order to stay healthy, I need to take time for me.” A task that does not come naturally to Desiree Diemer.

Desiree was raised by her grandparents and was taught at an early age to put other’s needs first. To reinforce this virtue, at the tender age of 16, Desiree and her grandparents were in a tragic car accident killing her grandfather and making her grandmother a quadriplegic, leaving Desiree as her grandmother’s main caretaker. While away at college, her grandmother then developed breast cancer and passed away a few years later.

Having to adjust to such tragedy in her life, Desiree had a deep need to help others. She was able to channel her energy and abilities into teaching autistic students. Desiree professes she was able to empathize with her students and understand how to teach lessons in a manner they could comprehend because of her own history of living with autism.

In 2015, Desiree found a job teaching at a high school in Florida. Unfortunately, because of lack discipline in her school, Desiree was assaulted by some of her students on a regular basis. Between the assaults and all-over negative environment, Desiree fell into a deep depression.

While taking care of others is a noble gift, too much giving of one-self without boundaries can be emotionally draining and detrimental to one’s over-all health. “After one of the many times of getting hit by a student, I couldn’t take anymore,” shares Desiree. “I had to be hospitalized for depression.”

It was then Desiree decided to move back to Iowa where she still had family. Knowing she would need help setting boundaries caring for others and have a solid support system, Desiree found the Berryhill Center. Here, Desiree would find a community and non-judgmental health professionals that would guide and encourage her every step in living healthy. Desiree was introduced to two different programs that would help her manage her mental and physical health, the NEW-R (Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery) and WHAM (Whole Health Action Management) programs.

Each program is designed to care for the whole person - body, mind and spirit. The programs helped Desiree set personal goals, such as making healthy choices and developing healthy relationships where she was on the receiving end of care, not just the giving.

By learning that she has value and that she deserves to take time for herself, Desiree has developed new sense of self-esteem. This new sense of self-awareness has given her the confidence to grow in relationships and to strive for new goals.

Today, Desiree is a young mom. “He is my joy,” shares Desiree about her small miracle by the name of, Law. Desiree was told she wouldn’t be able to carry a child in pregnancy due to having cerebral palsy. His birth has given her a new sense of needing to take care of herself so she can take care of him.

“I always have to remind myself this is a journey,” shares Desiree. “Some days it’s just about maintaining my progress. I work on not getting mad at myself and internalizing stress. I’ve learned to be patient with myself. I’m much more self-aware of how I am feeling and to be able to share those feelings.”

Desiree also makes sure she gets the rest her body needs and to take what she calls ‘brain breaks’ or time to stop and organize her thoughts.

Desiree is thankful for the team at Berryhill. They have given her the tools to get back on her feet and work in a satisfying career helping students at Iowa Central Community College. They have also given her the tools she needs to lose 30lbs of baby weight by providing programs that take care of the whole person.

For more information about Berryhill Center’s NEW-R or WHAM programs, call (515) 955-7171.
Desiree and her gift of ‘joy,’ little Law. Law is a busy little boy that keeps Desiree on her toes.

**NEW-R (Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery)** consists of eight sessions focusing on a weight loss goal. Principles include becoming aware of what we put into our bodies, physical activity, social support, and being intentional with goals. Participants focus on small changes, leading to big differences over time. Each session consists of an inspirational quote, a different topic of discussion, goal setting, and 20 minutes of physical activity.

**WHAM (Whole Health Action Management)** is a peer-led intervention for people with chronic health and behavioral health conditions aiming to create and maintain new health behaviors. Developed by SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions, the program focuses on increasing resiliency, wellness, and self-management of physical health and behavioral health. Throughout the sessions, participants identify 10 science-based whole health and resiliency factors. They then write whole health goals based on person-centered planning and document with a weekly action plan.

10 health and resiliency factors are included in the WHAM training. During the person-centered planning process, participants look at current patterns, interests, and strengths in each of the 10 factors.

- Stress management
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Restful sleep
- Service to others
- Support network
- Optimism based on positive expectations
- Cognitive skills to avoid negative thinking
- Spiritual beliefs and practices
- A sense of meaning and purpose
Heeding the Warning Signs

She had the family history, the excess weight, high blood pressure and elevated blood sugar levels but it wasn’t till her mother passed away from a lifetime of health problems that Suzi Rickels said, “No more, it’s not going to happen to me.”

“My mom had several health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, in which she didn’t take care of until her last few years of life,” shares Suzi. “After she passed away last year, I knew that if I didn’t do something about my health I was heading in the same direction.” It was then that Suzi came across an announcement for Trinity Diabetes Center’s Prediabetes Program and felt this may be the help she was needing to get motivated.

The classes held by Trinity Diabetes Center are based on a National Diabetes Prevention Program. The year-long program focuses on helping individuals at risk for prediabetes through support groups, one-on-one coaching and educational classes. Participants receive skills to help them lose weight, become more active and manage stress to lead a healthier life style.

Her inclination was right, the program gave Suzi the tools, support and more importantly, the motivation, she needed to lose weight and exercise. In turn, she not only felt better physically, she felt better about herself.

“I’ve always hated clothes shopping,” admits Suzi, “but since losing the weight it’s actually fun. It makes me tear up just thinking about it.” In total, Suzi has shed 47 pounds since November of 2018 when she began the prediabetes program. She first started with a goal of losing 25 pounds, however when she started to feel the benefits, Suzi kept working towards getting to a goal that was no longer considered overweight.

Along with daily exercise, Suzi has learned to eat differently. “I’ve discovered I don’t need bread at every meal!” shares Suzi. She has focused on eating more vegetables and tries to avoid sugar. Suzi also tries to do most of her grocery shopping in the first aisle with all the fresh produce. While she acknowledges that eating healthy may cost a little more, the benefits of health far outweigh the cost.

Suzi credits the prediabetes program to her success for helping get her health on the right track. She shares that having accountability has helped her stay on track, as well as the other participants. Suzi recommends anyone needing additional support to find motivation to take advantage of the program.

To be eligible for National Diabetes Prevention Program individuals do need to have one of the following risks for prediabetes:

- Diagnosed with prediabetes
- History of diabetes during pregnancy
- At risk for prediabetes
- 45 years or older
- Overweight
- Family history of diabetes
- Getting exercise fewer than 3 times per week

The next program at Trinity Diabetes Center starts in November. To register call (515) 574-6350.

According to the American Diabetes Association:

- More than 30 million Americans have diabetes.
- Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the US
- More than 87 percent of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or affected by a degree of obesity.
Suzi Rickels credits the Trinity Prediabetes Program for her success in getting her health on the right track.
Managing Pain Differently

Over the past few years, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued stricter guidelines around prescribing opioids for pain control. These recommendations are in response to the opioid crisis that hit our nation in which overdose deaths involving prescription opioids have increase by about five times in the past 20 years.

Opioids have been the go-to option for treating chronic pain for decades. It is estimated by the CDC that 50 million Americans live with chronic pain, which is just over 20 percent of the adult population. Our survey reflected very similar statistics with 27.38% responses stating they were experiencing back problems.

Can you treat chronic pain without the use of narcotic medications?

According to Chris Hanson, ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C, with Trinity Pain Management Center, yes, you can.

Hanson is one of four providers certified in Nonsurgical Pain Management (NSPM), providing care at the Trinity Pain Management Center. NSPM is a holistic approach which often includes: physical and occupational therapy, chiropractic care, pain medication management, interventional injection therapy; as well as, evaluating how the body and mind contribute to pain. This new pain team started providing services at the center this spring when Trinity changed its anesthesia model of care.

“We approach the treatment of pain in a holistic manner,” states Hanson. “There are so many influencers around a person’s pain and controlling that pain. We have found that by addressing everything from a person’s movement, thinking and coping processes, nutrition and even socialization can have a profound effect on their pain.”

The biggest thing Hanson and his partners teach their patients, “Movement is medicine. One of the first things we start working with individuals is setting goals to get more movement in their day-to-day living.”

Hanson states that many pain patients have become deconditioned over time from the lack movement so starting with small goals is very important. “If the furthest they walk is to their mail box, then we work on a reasonable goal of how to go a bit further each day.”

Hanson shares that there are so many available options that are low impact, from yoga, aquatic therapy to Tai Chi. He also shares that with today’s technology, people are able to go on-line to learn how to do many of these practices.

“Our goal in treating pain is to first and foremost, find a treatment that lasts more than a month or two,” shares Hanson. “While steroid injections may initially have an overall effect on an individual that seems to reduce their pain, the injections don’t always solve the problem. In fact, overtime, steroids are proven to cause osteoporosis, or deterioration of the bones and joints, which causes more pain. The very thing we are trying resolve.”

The pain team also focuses on using medications that are not classified as narcotics, thus avoiding addiction to opioids. Many long-time pain suffers have taken advantage of this holistic approach to pain and through titration, have been able to treat their chronic pain without opioids or other narcotics.

And does this alternative approach to pain work?

Yes, it does according to long-time pain patient Ann Davidson.
A few members of our pain management team, Kayla Ritts RN, Chris Hanson ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C, Cathy Vosika RN, Mary Bennett R.T.R, M and Teresa Dickinson RN. Our other providers include Joseph Scott Houghton ARNP, CRNA, Damiun Bassandeh, ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C, and Brian Jacobs ARNP, CRNA, NSPM-C.

There are only 60 providers nationwide that are certified in Nonsurgical Pain Management (NSPM-C).

“Pain can be a real pain in the butt,” simply states Ann Davidson, long time sufferer of chronic back pain. However, with the help of Trinity Pain Management Center, Ann has been able to transform her life and manage her pain to the extent she shares, “I feel like I am 20 years younger.”

Ann started having lower back in early 2000. Years earlier a physician had identified the partial cause of her pain: one leg was slightly longer than the other. At that time, Ann started to wear a shoe lift which worked for several years. In 2004 at the urging of friends, Ann began seeing a local chiropractor. While the adjustments helped, she shares that whatever relief she received was gone within hours. It was then her chiropractor referred Ann to the Pain Management Center.

Initially, Ann was prescribed medication exclusively to care for her pain. “At one point I was taking 60 mg of morphine twice daily,” shares Ann, “While the medication didn’t interrupt my ability to function, it definitely slowed me down. My activity level was not up to par.” The next intervention was a Medtronic Implant, also known as a spinal cord stimulator. The device delivers small electrical signals through a lead implanted in the epidural space, masking pain signals before they reach the brain. The stimulator is still in place today and has virtually eliminated the pain radiation into the legs.

Anyone who suffers from chronic pain, know it can be unpredictable: some days are better than others. Through her years at the center, Pain Center physicians suggested and tried different procedures in an attempt to find the right balance of therapies to provide relief.

“Nerve blocks and epidurals never provided the relief for me that other patients experienced,” Ann says. “Then the physician asked me if I would like to try some physical therapy and I agreed to that. At the same time, under the care of my doctor I began cutting the dosage of my medication in half. Eventually, I ended up taking 15mg of morphine once daily.”

During her physical therapy Ann would find a renewed love for life. Part of her treatment was to set some goals to be excited about, a task Ann took to heart.

“I decided I wanted to be able to ride a horse again,” shares Ann. “My therapist kind of looked at me and said,

I’m going to do the things I have always loved to do and I’m going to keep moving.

Ann with her horse, Mr. Jenkins. “Like every other horse I’ve ever owned, he’s special,” shares Ann. “If I long for anything, it would be to ride Jenkins on the bridle path at Blackhawk State Park in Rock Island, IL where I grew up.”

‘Okay.’ In making the goal, Ann found a new sense of determination and a new ‘can do’ attitude.

“I want to live and be alive until I am dead,” Ann states. “I not going to miss anything that is left. I’m going to do the things I have always loved to do and I’m going to keep moving.”

Today, Ann is off the morphine and on a less addictive option of Tramadol. She also met her goal and is riding her horse again. And while they are not her favorite forms of movement, Ann determined to keep moving, mows her own yard and scoops her own snow. She knows the importance of keeping moving, because movement really is medicine.
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