

Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you are enjoying the warmer weather as much as I am and getting out to explore all the activities our hometown has to offer. Inside this newsletter, you'll read wonderful stories about the care provided at St. Peter's Health and how it's impacting our community in remarkable ways.

We are continuing to make numerous clinical enhancements in Helena. Our St. Peter's Health Medical Group Orthopaedics team continues to raise the bar in quality and patient safety, garnering national recognition for providing new and specialized surgical services. We just celebrated providing 50 years of nephrology care to Helena residents and beyond. Under the medical guidance and expertise of Dr. Robert LaClair and his talented dialysis team, St. Peter's has built a nationally recognized at-home dialysis program. In fact, we're the only hospital-based dialysis program in Montana to offer specialized treatment plans that allow patients to receive care in the comfort of their home, while waiting for an organ transplant.

In addition to clinical advancements, next week, we are implementing a new, best-in-class Electronic Health Record (EHR) system called Epic. For years, we have worked to bring this world-renowned technology to our staff and patients, and we are proud to share that it's finally here. As you continue reading, you'll learn how to shift your St. Peter's Patient Portal to MyChart, a one-stop shop for managing appointments, paying bills, communicating with your providers and more. Our new EHR will improve patient experience and align us with top-tier medical centers around the world, furthering our progress towards becoming the Gold Standard for healthcare in Montana.

Despite the extremely difficult economic pressures we are currently facing in Helena and across the nation, we remain committed to living our values and investing wisely as we strive to meet the healthcare needs of our community. Our goal is to serve our community as an independent, Montana-based healthcare system for many years to come, so your needs and those of the Greater Helena Area will stay at the forefront of every decision we make. We are grateful for your trust and for the opportunity we have to provide care to each of you.

I wish you and your family a safe and healthy summer. I hope to see you at local farmers markets, Alive @ Five, Family Fun Fest and at other community events where we'll be present during the months ahead. Please don't hesitate to stop by our booths and say hello!

Sincerely,



Wade C. Johnson, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer



St. Peter's Health

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

Specialized spine surgery helps East Helena woman get back to enjoying life pain-free

Shortly after St. Peter's Orthopaedics welcomed Dr. Patrick Curry back to Helena in August, he met with East Helena resident Tracie Grimm.

Tracie lived with debilitating back and hip pain for years, most likely caused by an injury from a horse riding accident.

"I tried yoga, chiropractic manipulation, physical therapy, injections – you name it, I tried it so I could avoid surgery," Tracie said. "But it got to the point I couldn't walk without pain, so I was referred to Dr. Curry."



Since her spine surgery, Tracie Grimm is getting back to the activities she enjoys—pain-free—like keeping up with her grandsons.

Dr. Curry is a board certified and fellowship-trained orthopaedic spine surgeon who provides surgical and non-surgical care for the spine, back and neck.

Having a local option for highly specialized surgical care meant Tracie could stay close to home before, during and

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LIVING LIFE
TO THE FULLEST

after surgery. She had back surgery in December when Dr. Curry fused several discs together and shaved a bone that was pinching a nerve.

According to Dr. Curry, understanding options is essential for anyone considering back surgery. For many people, initial treatment often involves non-operative care.

“After that, we have a discussion about what type of surgery would be most beneficial for their problem,” he said. “I really try to tailor what we do surgically to what the patient wants to get out of surgery.”

Understanding options is essential for anyone considering back surgery. For many people, initial treatment often involves non-operative care.

procedure will entail and how things will be done.”

Tracie’s recovery process was intense, but she’s now pain-free and back to enjoying an active life as a “nanna” of three.

“I couldn’t be happier with the outcome of my surgery,” she said. “Dr. Curry is a no-nonsense, straight-to-the-point kind of guy. He doesn’t quit until he is sure you understand what the

Learn more about Dr. Curry at sphealth.org/spine



LOCAL ORTHOPAEDIC EXPERTISE
SHOWCASED ON A NATIONAL STAGE

At the international annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedics in March, St. Peter’s Executive Medical Director and orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Kerry Hale, was part of an all-female panel presentation, “Preventing Readmissions after Total Hip or Knee Arthroplasty.” Dr. Hale is one of the top joint replacement surgeons in the country and is a member of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons’ national committee of 12 women focused on advancing hip and knee arthroplasty.



Healthy Helena

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR
YOUNGEST RESIDENTS

The Early Childhood Collaborative (ECC) of the Greater Helena Area has received a \$200,000 Zero to Five grant from the Headwaters Foundation. ECC is housed within the St. Peter’s Population Health Department. The collaborative promotes community collaboration to streamline health, safety, care and education services for children and their families.

“This funding allows us to bring together community stakeholders working to increase access to resources that support children and families in the Greater Helena Area. Collaboration like this helps ensure children have the opportunity to build a solid foundation in the early years so they can thrive in school.”

— Maureen Bjerke, St. Peter’s Zero to Five Community Coordinator

HONORING COMPASSIONATE, LIFESAVING WORK

CONGRATULATIONS
TO PAUL LEE, RN
INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Paul was awarded the LifeCenter Northwest LifeSaver Award in March for his efforts to support a local family during an organ donation case. Six lives were saved as a result of the donation.



HELP US WELCOME NEW ST. PETER'S HEALTH PROVIDERS

ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND IMMUNOLOGY



James Sweet, MD
Broadway Clinic

ANESTHESIOLOGY



Holly Gray, MD
Regional Medical Center



Ariana Okerstrom, CRNA
Regional Medical Center

LIFESTYLE MEDICINE



Jeannie John Brandt, MD
North Clinic

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY AND HEMATOLOGY



Melissa Cotner, DNP
Regional Medical Center

FAMILY MEDICINE



Clarence "Jaron"
Brunson, MD
North Clinic



McCall Elverum, DNP, FNP-C
Broadway Clinic

HOSPITALIST



Georgianna (Georgi) Coon,
APRN-ACNP, APRN-FNP
Regional Medical Center

NEUROLOGY



David Tullar, PA-C
Broadway Clinic

PSYCHIATRY



Rebecca White, FNP
Broadway Clinic

ORTHOPAEDICS



Adrienne Bull, PA-C
Broadway Clinic



Amy Tangedahl, PA-C, MPAS
Broadway Clinic

RHEUMATOLOGY



Arwyn Taffs, NP
Broadway Clinic

Coming soon

ANESTHESIOLOGY

Deborah Bledsoe, CRNA
Regional Medical Center

FAMILY MEDICINE

Hallie Tipton, MD
North Clinic

NEUROLOGY

Mallory Emig, MD
Broadway Clinic

PEDIATRIC HOSPITALIST

Jennifer Raffaele, MD
Regional Medical Center

New community provider partners



Shayla Daschle, CNM
Midwife
Helena OB/GYN



Caitlin Klaassen, PA-C
Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation
Helena Orthopedic Clinic



Brandon Lee, PA
St. Peter's Health
Emergency Department



Samantha 'Sammy-Jo'
Wright, PA
St. Peter's Health
Emergency Department

INTRODUCING LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Led by Dr. David Krainacker and Dr. Jeannie John Brandt, St. Peter's Lifestyle Medicine uses a holistic approach to manage and improve health and wellness.

Did you know?

Movement of any kind has positive benefits on your overall health.

Free Lifestyle Medicine events

FRIDAY, JUNE 16 LUNCH-AND-LEARN

With Dr. David Krainacker
Move it! Summer's Coming

FRIDAY, JULY 7 WALK WITH A DOC

With Dr. David Krainacker and
Dr. Jeannie John Brandt
Centennial Park

Details at sphealth.org/lifestylemedicine



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF 'LIFE-CHANGING' CARE

St. Peter's dialysis program leads the nation in home dialysis and transplants

When it opened in 1973, the St. Peter's chronic dialysis program became the first of its kind in Montana. Fifty years later, the St. Peter's Dialysis Unit is a nationally-ranked program leading the way in at-home dialysis treatments and transplant opportunities that help ease the toll this rigorous treatment takes on patients and their families.

Chronic dialysis treatment became more accessible in 1973 thanks to a congressional act providing Medicare dollars for ongoing dialysis treatments. That's when two kidney failure patients from Butte contacted Dr. Faust Alvarez, a Helena-based internal medicine and kidney disease specialist, to see if he could help them move back to Montana by providing chronic hemodialysis treatments. Dr. Alvarez went to work coordinating everything needed to get the new, life-saving program started.

Nancy Pierce, RN, BSN, CNN started learning dialysis in 1974 at St. Peter's. She took over management of the unit in 1975 until her retirement in 2018.

"Dedicated staff ensured that St. Peter's continually upgraded its equipment and machines over the years to provide the most current treatments available," Nancy said.

When at-home hemodialysis machines emerged as an option for some patients, St. Peter's expanded its program. The at-home option means the world to Helena resident Kalene Pool, who does daily at-home peritoneal dialysis treatments

to help manage chronic kidney disease caused by Type 1 diabetes.

"Before I started dialysis, I felt absolutely horrible. After starting dialysis I feel so much better," she said. "The option to do dialysis at home has been life-changing. I have

St. Peter's is the only hospital in Montana with a home dialysis program. More than 40% of its patients are managing their dialysis at home compared to the national average of about 12.6%.

a full-time job and a child. For me, [in-center dialysis] every day just wouldn't work."

Chris Neilson completes his at-home hemodialysis treatment in White Sulphur Springs. Not only has the at-home option reduced his travel costs and time, it's ensured he's been able to watch his son grow up.

"It's made it so I could see my son graduate from high school, go to his proms...now he's about to graduate from college," Chris said. "All of these things I've gotten to see that I wouldn't have without dialysis."

According to Dr. Robert LaClair, a nephrologist and the unit's Medical

Director, another important factor that distinguishes St. Peter's is the large percentage of patients who receive kidney transplants.

Currently, St. Peter's serves only about 5% of all people on dialysis in Montana. Yet since 2014, upwards of 8% of Montana residents who receive kidney transplants each year are St. Peter's patients. According to data from the United Network for Organ

SUPERIOR CARE,
HOMETOWN
COMMITMENT.

There are significant barriers that prevent people from getting a kidney transplant, but a successful transplant means patients no longer need dialysis. "Transplanted" patients live longer and healthier lives, LaClair said.

"Everyone has to be on board to make a transplant work, from



A successful transplant involves a team effort — kidney transplant patient Amber Roeder (center) with some of her care team, left to right: Dr. Betty Plate (family medicine); Tolly Patten, RDN (clinical nutrition); Jen Mittelstadt, MSW, SWLC (social worker); Irma Rich, RN (dialysis); Dr. Robert LaClair and Amber Smith, LPN (nephrology) and Dori Grosshauser, RN (dialysis).

Sharing, in 2021, 11% of all Montana residents who received kidney transplants were St. Peter's patients.

the social workers to the nutritionists and everyone in between," Dr. LaClair said. "We

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treat each patient as a unique individual. Our approach to care is unique because everything we do is centered on getting a patient a transplant.”

Amber Roeder was on dialysis for seven years while living in the Flathead Valley. She began in-center hemodialysis at St. Peter’s when she moved to Helena about three years ago.

“The first thing Dr. LaClair said to me was, ‘Why are you here? Why haven’t you gotten a transplant?’” Amber said. “They did everything in their power to help me get the transplant. I wasn’t even with them for a full year when I got transplanted.”

Amber recently celebrated her 30th birthday with her husband and 9-year-old twin daughters.

“I’m so grateful that I’m here,” she said. “I never feel alone in my care. I can’t express the amount of gratitude I have for all of those wonderful people in the unit.”

DONOR FUNDS UPGRADE DIALYSIS CARE

Nearly \$1 million in donor funds helped the St. Peter’s Dialysis unit purchase 19 Tablo® Hemodialysis System machines for both at-home and in-center use. Tablo systems are more mobile, more user friendly and more efficient. The St. Peter’s Health Foundation Dialysis Fund, Elizabeth Vercellin Endowment and the Greatest Need Fund provided \$807,500 to fully fund the purchase.



YOU ARE
THE  OF
OUR COMMUNITY

St. Peter’s Health Week recognizes and celebrates our 1,800+ caregivers who put all their heart into caring for our community.

INTRODUCING MYCHART

St. Peter’s now offers best-in-class technology for managing your health

Want quick, easy online access to manage appointments, send messages, view medical records and test results, or pay your bill? St. Peter’s now offers free access to MyChart, the leading online health record information service. MyChart is part of St. Peter’s \$25 million transition to the EPIC Electronic Health Record system. MyChart replaced the previous Patient Portal and offers even more tools and features to manage all your health information in one place.

DON’T LOSE ACCESS!

Even if you’re currently using Patient Portal, you will need to create a MyChart account to maintain online access to your medical record information. The best way to set up a MyChart account is to use the activation information you will receive after you schedule an appointment, receive a healthcare service, or are admitted or discharged at the hospital.

Why MyChart?



24/7 CONNECTION
Easily manage you and your family’s healthcare online



ONE-STOP SERVICE
Manage appointments, message providers and pay your bill in one place



MORE TOOLS & RESOURCES
View test results and records, along with trusted health information

For more MyChart activation information, scan the code with your smartphone or visit sphealth.org/mychart.



Registration now open!



**Saturday
August 12**
8:30 am to noon
FREE!

- Group warm-ups start at 8:30 am in Centennial Park
- One mile fun run at 9 am
- Health and Wellness fair follows in the Great Northern Town Center



Register today for a FREE T-shirt!

sphealth.org/FamilyFunFest