# **BAXTER** HEALTH

SUMMER 2024 VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 3

### Plus NOURISHING BODY AND SOUL

food closet launched to aid discharged patients pg. 31

**BOB WILLIAMS** A tapestry of service

and compassion

pg. 17

# **EXPANDING VASCULAR CARE**

NEW SURGEONS, DR. NESTOR ARITA AND DR. HEATH BROUSSARD, JOIN BAXTER HEALTH

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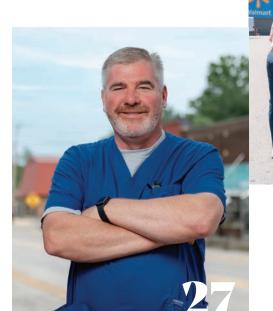
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Kate Smith. FNP-C

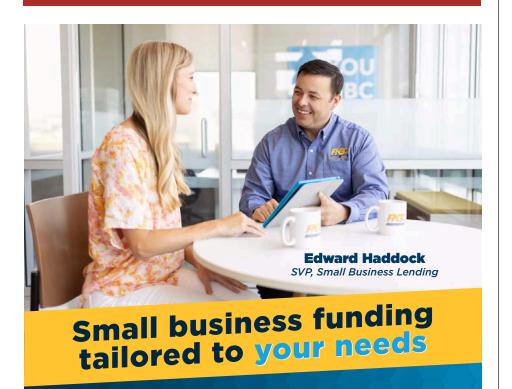




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# **A HEARTFELT EDITION**

Welcome to another edition of PULSE magazine, the official publication of Baxter Health. By now, Arkansas temperatures are heating up, especially up here in Ozark country, and the state is in full-fledged summer mode.

In this edition, we profile our acclaimed vascular surgical department, which is expanding. As we welcome two new talented physicians to the family, we invite you to get to know them through this article.

Also, we feature one of our favorite volunteers, Bob Williams. Bob has led a remarkable life as a clergyman, military chaplain, author, serial volunteer and at 84 years young, an unexpected first-year nursing student.

Food insecurity is a major problem, and Arkansas leads the nation in people who frequently don't know where their next meal is coming from. In this edition, we visit Baxter Health's food closet, an idea that grew out of our Health Equity Committee which is tasked with ensuring health and wellness issues are addressed throughout the community.

We also revisit a patient story that saw one of our surgeons jump into action to save a life. That may feel par for the course in the career of a physician, but it's actually a responsibility and privilege that never gets old for our medical personnel. Be sure to check out that story.

All of this and more is waiting to be discovered in this issue of PULSE! Thank you for picking up this issue. Take us along as you enjoy a summer evening on the back deck or on the lake soaking in the beautiful summer scenery. There's no place like Arkansas for summer adventures.

With gratitude,

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**RON PETERSON** President/Chief Executive Officer Baxter Health



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# **BAXTER HEALTH & KTLO** HEALTH FAIR & **EXPO OCTOBER 10-11, 2024**

# **UPCOMING EVENT HEALTH FAIR** AND EXPO RESCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER

Baxter Health and KTLO, Classic Hits and The Boot, organizers of the annual Health Fair and Expo, have announced a change in the event's scheduled date. As a cornerstone event, the Health Fair and Expo brings health professionals, wellness vendors, and community members together for a day of learning, health screenings and fun. The event traditionally held in April has been moved to October this year.

The 43rd Annual Health Fair and

Expo is now scheduled to take place Thursday, Oct. 10, at The Sheid at ASU-Mountain Home and Friday, Oct. 11, at The Durand Center in Harrison. The decision to move the event was made after careful consideration of various factors, including proximity of the original date to the 2024 solar eclipse, and the new date aligning to Medicare Open Enrollment, which will allow for opportunities for the community to ask questions.

"We believe that moving the Baxter Health Fair and Expo to October will allow us to provide an even more enriching experience for our community. We look forward to sharing some exciting things that will be on display as we get closer to the new date," said Tobias Pugsley, vice president of marketing and communications, at Baxter Health.

KTLO's Heather Loftis notes, "The Medicare Open Enrollment period is of great importance to a large number of area residents, so this date means attendees will be able to access the latest information to make good decisions about their plans. Aside from all the available, informative aspects on health and wellness for the family, we expect the fresh look and vibe of the new Mountain Home venue to add energy and excitement to this highly anticipated event, while everyone will enjoy the notably better fall weather! Mark your calendars now to join us for a fun day in Mountain Home on Oct. 10, or in Harrison on Oct. 11!"





# **OUTRUN CANCER 5K**

Peitz Cancer Support House's second annual Outrun Cancer 5K was on Saturday, June 1 on the ASUMH campus. The cancer survivors and their loved ones are always an inspiration to all of us. A special thanks to the community, event sponsors, PCSH Advisory Board, and volunteers for their commitment to the programs and services of the Peitz Cancer Support House.











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# **KICKOFF FOR 2024 WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY**

In June, the 2024 Women in Philanthropy group gathered with a lively event on Baker Street in downtown Mountain Home. Members celebrated the impact of their generosity in 2023 and looked forward to expanding the group this year. It's not too late to join - new members are welcome anytime throughout the year! We will host another event in the fall and hope to see new faces. Join us in making a difference in our community's healthcare needs. To learn more about Women in Philanthropy go to: baxterhealth.org/wip



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Baxter Health Foundation is very thankful for the \$2,000 grant provided by the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas. Together with our Continuity of Care Department we



were able to secure this grant that will help fill our Baxter Health Food Pantry for our patients in need of assistance upon discharge from our hospital. We are proud to be able to provide this immediate assistance before patients get home and can secure more food resources through our local food banks.

Pictured: Lilian Browne, Social Worker, Continuity of Care (left) and Sarah Edwards, Executive Director, Baxter Health Foundation (right).

# ASUMH AND BAXTER HEALTH **RECEIVE \$625,175 GRANT FOR** NURSING PROGRAMS

Arkansas State University-Mountain Home (ASUMH) and Baxter Health received a \$625,175 grant from the American Rescue Plan Act for the Arkansas Linking Industry to Grow Nurses (ALIGN) Program. The grant, presented by Governor Sarah Sanders, will create a clinical pre-residency for nursing students, enhancing education with expanded simulation labs and standardized practices.

This initiative aims to increase LPN

and RN admissions at ASUMH, recruit clinical nurse educators, and expedite graduate integration into hospital roles. The grant will benefit about 75 students, with preceptorships, specialized training, and hands-on experience. ASUMH will hire a Clinical Nursing Educator and Coordinator, and the grant will provide advanced simulation equipment.

For more information, contact ASUMH at 870-508-6100 or Baxter Health at 870-508-1000.



**AND NEWCOMERS** 

MOVERS A

**NESTOR ARITA, MD BAXTER HEALTH HEART &** VASCULAR CLINIC

Baxter Health welcomes Nestor Arita, MD, a board-certified vascular surgeon, to Baxter Health Heart and Vascular Clinic. Born in Honduras and raised in Miami. Dr. Arita attended Baylor College of Medicine and completed a vascular and endovascular fellowship at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, gaining expertise in various vascular conditions. He specializes in both open and endovascular treatment methods. In his spare time, Dr. Arita enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and their two children



### JASON LINDSAY, MD BAXTER HEALTH UROLOGY CLINIC IN MOUNTAIN HOME

Baxter Health welcomes boardcertified urologist Dr. Jason Lindsay to the newly opened Baxter Health Urology Clinic in Mountain Home. Dr. Lindsay, part of Baxter Health since 2006, previously practiced at Mountain Home Urology, which became Baxter Health Urology Clinic on July 1. A Louisiana State University graduate, he earned his medical degree from LSU Health Sciences Center and completed residencies in general surgery and urology at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Outside of work, Dr. Lindsay enjoys riding horses, the lake, and quality time with his wife and son.





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# **CALENDAR**



of September The Schliemann Center for Women's Health HAWG WILD TAILGATE PARTY will be Saturday, Sept. 21 from 6 to 10 p.m. and will include a live stream of the Arkansas vs. Texas A&M game, outdoor games including a cornhole tournament, a BBQ dinner, drinks, and silent auction. Tickets can be purchased at the Schliemann Center, online at baxterhealth. org/HawgWild, or by calling (870) 508-2345.

### REOCCURRING **Mruk Family**

**Center on Aging** Fit & Fab for Women, Wellness Education Center, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:15 a.m. or 10:15 a.m.

Fitness for Men. Mondays and Wednesdavs at MFCOA, 9:15 a.m.

**Rock Steady** Boxing for Parkinson's, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, times vary.

Breastfeeding, Seated or Standing Monthly, 3rd Tuesday, Exercise for Seniors, 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.

**Heart Healthy** Women, Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 1 p.m. 2nd Thursday, 10 a.m.

Parkinson's

Carepartner

location.

1-2 p.m.

Support Monthly,

Dementia Care

Schliemann

Women's Health

Childbirth, Monthly,

2nd Saturday, 9 a.m.

3rd Thursday, 10 a.m.

Crafting Class, 1st and

Center for

Partner Support,

Monthly, 4th Thursday

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Infant Loss & Support, Facilitated by Deanna Howarth-Reynolds, LMFT, Lighthouse Counseling of the Ozarks, Monthly, 1st Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

Novel Women's Book Club, Monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Ladies Exercise. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Line Dancing, Tuesdays, Wellness Education Center, Pre-beginner steps at 11:15 a.m., Beginners at 12 p.m., Advanced at 1 p.m.

### Dance! Mondays and Wednesdays, Wellness Education Center, 4:15 p.m.

**AUGUST -**

**OCTOBER 2024** 

Cardio Kickboxing & Strength Training, Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

### **Peitz Cancer Support House**

**Cancer Support** Connections, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

**Men's Cancer** Discussions, Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9 a.m.

**Ostomy Wellness**, Monthly, 1st Tuesday, 10 a.m.

Threads of Hope: **Creating Gifts for** Cancer Patients. Mondays, 1 p.m.

Knock Out Cancer Boxing, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 p.m.

Beginner & Intermediate Yoga, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m.

Chair Yoga, Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Services & **Resources for Cancer Patients** and Loved Ones, Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m-4 p.m.

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OLUNTEER / bob williams

# A TAPES OFSERV

# From Ministry to Medicine Bob Williams, 84, embraces nursing and community gratitude

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA

I was volunteering in a hospital, and I wanted to have a better understanding of the things the people were going through," he said. "I was coming in contact with medical conditions every day, and I believed I could be a better resource if I had a little more education." – Bob Williams

Bob Williams entered the classroom and took a seat, trying not to focus on the butterflies in his stomach. Like a lot of first-year nursing students, Williams had the opening-day jitters over this new adventure, something many aspiring nurses feel in private.

But for Williams, there was no place to hide. At 84, he stood out from the rest of the class and continues to, although the shock of entering the classroom after so many years in his ministry career was something he not only felt. His classmates were intrigued and inspired by it as well.

"I definitely stood out," Williams said. "It was an adjustment for everybody."

Williams' decision to begin his journey toward a nursing degree is just the latest chapter of a life lived in service to others over self. An Episcopal priest, Williams served for decades as a Marine chaplain, which took him across the country and around the world to minister to service men and women.

Once his military career ended, he landed in Mountain Home where he became pastor of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, serving the faithful and tending to their spiritual needs. He retired once, but a lack of available clergy drew him back into active service. As the church's website reads, "He'd like to retire again."

As part of his duties as pastor, Williams found himself regularly visiting the hospital to call on the sick and give them comfort. That work led him to volunteer hours, and today he spends one day a week at the reception desk in the surgery department where he greets patients and their families.

"I had to cut back a little when I started nursing school," he said. "I just go wherever they send me."

As for his decision to pursue a nursing degree in the first place, Willaims said he simply saw it as another way to improve how he served people through the channels of what he was already doing.

"I was volunteering in a hospital, and I wanted to have a better understanding of the things the people were going through," he said. "I was coming in contact with medical conditions every day, and I believed I could be a better resource if I had a little more education."

Williams' service doesn't go unnoticed. The mother of an employee recently made him a patriotic quilt as a gift, and he's also well-known for spreading good cheer as the bartender during fundraisers for the Baxter Health Community Houses. He encourages more people to spend a little time in service to others.

"There's always something people can do to get involved," he said. "I would tell anyone looking for a way to give back to the community to look at the hospital first."

QUILT OF VALOR WARDED TO: 54



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EXPLORING THE INTRICATE VASCULAR SYSTEM, BAXTER HEALTH WELCOMES TWO NEW SURGEONS, DR. NESTOR ARITA AND DR. HEATH BROUSSARD, TO ENHANCE PATIENT CARE AND EXPAND SERVICES

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE





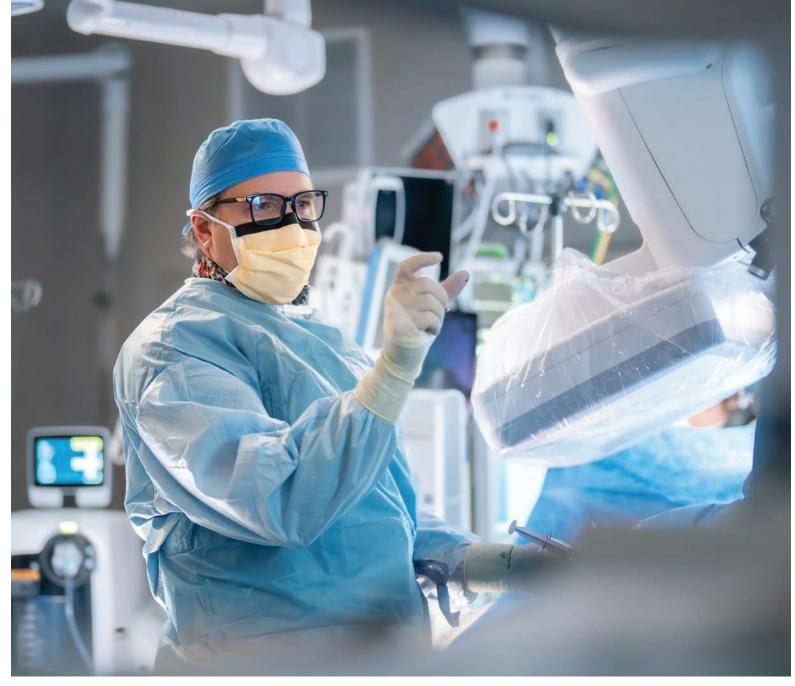
There's a strong foundation at **Baxter Health.** A lot of the infrastructure that you need for these types of procedures is actually there with room for growth."

– Dr. Nestor Arita

ne body is an amazing creation, a finely engineered machine that incorporates some of the most sophisticated systems ever seen. Within each of us lies a complex integrated network that rivals anything we as a species have created, from the supercomputer of the human brain to the tireless power plant of the heart to the brilliant framework of bones, muscles and tendons by which we move, work and live.

Not the least of these incredible structures is the vascular system, the network of piping that carries blood to and from organs and extremities. Maintaining this intricate system are vascular surgeons who work to keep the river of life flowing.

"The way I describe vascular surgery to a layperson is that it is a field that deals with pathology or disease processes of arteries and veins," said Dr. Nestor Arita, a member of the vascular team at Baxter Health.



"Predominantly, the territory of the vascular surgeon will be in the head or neck region, the arms, legs, abdomen and almost any blood vessel outside of the heart in the chest.

"In terms of specific disease processes, some of the most common disease processes we deal with are basically blockages or aneurysms that lead to different problems, depending on where they are located within the body."

Arita is the latest surgeon to join the Baxter Health team, having arrived from a regional hospital in Jackson, Tennessee, in August. His arrival comes on the heels of Dr. Heath Broussard, who joined Baxter

(Above) Dr. Broussard in sugery. (Opposite, bottom) Levi McDole, RT(R), Cath Lab, in the Baxter Health hybrid room, a unique space that can be used by a combination of Cath Lab and Vascular Surgery teams depending on the surgical case.

Health in March and also came here from Jackson, Tennessee. The two newcomers join Baxter Health vascular surgeon Dr. Kent Nachitgal to create a formidable pool of experience and expertise in the area of vascular medicine.

"(Baxter is) definitely in a growth and developmental stage in its specialties," Broussard said. "They've had vascular surgery for as long as you can count, but it's

usually always been one person. It's hard for one person to provide full service 24/7, 365.

"I'd been in private practice for 25 years, and I wasn't looking for a job, but I was encouraged to come check out Mountain Home. I came up for an interview and was very impressed with the culture and the hospital. I think (Baxter CEO and President) Ron Peterson has helped develop an excellent patient-focused culture in the hospital. It's something that's very noticeable to me, having traveled all over the country and getting to see many hospital systems."

Broussard, a Louisiana native who received his medical training at LSU, was so taken

surgery program.

strong program."



with what he saw that he actively recruited Arita to join him, having worked together on complex cases back in Tennessee.

"There's a strong foundation at Baxter Health. A lot of the infrastructure that you need for these types of procedures is actually there with room for growth," said Arita, who earned his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "I'm specifically referring to the hybrid room, which is an operating room that's equipped to do open surgery and then also do a lot of these minimally invasive techniques that are prevalent in our industry. Working for a hospital that's so progressive is important because that's the kind of mindset that you need to have in order to grow a vascular

"I also felt that there was an opportunity here to have, hopefully, a significant impact. There's a lot of need in the area. As a department, we're hoping we can provide new services and new surgery care for the immediate and outlying community. I'm hopeful to just be able to go in and really expand on that and perhaps bring in some new techniques to what is already a very



**Ron Peterson has** helped develop an excellent patientfocused culture in the hospital." – Dr. Heath Broussard





# **RIGHT PLACE**, **RIGHT TIME**

### Rita Wood's Life-Saving Surgery at Baxter Health

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

comes to a spirit. Rita pioneer is the real deal. The 81-year-old lives between the tiny communities of Glenco and Agnes, a spot she's tended and called home for the past 45 years. During her working life, she worked at a shirt factory in nearby Salem for more than two decades and then served about as long as a court reporter for Judge Harold Erwin. When he retired a few years back, so did she. She came home, took care of her garden and watched the world go by.

Living such a life of self-reliance and fortitude has its privileges, apparently; until very recently, she's never had any major health problems and never spent a night in the hospital. Talking to her over the phone, one wouldn't even guess Wood's an octogenarian. Told this, she chuckles.

"Well, I might have sounded a little bit older a few months ago," she said. It was then, in April 2024, that Rita Wood finally came up against something she couldn't tough out or bend to her considerable spirit. Having felt some pain for a while, she'd just gone about her business as the discomfort came and went. That is until the day it came with a vengeance and wouldn't let go.

"It was a bolt from the blue," she said. "At the time, I thought maybe it was a kidney stone because the pain was in the back and the side. I was thinking eventually it will pass or whatever, and I tried ignoring it."

Finally, when the pain got to "probably about a 15" on a scale of 1 to 10, Wood called for help.

"I don't like to go to the doctor often," she said matter-of-factly, "but I was almost rolling in pain. I mean, I couldn't get comfortable. I knew there was something really bad, really going wrong. Finally, it let up enough that I could call my daughter and have her come pick me up and take me over to the emergency room in Salem."

A CT scan in Salem revealed an abdominal aortic aneurysm, something beyond the staff's capacity to treat. Wood was whisked to a waiting ambulance to make, in her words, "a very quick trip from Salem up to Baxter Health at Mountain Home.

"I remember pulling up to the hospital, and I can remember feeling them pulling me out," she said. "And after that, I don't really recall anything until I came into recovery and woke up."

Dr. Heath Broussard, vascular surgeon, answered the phone around midnight. In the every-other-week rotation in the emergency department it was his week off, but the tone of the attending physician, fellow vascular surgeon Kent Nachtigal, told him something serious had just arrived at the hospital.



Broussard had one trick left in his bag, a relatively new procedure known as endovascular repair of the aortic aneurysm with laser fenestration of the visceral vessels. At the time, he was the only physician at Baxter Health trained in the procedure. "Basically, it's a way of putting a

"It was a complicated aneurysm that typically would not be able to be repaired in Mountain Home," he said. "Usually, they would have to be shipped off somewhere like St. Louis or Little Rock, but Dr. Nachtigal asked me to come in and take a look at it and see if there was anything we could do here. He didn't think she would survive if we had to ship her that far away."

Reporting to the hospital, Broussard concurred with Dr. Nachtigal's assessment that the woman, Rita Wood, wouldn't make it to the OR in any of the urban hospitals. To further complicate matters, Wood wasn't a good candidate for open surgery, given her age, and would likely die on the operating table during such a procedure.

stent inside the aorta through a little needle hole in the groin," he said. "With traditional repairs, a stent is put below all of the blood vessels that go to the intestines and the kidneys. The stents are not designed to go above there because they block arteries, but she didn't have enough room below those blood vessels for the stent to seal itself in there to seal the leakage.

"The procedure I did put the stent all the way up and covered all of those blood vessels, and then I used a laser to burn a hole in the fabric of the graft to restore blood flow - one artery to each kidney, one artery to the small intestine and colon and one artery to the stomach and the liver."

The procedure, which took two hours to complete, worked like a charm. Wood was only confined to the hospital for a couple of days.

"It was just an amazing experience," she said. "I kind of felt like a celebrity while I was up there. They couldn't have been kinder or better to me."

A little more than a month later, Wood was back tending her garden with a new appreciation for the wonders of modern medicine and the compassionate care she received at Baxter Health. Her close brush with mortality hasn't been lost on her.

"If they'd have cut me open, I might've just completely, you know, lost it," she said. "If Dr. Broussard wasn't there or he wasn't familiar with the procedure that they did, they would've had to send me on. And had they sent me on, I don't think I would be here today."

For his part, Broussard said he was just doing his job, although he admitted that such an encounter represents the pinnacle of any physician's career.

"Saving a life is, obviously, the greatest job satisfaction that I can get - to see that person in the clinic two weeks later and for them to stand up and thank me and give me a hug," he said. "I guess she was just fortunate to be in the right place at the right time and everything lined up right. It all worked out well."

If Dr. Broussard wasn't there or he wasn't familiar with the procedure that they did, they would've had to send me on. And had they sent me on, I don't think I would be here today."

– Rita Wood







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### **CLINIC FEATURE** MAMMOTH SPRING

# HOMETOWN **HBALIN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

Dr. Cochran provides compassionate care in Mammoth Spring

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

eached at his home in Mammoth Spring, the small north Arkansas community where he grew up and was first inspired to pursue medicine, Dr. Chris Cochran asks the caller's pardon for the racket outside his window.

"Just listening to the cicadas sing," he said.

Mammoth Spring is the kind of place where the songs of the summertime warbler insects aren't drowned out by excessive traffic, just as its thousands of fireflies' brilliance isn't diminished by neon and streetlights. It is also generally not the kind of place that can support its own resident physician, even one who cherishes the familiar confines of his hometown as Cochran does. Yet here he is, reporting to work at Baxter Health Cochran Internal Medicine Clinic where he serves a full slate of people, many of whom aren't just patients but bit players in his life story.

"I've done colonoscopies on about four or five of my former teachers," he quips. "Half the downtown has my cell phone number. That could get old in a hurry, I suppose, but it's just part of the deal. It gives me a measure of augmentation that I didn't expect.

"When I moved back to my hometown, I didn't realize the joy of feeling that I'm as good as I am at what I do, not by virtue of comparing myself to my colleagues but just by the satisfaction of walking into a room for a followup and finding people are glad that I'm there. I do relish that."

Cochran's parents — his father a pharmacist and his mother a wildlife biologist - nurtured in him an early love for the sciences. After graduating with a degree in biology from Lyon College in Batesville, he headed for medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, then on to the University of Missouri Kansas City for his internship and residency. He spent the first

decades of his medical career in nursing home and hospital work before deciding to return to Arkansas - for the first year on his own dime. If he had any illusions about the manner and degree to which smalltown health economics had changed, that first year erased them.

"I can tell you, the old days are over for health care," he said. "My accounts receivable just sat there and fermented for three or four months before I saw a dime come in. Thankfully my wife, Niki, is a savings disciple so we had a pretty good safety net. But I couldn't have done it without that."

Survive he did. Now with the backing of Baxter Health, Cochran is happily serving patients who appreciate it. They need him, that much is clear, but what was more of a revelation was how much he needed them back.

"It's just a void in small towns across America as far as health care is concerned," he said. "I'm here for the community, to help them, to bring real, qualified expertise. I think that the town really appreciates it because they know that they're safer living here, and for me it has been so rewarding."

The one question that keeps popping up among his colleagues and friends not from here is the emotional toll such work takes. "How can you handle treating people you know," they ask, "or see suffering in old friends and classmates?"

"Well, you know, after so many years that emotion muscle is really honed, and I can channel that very well at this point," he said. "What I'm into now is, I don't want anybody else taking care of those people because I know they won't do as good a job as I do. They simply won't care in the same way I do.

"There was this poor lady, she was a couple of years behind me in high school, and was just very unlucky and got two or three different cancers in her lifetime until finally one of them got her about a month ago.



**People ask how** can I take care of people I know like that, and I say it's because I know them that makes me care about them on a different level ... It's just a different connection and something I try to honor in how I treat them."

- Dr. Chris Cochran

A man I know got lung cancer and brain cancer and showed up in my office not even hardly knowing his own name.

"People ask how can I take care of people I know like that, and I say it's because I know them that makes me care about them on a different level than if they were just strangers who came into my office. It's just a different connection and something I try to honor in how I treat them."



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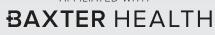
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# Feeding Hope

Amid Arkansas' food insecurity crisis, Baxter Health works to support discharged patients in need, embodying a commitment to community care and health equity

**BY DWAIN HEBDA** 

he news that landed late last year was shocking — Arkansas, a state where agriculture was the leading economic driver, that led the nation in rice production and was home to one of the biggest food processors in the world, was also the hungriest state in the nation.

According to statistics reported in November by the USDA Economic Research Service, an average of 16.6% of Arkansas households were food insecure between 2020 and 2022, more than any other U.S. state and nearly five percentage points over the national average. More sobering still, 20% of Arkansas' children, one out of every five, lived in food-insecure households.

Unlike many people, Lilian Browne wasn't surprised at the numbers. As a social worker for Baxter Health, she regularly comes face to face with patients who are leaving the hospital to return to empty cupboards and bare refrigerators. "This has always been an issue in our community and every community, probably," she said. "Food insecurities are a big problem, and not all the population that we serve qualifies for SNAP benefits. They can be helped by the local food banks one time, but after that, they have certain criteria that they have to meet to be able to receive help."

Browne said other restrictions and issues with existing organizations led her to conceive of an idea to establish a food closet at the hospital to serve patients who needed it after being discharged. She found ready allies in the idea, fellow employees who not only saw it as the right thing to do but as a way for Baxter Health to live out its Health Equity mandate. Health Equity, a requirement by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, compels health providers to examine health issues within their communities and to develop strategies for meeting them across the board.

### Strengthening **Community Support**

**Baxter Health Crossroads** Family Clinic collaborates with Hometown Brew coffee shop to tackle hunger amidst rising community needs

Residents of Harrison and the surrounding vicinity recently got a new way to help combat hunger in their community. Last year, Baxter Health Crossroads Family Clinic recently received a \$700 gift as a result of being the featured charity of the month by the local Hometown Brew coffee shop. That money was used to create and stock a food pantry at the clinic, which opened around the beginning of the year.

Melissa Walker, office manager, said the resource is open to anyone in the community and has been utilized at least once per week since then. Clinic personnel help people seeking food get the correct items by asking questions about recipients' food allergies, ability to heat items and if they have needed utensils. Walker noted the community needs have escalated in the wake of recent violent storms in the area.

The pantry will accept donations from any individual, group or organization. Needed are nonperishable items such as boxed, shelf-stable food, canned goods, baby food, baby formula, diapers, baby clot<u>hes and</u> personal hygiene items. Often overlooked items such as plastic tableware and can openers are particularly appreciated.

The clinic is located at 1420 Highway 62-65 North, Suite 1 in Harrison. For more information or questions about donations, please contact Melissa Walker via the clinic's Facebook page or by calling 870-741-6111.



"We've been tasked by CMS to ensure that we are assessing our patients for social determinants of health, and one of those buckets is food insecurity," said Tammy Penka, director of quality at Baxter Health. "Last year, we formed a health equity steering committee, and one of our initiatives has been to put together a food and hunger resource guide, which has taken a lot of effort through lots of different people within our organization."

The food closet became a reality last fall and since opening has served 85 patients. Browne said the program provides food that accommodates other issues patients may be facing.

"Our goal here is to be able to meet that immediate food insecurity," she said. "Oftentimes, people get bags of food that don't necessarily include things patients need.



For example, bags included certain things that patients couldn't chew if they didn't have any teeth. They might have had things that needed to be cooked or had cans that couldn't be opened because they didn't come with a can opener. Well, if I'm home-

# Difference

The Food Closet at Baxter Health accepts monetary donations in any amount to help further its mission. For information on how to donate, contact Baxter Health Foundation at (870) 508-1770 or foundation@baxterregional.org.

Those wanting to donate food items are encouraged to consult the list below for the most needed non-perishable food items to help stock the pantry.

» Peanut butter/all nut butters

### » Tuna pouches

- » All canned meats, including low-sodium canned meats
- » Fruit cups packed in water or fruit juice, including no added sugar varieties

» Canned fruit, packed in water or fruit juice carbs) supplement

» Canned juice

» Meat sticks

» Dried fruit/veggies

dry cereal
Shelf-stable milk

» Cup o' Noodles

» Canned pasta

» Granola bars

varieties

>> Water bottles

» Trail mix

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(Above) Josh Fletcher loads up his cart to deliver supplies and food for those impacted by the recent tornadoes. (Opposite, top) Debbie Wood and Natalie Amato help out shelve food with Food Bank of NCA CEO Jeff Quick. (Opposite, bottom) Baxter Health gave a check to the Food Bank of NCA from their food drive hosted during National Hospital Week. Pictured from left are James Douglas, Debbie Wood, Jeff Quick, Kinley Prichard, Tobias Pugsley, Natalie Amato and Donna Kelso.

» Veggie cups, including low-sodium veggie cups/canned veggies

» V8 juice, including low-sodium V8 juice

» Crackers, including unsalted tops saltines

» Boxed cereal, including no added sugar

» Pasta, including whole-grain pasta » Low-sodium pasta sauce » Boxed macaroni and cheese

>> Nuts and seeds, including unsalted nuts Peanut or other nut snack packs
Canned beans, including no salt added

» Freeze-dried foods (all kinds)

» Ensure and similar supplements » Glucerna or any low-carb (less than 5g less, if I don't have a home, I don't have a way to cook or to open anything."

Funds for the project come from the Friends Fund, a pool of money to which most employees contribute to help address various causes and emergency assistance.

"The organization has an employee fund drive every year, and our employees, probably 75% to 80% of them, give to the fund," said Sue Rodden, director of continuity care. "The Continuity of Care Department, which houses the social workers and discharge planners, is gifted with a sum of money every year to help. Now, as opposed to setting up a separate food bucket, if you will, we can get a little bit of extra cash from that entity, if needed. So in that way, all employees who contribute to the fund are helping to combat food insecurity in the community."

Penka said the success of the food closet has inspired the Health Equity Committee to consider similar initiatives. A "blessing box" is in the works, a walk-up resource for people who need supplies, food or even medical supplies.

"That project is in the works, and we're hoping to have that completed this fall on the hospital campus," she said. "I think it's incredibly rewarding to be able to address the needs of the community and show how our organization cares for the community and is there to support people who need it."

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### NUTRITION EASY SUMMER RECIPES



# Chipotle Lime Salmon Tacos with Corn **Avocado Peach Salsa & Cilantro Yogurt Sauce**

Servings: 4 From: Ambitious Kitchen

### INGREDIENTS For the salmon

- » 1 pound salmon, cut into 1 inch cubes and skin removed
- >> 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- >> 1 teaspoon lime zest
- » ½ lime, juiced
- >> 1 ½ tablespoons brown sugar (or sub coconut sugar)
- >> 3/4 teaspoon chipotle chili powder
- >> 3/4 teaspoon cumin
- >> 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- >> 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- >> 1/4 teaspoon salt
- » Freshly ground black pepper

### For the avocado peach salsa

- >> 1 medium ripe but still slightly firm peach, diced
- » 1 ripe but still slightly firm large avocado, diced
- >> 1 large ear corn, kernels cut off (about <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup corn)
- » 2 tablespoons finely diced red onion
- » 1/2 jalapeno, seeded and diced (reserve other half for slicing and garnishing)
- » 1 tablespoon finely diced cilantro
- >> 1/2 small lime, juiced
- » Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### For the sauce

» Spicy cilantro yogurt sauce

### For serving

- >> 8 soft corn tortillas
- » Extra thinly sliced jalapenos >> Extra cilantro
- » Shredded red cabbage

### INSTRUCTIONS

1: Make your cilantro yogurt sauce. Set aside in the fridge until you are done and ready to put it on your tacos.

2: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

3: In a medium bowl, add cubed salmon, avocado oil, lime zest, lime juice, brown sugar, chipotle chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper; toss well to combine the salmon in the seasonings. Add the salmon cubes to the baking sheet and spread out evenly. Bake for 15-20 minutes.

4: Make the avocado peach salsa: Place all ingredients in a medium bowl and mix to combine. Cover and place in the fridge until ready to use.

5: Char your tortillas if you'd like, then top each with salmon cubes, cabbage, peach avocado corn salsa mixture, extra thinly sliced jalapeños and a drizzle of cilantro yogurt sauce on top plus extra cilantro. Enjoy! Serves 4; 2 salmon tacos each.



### **Greek Chicken** Kabob

Servings: 6 From: Damn Delicious

### INGREDIENTS

- >> 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- >> 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- >> 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- >> 1 teaspoon paprika >> 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- >> 2 teaspoons dried basil
- >> 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- >> 3 cloves garlic, minced
- >> 1 shallot, diced
- » Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- » 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch chunks

### INSTRUCTIONS

1: In a medium bowl, combine 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, paprika, oregano, basil, thyme, garlic, shallot, 1 ¼ teaspoons salt and 1 ¼ teaspoons pepper.

2: Stir in chicken until well combined; marinate for at least 2 hours to overnight, turning occasionally. Drain the chicken from the marinade.

3: Thread chicken onto skewers. Brush with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil; season with salt and pepper, to taste.

4: Preheat grill to medium heat.

5: Add skewers to grill, and cook, turning occasionally, until the chicken is completely cooked through, reaching an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, about 10 minutes.

6: Serve immediately.







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### NUTRITION



### Zucchini, Corn, and **Shrimp Flatbread**

Servings: 4 From: Food & Wine

### INGREDIENTS

- >> 1 (8-ounce) container mascarpone cheese
- » 1 garlic clove, grated with a Microplane grater (<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> teaspoon)
- » 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided » 3 medium (8-ounce) zucchini, sliced lengthwise into
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch-thick planks
- » 2 (8-ounce) ears fresh yellow corn, husks removed » ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- » 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, divided, plus more for
- servin » 1 pound unpeeled raw medium shrimp (thawed if frozen)
- >> 4 (3-ounce) naan flatbreads (such as Stonefire)
- $\gg \frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon smoked paprika
- » Torn fresh basil, for garnish

### INSTRUCTIONS

1: Stir together mascarpone, garlic, and ½ teaspoon salt in a medium bowl; set aside. Toss together zucchini, corn, 1 tablespoon oil, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl.

2: Peel shrimp and devein. Using a paring knife, gently cut along back of shrimp, cutting threefourths of the way through, until you reach the tail. Toss together butterflied shrimp, 1 tablespoon oil, remaining <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a medium bowl. Brush both sides of flatbreads evenly with remaining 2 tablespoons oil.

3: Preheat grill to high (400 to 500 degrees F). Place corn on oiled grates; grill, uncovered, until corn is bright yellow and evenly charred, about 10 minutes, turning occasionally. Add zucchini, shrimp, and flatbreads during final 5 minutes of corn grilling time; grill, uncovered, until shrimp are just pink on each side, about 1 minute and 30 seconds per side; zucchini is charred and just tender, 1 to 2 minutes per side; and flatbreads are lightly toasted on bottoms, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer corn to a cutting board, and transfer zucchini, shrimp, and flatbreads to a baking sheet. Cut corn kernels from cobs; discard cobs.

4: Reduce grill temperature to medium (350 to 400 degrees F). Stir corn kernels into mascarpone mixture in medium bowl until combined. Spread about <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup corn-mascarpone mixture over grilled side of each flatbread. Top evenly with zucchini and shrimp. Sprinkle evenly with smoked paprika. Grill flatbreads, covered, until bottoms are lightly toasted, 2 to 3 minutes. Garnish with basil and additional pepper. Cut into planks and serve.

### MAKE AHEAD

Prepared shrimp and vegetables may be grilled up to 1 day ahead and kept covered and chilled before assembling and grilling flatbreads.







Prices vary by state. Options selected by customer; availability and eligibility may vary. State Farm, Bloomington, IL





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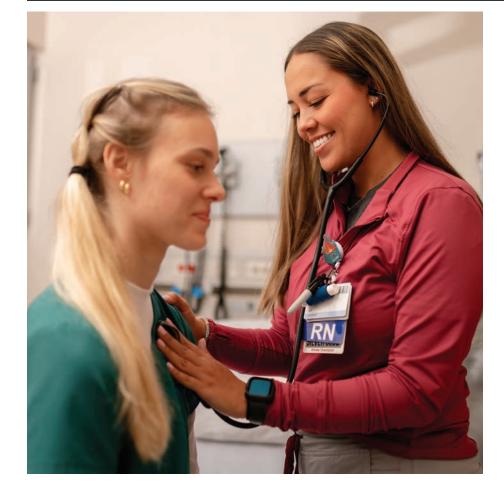
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# **Embodying Love**

The call to compassion and service and the healthcare profession's commitment to treating all with compassion and equality

### BY REV. RANDALL D. LUDWIG, DMIN, BCC | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty

and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "(Jesus replied), 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did unto me." Matthew 25:35-40

hese few words not only sum up what Jesus teaches but what he embodies: Love, Compassion, Service and Prayer. Jesus' ministry was embodied by his compassion for those in need.

This scripture could be interpreted as referring to charity or humanitarianism, but let us look at it in an even deeper way. The love and compassion that Jesus embodies goes beyond those things. God created the world out of an abundance of love, pouring it generously over all people all the time.

Because we are created in the image of God, we are called to give as God gives, freely and repeatedly. We give of ourselves freely whether or not we like what they stand for, whether or not we agree with them, whether or not they can pay us back. We give as has been given to us, without condition. We're not trying to earn points from God or anyone else. We're not trying to secure a place in heaven after we die. Showing love and compassion here on earth is what we were created to do.

Jesus did not pick and choose those he would help; if they asked for help, they received it. There is no judgment as to who is more deserving than another. There can be no speculation as to what someone will do with the element of care that is given to them; we are simply called to look into the faces of other people and there see Jesus' face. We are called to love everyone - no matter what.

Jesus could have carried out his ministry among the pretty people, or the wealthy people or the socially accepted people; instead, Jesus took to the streets. He talked to the poor, the lonely, the marginalized, treating everyone as an equal. He saw every human being as a creature of God.

Healthcare is one of the few professions that looks beyond the face and stature of its clientele when administering treatment and care. Passing judgment as to what brought on the unhealthy condition does not take away the ailment.

I think the lesson we all can learn from healthcare as well as from the gospel of Jesus Christ is this: Saying "I told you so" never solves a problem. God calls us to love one another unconditionally. Forgetting the past and helping someone find a brighter future is what we are called to do. It is how we embody the love of Christ in this world.

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