

GREAT NEWS

FEBRUARY 2021

Our COVID-19 Vaccine Experience

Great River Medical Center began providing first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to employees Friday, Dec. 19. Following Iowa Department of Public Health and Des Moines County Public Health guidelines, employees who have direct patient contact received the voluntary vaccine first. Additional employees were offered vaccines in tier groups. The final employee group became eligible Jan. 22.

Most employees received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The hospital has an ultra-cold refrigerator that is required to keep the vaccine at -80 degrees C. The first-dose supply of the Pfizer vaccine was exhausted Jan. 22, and the hospital began using its smaller supply of the Moderna vaccine.

There is a 21-day period between doses of the Pfizer vaccine and a 28-day period for the Moderna vaccine. Both are said to be about 95% effective with two doses.

During the first month of vaccinations, 1% of employees who received their first doses of the Pfizer vaccine reported reactions including fever, chills, tiredness and headache. After receiving the second dose, 3.9% reported reactions.



Housekeeper Jon Cowles gets his COVID-19 vaccine.

Where to Get Your COVID-19 Vaccine

Local health departments are responsible for giving COVID-19 vaccines to the public. To get information, please call the health department in the county where you live. Here are telephone numbers for Great River Medical Center's service area:

- Des Moines County, 319-753-8290
- Hancock County (Illinois) 217-357-2171
- Henderson County (Illinois) 309-627-2812
- Henry County, 319-385-0779
- Lee County, 319-376-1077
- Louisa County, 319-523-3981

Great River Friends Extends Scholarship Deadline to March 1

Great River Friends has extended its scholarship deadline. Two types of scholarships are offered to students pursuing health care careers.

Applicants for high school scholarships must be seniors with minimum 3.0 grade point averages. They must live in or attend schools within Great River Medical Center's service area (about 60 miles).

Applicants for continuing college student scholarships must have graduated from high schools in Great River Medical Center's service area in the last 10 years and have completed at least one year of college. Students in graduate school may apply.

Scholarship applications must be postmarked or delivered by Monday, March 1.

Great River Friends is a community of donors and volunteers that supports Great River Medical Center with the gifts of time, talent and treasure. For more information, please call Volunteer Services at 319-768-3340.

February Casual Days

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

- Feb. 5 **American Heart Association**
- Feb. 19 **National Marfan Association**

Get Vaccinated: A Physician's Perspective

From a Facebook post by David Carlson, MD, family medicine:



"Got my first COVID-19 vaccine today! I have to admit I was and am a bit of a skeptic, given the lack of long-term evidence of safety of the so-called genetic (RNA and DNA) vaccines; their effectiveness, however, is without question. I investigated the science extensively, and believe that on balance, they're safe and a lot safer than gambling with my life.

"You see, I have asthma, I'm closing in on 60 years young, got myself a high-risk job(!), and I've personally witnessed the unpredictability of this plague we're going through, as well as the devastation it can cause. The small long-term risk of the unknown is worth the incredible benefit of being vaccinated! We don't yet have evidence of the genetic vaccines' safety for pregnancy, but we will before 2021 is over.

"To my friends, patients, family and Facebook followers, please get vaccinated. The FDA and CDC are extremely cautious and reputable agencies, and I've been convinced (as much as possible, until direct long-term studies are completed – years from now) the currently available vaccines are safe and effective."



David Carlson, MD, receives his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine Jan. 27.

Your **Heart** Is Your ~~Love~~ Health Meter

With Valentine's Day right around the corner, our minds turn to hearts. Hearts on cards and decorations, heart-shaped cookies. Did you know February is American Heart Month? The entire month is set aside to raise awareness of heart health and prevention of heart disease.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women and men in the U.S. Most of these deaths could be prevented if people took better care of their hearts. Think A-B-C.

Avoid tobacco.

Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body. Once you start smoking or using other forms of tobacco, it's hard to quit. That's because the nicotine in tobacco is an addictive chemical. The more you use it, the more you need to feel good. When you stop smoking, the withdrawal symptoms are unpleasant. But quitting is worth the temporary discomfort!

Get tips for quitting tobacco [here](#).

Become more active.

Regular exercise is essential for keeping your heart healthy. The American Heart Association recommends getting 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise every week. That might sound like a lot, but when you consider there are 10,080 minutes in a week, it's very doable! Break it up into 10-minute sessions. Even small amounts of exercise can reduce your risk of heart disease. Start slowly. You should begin feeling a little better each day.

Choose a healthy diet.

A heart-healthy diet is a great weapon for fighting heart disease. Choose colorful fruits and veggies, whole grains, low-fat dairy, chicken and fish. Limit red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages. Coordinate your diet with your physical activity so you are using up the calories you are consuming.

Following the A-B-Cs of heart health can help you prevent heart disease. Getting started during American Heart Month can lead to a healthier 2021. [Learn more](#).

Heart Attack Warning Signs

If you have any of these signs, call 911 right away:

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest. It lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Other signs such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness
- As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

Hospital Casual Day Donations Top \$8,400

Great River Medical Center employees donated \$8,462 through casual day contributions in 2020. On designated Fridays, employees may wear jeans to work in exchange for \$2 casual day stickers.

The money was given to 22 organizations and services chosen by an employee committee:

- Boy Scouts of America-Mississippi Valley Council
- Burlington Homeless Shelter
- Camp One Step
- Community Action of Southeast Iowa
- Des Moines County Emergency Response Team
- Des Moines County Humane Society
- Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois
- Great River Friends
- Great River Medical Center Employee Assistance
- Great River Medical Center Food Drive
- Great River Medical Center Hats & Mittens Drive
- Greater Burlington Area Crime Stoppers
- Hematology & Oncology-Great River Medical Center
- Hetta Gilbert Children's Medical Organization
- Kayla's Cupboard
- Kidd's Kids
- Klein Center Sunshine Club
- R.S.V.P.
- SCC Dreamcatchers Club
- Toys for Tots
- United Way
- Walk to End Alzheimer's
- Young House Bridges Out of Poverty



Don't let the pandemic limit your activity.

Exercising is a great way to make yourself look and feel better physically and mentally.

- New members join with no enrollment fee.
- Dual membership at Health Fitness and Universal Fitness
- Socially distanced workouts and classes
- Frequent and extensive cleaning

Now is a great time to get off the couch and join the fitness movement!

Health Fitness

Wellness Plaza
1401 W. Agency Rd.
West Burlington
319-768-4191

Universal Fitness

2750 Mt. Pleasant St., Suite 104
Burlington
319-208-1744



LETTER

The Finest Care

With all of the perils and challenges of 2020, it is difficult to find positive news to share. Today, we are bringing you that news regarding your staff at Great River Hospice House!

In October of 2019 in San Diego, my brother was diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma and received a dire long-term outlook. Having had a wonderful experience with our parents, Holly (2018) and Kay (2016) Wagner at the hospice house, Mark chose to come to Burlington to receive care after devastating chemotherapy treatments. After nearly two months and much TLC at the hospice house, we were able to return to his California home for nearly ten months! What a great recovery for him!

Unfortunately, in November of 2020, he was declining rapidly and, again, chose to return to (in his words) "the best nurses and their assistants in the country" at Great River Hospice House. The expertise and caring nature of the staff were phenomenal during his final days before he passed away on November 23.

[Read more](#)



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

Please remain vigilant,
even after receiving the
COVID-19 vaccine.



Great River
MEDICAL CENTER

Your health counts.

Employee Profile

Wendy Bloomer

Registered Nurse, Inpatient Dialysis
Critical Care Clinical Facilitator

**Start date:**

June 2005

What I do:

I provide hemodialysis services for patients, and I teach nurses who work in the Intensive Care and Cardiovascular Care units. My days can be very busy and fast-paced.

What I wanted to do when I grew up:

Be a florist, librarian or school teacher

Hometown / Where I live now:

Sandwich, Illinois / Burlington

Family:

- Son, Gavin, 19
- Daughters Mariah, 14, and Jocelyn, 6

Things I enjoy:

Anything outdoors, reading, my kids and traveling

My motto or personal mantra:

"Today was good, today was fun, tomorrow is another one." Dr. Seuss

Who I root for:

Ali Dabbs, RN, a nurse who is new to Inpatient Dialysis