

# GREAT NEWS

MAY 2021



## New Screening Tool Improves Cancer Detection in Women with Dense Breasts

Great River Medical Center and Fort Madison Community Hospital are improving breast cancer diagnosis in women who have dense breast tissue. On April 12, both hospitals began offering automated breast ultrasound (ABUS) using the only FDA-approved ultrasound screening device for this purpose.

Mammograms are still the gold standard and first step for breast cancer screening for all women. Ultrasound screening with the Invenia ABUS 2.0 is an additional test that can be done during the same appointment. It has been shown to improve breast cancer detection by 35.7% for women with dense breast tissue.

ABUS uses sound waves to create 3D images. A layer of lotion is applied to each breast, and then a scanner is firmly positioned on the breast to get the images. A radiologist reviews the images and reports the results to the health care provider who ordered the procedure.

About 40% of women have dense breasts. This means the breasts contain more tissue than fat. Breast density has been found to be the most common risk factor for breast cancer, over family history and other risk factors. Women with dense breast tissue are at four to six times' higher risk of developing breast cancer than women without dense tissue.

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## New Provider

**Amanda Veenstra, PA**

**Pulmonology**

Eastman Plaza, Suite 304

1223 S. Gear Ave.

West Burlington

319-768-3240



Master's degree: St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa

## May Casual Days

Employees purchase \$2 stickers for the opportunity to wear jeans to work on designated Fridays. The May casual days and organizations they benefit are:

May 7 Lupus Foundation of America

May 15 Great River Health spirit day – Free!

May 21 Wounded Warrior Project

### Letter

As we reflect on the past four decades of raising awareness, providing medical education, building programs and funding research, we are evermore grateful for the remarkable community of donors and friends – like you and everyone who participated in your casual day – who make it possible. Your gift gives hope to every member of our community, along with their families. Your engagement indicates a brighter future for individuals who are living with Marfan syndrome, VEDS, Loeys-Dietz and related conditions.

The Marfan Foundation is not skipping a beat in 2021 thanks to your generosity ... We have planned an array of virtual events for the spring, providing those moments we all cherish to gather and be together until we can meet in person once again! Thank you for being a part of our incredible progress and fighting for victory!

— Michael L. Werner, president & CEO  
Helaine Baruch, chief philanthropy officer

New screening tool— continued

A 2019 national law requires women to be informed of their breast density in their mammogram report letters. Women whose reports show they have heterogeneously dense or very dense breasts may benefit from this extra screening method. For more information, women should talk to their primary health care providers.

## Hospitals offer 3D mammography; SmartCurve new in West Burlington

Great River Medical Center and Fort Madison Community Hospital offer 3D mammography. During the procedure, breast images are created by using several low-dose digital X-rays taken at different angles. A computer converts the images into a stack of thin layers, allowing radiologists to review breast tissue one layer at a time.

Great River Medical Center recently began performing mammography using the SmartCurve system. Curved compression surfaces improve comfort without compromising image quality. The SmartCurve system improves comfort in 93% of patients who reported moderate to severe discomfort with standard compression.

## Pritchard Named Employee of the Month



Christin Pritchard was named Great River Medical Center Employee of the Month for her leadership during the health system and community rollouts of the COVID-19 vaccine. She is the director of Clinic Nursing Operations.

### Pritchard's nomination

"Although implementing the vaccine clinics for employees and the public certainly has been a group effort, Christin was the leader of the process. She will probably say she was 'just doing her job.' That may be the case, but Christin really went above and beyond, especially for the public clinics.

"Many people don't realize the coordination and logistics required to make a vaccination clinic happen. Christin spent countless hours of her own time – often until 9 or 10 p.m. the night before a clinic began at 7 a.m. – making sure lists were organized, volunteers were coordinated, supplies were ready and everything was going to run smoothly.

"On the news, we hear about clinics that have had long lines, ridiculous wait times, people camping in their cars and even wearing disguises to try to get a vaccination. Not in Des Moines County, Iowa. Our people have been in and out with smiles on their faces because of the efforts of Christin's leadership and organization of a team effort. I admire her for this work, and I know it's a project she will never forget working on."

## Henry County Health Center and Great River Health Move Forward with Expanded Partnership

On March 2, Henry County residents voted 59% to 41% to authorize the Henry County Health Center (HCHC) Board of Trustees to pursue an operational lease agreement between HCHC and Great River Health. Starting July 1, Great River Health will lease HCHC's facilities and assets, and will operate the health center. The expanded partnership will provide financial stability to HCHC and will ensure health care continues to be managed locally.

This expanded public-private partnership is among the first of its kind in Iowa, and it may be a possible solution for rural hospitals that face financial and industry-related challenges in coming years.

Under the agreement, the HCHC Board of Trustees will continue to be responsible for maintenance, improvement and any necessary replacement of leased hospital assets. The trustees will continue to govern and provide oversight on execution of the agreement. The operational lease also ensures management of the health center remains within southeast Iowa, with critical decisions made at a local level. [Read the full story.](#)



## Nursing Roles Change, Demand Increases

One hundred years ago, student nurses at Burlington Hospital School of Nursing began giving patients baths early in their training. They made their own bandages, whittled sticks for cotton swabs and washed dishes from patient meal trays. They worked 12-hour shifts in the hospital, and were required to attend morning classes after working all night.

Nursing has evolved from making bandages to making critical patient-care decisions. Nurses are trained in procedures that were unimaginable a century ago. They work in more than 50 Great River Health departments and clinics in jobs including:

- Discharge planning
- Education
- Electronic medical records
- Employee health
- Hospital equipment and supplies
- Insurance authorization
- Patient care
- Patient safety
- Patient satisfaction
- Pharmacy

Nurses at Great River Health have many roles, but their combined goal is to provide high-quality patient care.

### Nursing jobs in demand

There are about 3 million registered nurses working in the U.S. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the growth rate of nursing jobs is faster than the average growth rate of other jobs in the country.

Nurse education programs offer diplomas, and associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees. Nurses may specialize in different areas, such as cardiovascular care, diabetes, intensive care, pediatrics and oncology.

Great River Health has nearly 50 registered nurses with master's or doctorate degrees who provide diagnosis and treatment. They work in clinics, Surgical Services, the Klein Center and Palliative Care.

## Met a Few of Our Great Nurses



**Rachel Hill**  
**Home Health & Hospice**  
**Years in nursing: 13**

"I am a nurse because I truly want to help people. I want to help them not just with their physical ailments, but with their emotional and spiritual ones too. Nursing gives me this opportunity. Also, I love the challenges nursing presents. Every day is different, and it requires me to adapt and learn new skills to help my patients. Nursing is very fulfilling."



**Toni Meldrum**  
**Pulmonology**  
**Years in nursing: 20**

"I became a nurse to make a positive difference in people's lives. Over the years, I have been able to help people by educating them, showing compassion and sometimes just listening. I believe our past experiences are what have made us who we are and keep us striving to be better nurses and individuals."



**Brandon Dietsch**  
**Acute Care Center**  
**Years in nursing: 17**

"As a nurse, I enjoy being in the forefront of innovative health care. There is something new and exciting every day. With great coworkers, I have been able to excel in the roles I have had in the Acute Care Center for our patients and staffing families. Being a resource nurse has given me the opportunity to lead new nurses as they begin a great career!"



**James McDowell**  
**Surgical Services**  
**Years in nursing: 26 years**

"I am a nurse because it gives me an opportunity to care for my community when it is in need. Working in surgery allows me to have hands-on access to some of the latest innovation in the medical field. I like being a nurse because it is challenging and requires leadership and other values to navigate my daily routine."



**Kristi Oberman**  
**Nursing House Supervisor**  
**Years in nursing: 9**

"I became a nurse to improve the health outcomes of patients. I enjoy educating patients and their willingness to learn. When I started working at Great River Medical Center, I was inspired by another house supervisor and modeled myself after her. Now I like helping other nurses find answers they need to improve patient care."

# Employee Profile

**Lisa Ramsey**  
Analyst  
Supply Chain Management



**Start date:**

Oct. 23, 1978

**What a typical day looks like for me:**

My whole day is spent at the computer fixing things and getting ready to implement Workday at Fort Madison Community Hospital. Workday is Great River Health's system for ordering and tracking supplies, managing payroll and human resources, tracking employee education and performing finance-related functions.

**What I wanted to be when I grew up:**

A nurse, but I realized that's not for me!

**Hometown / Where I live now:**

Fort Madison

**Family:**

I have three nieces and two nephews who I love with all my heart.

**Things I enjoy:**

Spending time with family and friends, gardening and traveling

**If I could choose anyone, my mentor would be:**

My mom. There wasn't anything she couldn't do or fix. She had so much love for her family.

**People would be surprised to know:**

I have had 10 bosses in my 42 years at the hospital.

**My favorite line from a movie or television show:**

"Don't let anyone ever make you feel like you don't deserve what you want." (Heath Ledger in "10 Things I Hate About You")

**Who I root for:**

Hawkeyes, Cubs and Bears

**My biggest achievement:**

Working at the same place for 42 years