

Pulse

BAXTER HEALTH

SPRING 2025
VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1

MEDICINE, MARATHONS AND SWAT MISSIONS

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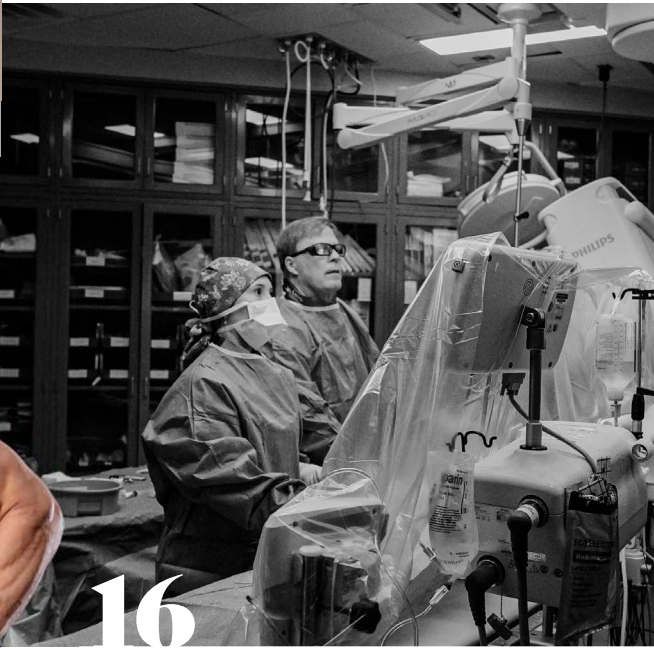
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SPRING IS IN THE AIR!

One of the best things about living in the Ozarks is the incredible natural beauty that surrounds us. This time of year, you only have to look out your window to see what I mean, as Mother Nature transforms from a frosty landscape to the gentle greens and bright blooms of springtime.

In this issue of PULSE, you'll find news about our Heartbeat of Hope: Heart and Vascular Expansion Campaign, which seeks to raise funds to expand our cath lab here at Baxter Health. A cath lab is an essential resource for patients experiencing cardiac issues, and with the addition of new medical personnel, we've outgrown our existing space. We salute the Baxter Health Foundation, which is once again stepping up to help us raise a portion of the necessary funds, and we thank everyone who has contributed so far.

We also spotlight members of our music ministry — those talented individuals who volunteer their time and skills to play the piano and other musical instruments at the hospital. It's heartwarming to read about their experiences, and we encourage anyone with a love of music to "join the band."

Every issue of PULSE is designed to accompany you on outdoor adventures, especially now as the weather warms and thoughts turn to fresh-air activities. If you're looking for inspiration to tackle that brisk hike or mountain bike course, look no further than Dr. John Chinchén—a remarkable athlete in his own right.

All this and much more make this first issue of PULSE in 2025 an informative and engaging look at what's happening here at Baxter Health. Thank you for reading, and may 2025 be your best year yet.

With gratitude,



RON PETERSON
President/Chief Executive Officer
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5 South Staff
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Acute Inpatient Rehab Staff
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Aleah Davis, LPN, 5 South
Alice Alba, ADN, RN, 4 South
Amanda Jones, NA, 4 South
Amanda Metzger, CNA, Float
Amber Riley, RN, Float
Amy Nelson, ST, Surgery
Andrea Lewis, ADN, RN, ICU
Andrew Nelson, PT, Physical Therapy
Angel Uchtman, BSN, RN, 4 South
Anita Williams, ADN, RN, 5 South (x2)
Ann Due, LPN, Pre-Op
Ann Stetler, CST, Outpatient Surgery Center
Ashley Glosser, ADN, RN, 5 South
Aurora May, ADN, RN, ARU (x3)

Barbara Amman, Lobby Desk Volunteer
Baxter Health Behavioral Health Geriatric Unit Staff
Becky Rose, CVM, Volunteer Services
Becky Lester, BSN, RN, Pre-Op
Betty Dutton, LPN, WNCC
Beverly Wyatt, CNA, 5 South
Branden Carnal, RN, 4 South
Brandon Gamelin, BSN, RN, ICU
Bud Skidmore, Bargain Box Volunteer
Casey Oliver, ADN, RN, ARU
Charles Zehm, MD, Anesthesiology
Charlyce Weeks, BSN, RN, 3 West (x2)
Cheryl Ammons, Bargain Box Volunteer
Christina Hardman, BSN, RN, ICU (x2)
Christina Hensley, RT, Respiratory Care
Christina Jones, ADN, RN, ARU
Cinda Pike, CNA, Float
Cindy Costa, CFRE, Foundation
Dan Saunders, Chapel Volunteer
Dana Luallen, LPN, 4 South

Daniel Alderman, MD, Radiology
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Dawn Schraeder, PT, Acute Inpatient Rehab
Dianne Steffen, ADN, RN, OPSC
Dmitriy Zak, MD, Highlands Oncology
Donald Byrd, CNA, ICU
Eleanor Davenport, BSN, RN, Infusion Clinic
Erin Hiester, BSN, RN, CCRN, Float
Ginny Lotito, SLP, Acute Inpatient Rehab
Halen Braun, BSN, RN, WNCC
Heather Morrison, ADN, RN, WNCC
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ICU Staff (x3)
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James Pinkston, RN/NREMT-P, Ambulance
Jason Lindsay, MD, Baxter Health Urology Clinic
Jean Anne Jackson, ADN, RN, Cline Emergency Center

Jeannie Lillo, BSN, RN, CCRN, ARU
Jecille Deles, BSN, RN, 4 South (x2)
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Jennifer Inskeep, RN, Hospice
Jeremey Holeyfield, ADN, RN, ONC, 5 South
Jessica Harden, RT(R)(MR), MRI
Jo Oakley, CNA, 5 South
Joella Chism, ADN, RN, Endoscopy
John Chinchin, MD, Cline Emergency Center
Johnathan Alt, NA, 5 South
Justin Chambers, CNA, 5 South
Kaitlin Clements, ADN, RN, ICU
Karla Tyler, Volunteer Services
Ken Holt, DO, Comprehensive Women's Clinic
Kevin Haarstad, Facilities Management
Kim Byrum, CNA, Acute Inpatient Rehab
Kim Peters, ADN, RN, Cline Emergency Center
LaRissa Arbuckle, BSN, RN, CCRN, ICU

Lily Browne, BSW, Continuity of Care (x2)
Lorie Davidson, APRN, First In Service Hospitalists
Maggie Carnahan, Bargain Box Volunteer
Margo Sisk, ADN, RN, ICU
Maria Lyuksytova-Price, MD, Intervention Pain Management
Mark Hill, CRNA, Anesthesiology
Mark Hill, CRNA, Anesthesiology
Marylynn Householder, Market Street Clinic
Melisa Renfro, BSN, RN, ONC, 5 South
Melissa Dirst-Roberts, MD, First In Service Hospitalists
Michael Weed, Paramedic, ER/Ambulance
Miguel Rodriguez, APRN, 3W/First In Service Hospitalists
Mikayla Neil, NA, 5 South

Miriah Grayham, ADN, RN, 4 South
Montana Moore, Telemetry Technician, 4 South
Newana Hale, ADN, RN, Cardiac Diagnostic Testing
Paige Galloway, 4 South
Paige Singleton, ADN, RN, ICU
Physical Therapy Staff
Randy Fowler, Paramedic, Ambulance
Rebecca Carol Baxter, BSN, RN, Acute Inpatient Rehab
Reppell Diabetes Clinic Staff and Volunteers
Robyn Coker, BSN, RN, PST
Robyn Ford, ADN, RN, ARU (x2)
Roger Tilley, Paramedic, Ambulance
Ron Pacheco, BSN, RN, ICU
Sacha Mcgee, ADN, RN, Cardiac Diagnostic Testing

Samantha Fry, LPN, 5 South
Sami Johnson, ADN, RN, INPT, WNCC
Sandy Skidmore, Bargain Box Volunteer
Sarah Edwards, Foundation
Sarah Smith, APRN, Cline Emergency Center
Sarah Wright, BSN, RN, ARU (x2)
Schliemann Center Staff and Volunteers
Sharon Lack, MA, Gastroenterology Clinic
Stefany Isham, Schliemann Center
Stephanie Leckert, RT, Respiratory
Stephen Mayrell, Bargain Box Volunteer
Sue Rodden, MSN, RN, Continuity of Care

Tamme Conner, CRT, Respiratory Care (x2)
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AWARDS

A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE

BAXTER HEALTH EARNS INPATIENT QUALITY INCENTIVE AWARD FOR OVER 10 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO HEALTH CARE EXCELLENCE



Baxter Health has been honored with the Inpatient Quality Incentive (IQI) Award by Arkansas Medicaid and the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC) in recognition of its ongoing commitment to improving health outcomes. This award celebrates Baxter Health’s decade-long participation in the IQI program and its consistent efforts to enhance patient care for Arkansans. Established in 2006 through

a partnership between Arkansas Medicaid, AFMC, and the Arkansas Hospital Association, the IQI program was designed to evaluate and improve hospital care quality across the state. Since its inception, Arkansas Medicaid has provided financial incentives to hospitals that demonstrate measurable improvements in patient health outcomes. “Baxter Health is honored to receive the Inpatient Quality Incentive Award,”

said Rachel Gilbert, MSN, RN, VP/ Chief Nursing Officer. “This recognition reflects the dedication and hard work of our entire team, who consistently strive to provide the highest level of care to our patients. Together, we are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of those we serve at Baxter Health.”

(Pictured from left) Tammy Penka, MSN, RN, Director of Quality, and Angel Strain, MSN, RN, Process Improvement/Implementation Specialist

MOVERS AND NEWCOMERS



DEBRA WILHITE, APRN
BAXTER HEALTH CARDIOVASCULAR CLINIC

Baxter Health welcomes Debra Wilhite, APRN, to Baxter Health Cardiovascular Clinic. A board-certified nurse practitioner, she joins a team of esteemed cardiologists and NPs. Debra previously practiced at Access Medical Group in Mountain Home and has experience in family medicine, urgent care, and orthopaedics. She began her career as an ICU charge nurse and has been a nurse practitioner for 25 years. Outside work, she enjoys camping, the lake, and time with family, including her dog, Callie.



TIMOTHY ERIC BOWEN, MD
BAXTER HEALTH CARDIOVASCULAR CLINIC

Baxter Health welcomes board-certified interventional cardiologist Timothy “Eric” Bowen, MD, to Baxter Health Cardiovascular Clinic. With over 25 years of experience, he specializes in preventing, diagnosing, and treating cardiovascular diseases. Dr. Bowen previously served as Cardiology Medical Director at National Park Medical Center and practiced at Conway Heart Clinic and CHI Cardiology. He is now accepting new patients in Mountain Home and will see patients monthly in Ash Flat, Mountain View, and Harrison.



JAMIE LEACH, LMSW
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Baxter Health welcomes Jamie Leach, LMSW, as the Behavioral Health and Community Relations Specialist. Jamie brings extensive experience and a strong commitment to mental health. She previously served as a behavioral therapist at Chenal Family Therapy and held roles in Baxter Health’s Behavioral Health, First Step, and Hospice of the Ozarks. Jamie earned her MSW from the University of Central Florida. She enjoys concerts, hiking, kayaking, and time with her son. She looks forward to expanding behavioral health services at Baxter Health.

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For questions regarding eligibility, payment options or account details, please contact Baxter Health Patient Financial Services at 870-508-1080. Financial counselors are available to assist you Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Fridays, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Take advantage of this opportunity to reduce your balance and save on medical expenses today!



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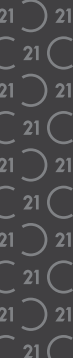
Baxter Health proudly marked the completion of the Cline Emergency Center remodel and expansion with a public ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, February 13, 2025. The event, held in the Cline Emergency Center Lobby, celebrated a significant investment in enhancing emergency care for the community.

For decades, the Cline Emergency Center has been a trusted provider of high-quality emergency care. Thanks to the generosity of Baxter Health Foundation donors, the remodel has expanded and modernized the facility, adding new patient rooms, rapid care rooms (RCR), trauma rooms, waiting areas, and a more efficient check-in process. These upgrades ensure a faster, more comfortable experience for patients and families seeking emergency care.

"This milestone represents our ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional patient care," said Ron Peterson, Baxter Health President & CEO. "This remodel is a testament to our dedication to improving the patient experience, and we are incredibly grateful for the support of our community and the Baxter Health Foundation, whose generosity made this transformation possible."

The expanded Cline Emergency Center now offers greater capacity, improved patient flow, and enhanced treatment areas, all while maintaining the compassionate, high-quality care that Baxter Health is known for.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured a walk-through of the newly remodeled lobby, videos showcasing the upgraded patient rooms and waiting areas, and light refreshments for attendees. The event served as a moment of celebration, highlighting Baxter Health's continued commitment to innovation and patient-centered care.



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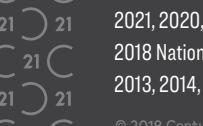
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CALENDAR

MARCH-JUNE 2025

11

of April
Mruk Family Center on Aging Parkinson's Awareness Event, will be 9 a.m. to 2p.m., Friday, April 11. The event will include discussions with Dr. Tim Paden and neurologist Dr. Alan Diamond, a Rock Steady Boxing glow-in-the-dark workout, speaker panel, educational booths, and more.

7

of June
Peitz Cancer Support House 25th Anniversary and National Cancer Survivors Day celebration, will be 9 a.m., Monday, June 7.



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 Wednesdays at MFCOA, 9:15 a.m.

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

Bingocize®, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m., It's bingo, exercise, health education, and a whole lot of fun!

Parkinson's Carepartner Support Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 10 a.m. Please call for specific location.

Dementia Care Partner Support, Monthly, 4th Thursday 1-2 p.m.

Schliemann Center for Women's Health Childbirth, Monthly, 2nd Saturday, 9 a.m.

Mommy & Me Support, Monthly, 3rd Thursday, 10 a.m.

Breastfeeding, Monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 3 p.m.

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

Low Impact Cardio Fit, Wellness Education Center, Tuesdays, 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.

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, 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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THE BEAT GOES ON

NEW CAMPAIGN TO
EXPAND CATH LABS

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE





“The cath lab will impact everyone in our community. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Arkansas and across the nation. This facility will impact our friends, our family, our neighbors and the communities we serve. This speaks to so many people, and we’re thrilled to help make it happen.”

— Sarah Edwards

Baxter Health has grown into one of Arkansas’ most remarkable health care success stories, thanks to leadership’s unyielding focus on providing a level of expertise in medicine and services not commonly found outside big cities.

One challenge of this success is the ongoing need to keep up with demand while maintaining a high level of medical services—from personnel to technology to bed space.

A new capital campaign, Heartbeat of Hope, is a prime example of this, as Baxter Health looks to expand its cath lab space to meet the growing demand for various services.

“Since I arrived here in 2017, this area has seen tremendous growth. We’ve had an influx of new residents and an increase in patient volumes,” said Dr. Patrick Tobbia, an interventional cardiologist. “We’ve added several providers since then, including two new vascular surgeons, multiple new cardiologists and two radiologists who all perform procedures.”

For the uninitiated, a cath lab is a hospital facility where minimally invasive procedures stabilize patients in various states of distress—from treating heart attacks to repairing faulty heart valves to performing

cardiothoracic and radiological procedures. Baxter Health’s growing team of medical professionals must currently compete for space in the hospital’s two dedicated cath labs and one hybrid cath lab, creating a logjam for patients in need of treatment.

“If you do the math, you can see there’s a bottleneck,” Tobbia said. “It’s not that the doctor can’t perform the procedures—it’s that there’s not enough cath lab space. That means patients have to wait for a procedure slot.”

Making matters worse, patients who need these procedures often don’t have time to wait, Tobbia said, making the lack of capacity a life-or-death issue.

“If somebody’s having a heart attack, for example, we can go through the radial artery or the femoral artery using the cath lab’s X-ray-guided machinery,” he said. “We pass catheters all the way up to the heart. Or, if their arteries are blocked in the leg, we can guide toward the carotid. If there’s a blood clot or a blocked artery, we can unclog it using the cath lab.”

“We do this day in and day out because we have a 24-hour STEMI program, an acute heart attack program. Anybody in the community who arrives within 90 minutes of a heart attack goes straight to the cath lab, where we save their life. Previously, these patients would have needed emergency

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“ This is truly a life-saving facility. Expanding this facility is a crucial step toward advancing cardiac care in this community. It won’t be the last thing we build, but it will help us improve care for everyone in this area. It’s humbling to see the community’s response. It shows a lot of grace and understanding for why this needs to happen.”

— Dr. Patrick Tobbia

bypass surgery—or they simply wouldn’t have survived.”

Recognizing the need for additional space, hospital leadership asked the Baxter Health Foundation last fall to develop a fundraising plan for expanded facilities.

“This project wasn’t in our 2024 plans at all, but when the hospital came to us, it was clear that with the addition of new physicians, expansion was something we’d need to get done in 2025,” said Sarah Edwards, foundation executive director.

Even with a clear need, the ask was steep—\$2 million of the \$4.5 million total cost. Edwards said it’s the largest capital campaign the foundation has ever undertaken, surpassing the last major campaign in 2021–22, which raised a then-record \$1.7 million.

The foundation team wasn’t alone in embracing the challenge. As the year came to a close, major donors stepped up in a big way during the campaign’s quiet phase.

“We conducted the quiet phase over the last couple of months in 2024, and we’ve had a fantastic start. We ended 2024 with \$1.5million raised,” Edwards said. “That just reiterates how amazing our community is. Whenever a need arises in health care, they always step up.”

The campaign received an extra boost when it secured a challenge grant that

will award an additional \$500,000 if the \$2 million goal is met by this fall. Edwards said between that incentive and the importance of the project itself, she’s excited to see the response when the campaign shifts to public appeals.

“The cath lab will impact everyone in our community,” she said. “Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Arkansas and across the nation. This facility will impact our friends, our family, our neighbors and the communities we serve. This speaks to so many people, and we’re thrilled to help make it happen.”

Tobbia said as a physician, he’s grateful to serve a community that understands the importance of medical facilities and is humbled by the response so far.

“This isn’t about cosmetics or a vanity procedure room. This is truly a life-saving facility,” he said. “Expanding this facility is a crucial step toward advancing cardiac care in this community. It won’t be the last thing we build, but it will help us improve care for everyone in this area.”

“It’s humbling to see the community’s response. It shows a lot of grace and understanding for why this needs to happen. Many of our donors have had friends, family and neighbors whose lives were saved in the cath lab. People here understand just how important this facility is.” ■

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RENAISSANCE MAN

PHYSICIAN LEADS
EXCITING LIFE INSIDE
AND OUTSIDE THE ER

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

Dr. John Chinchén, a Baxter Health Cline Emergency Center physician, is a true modern-day Renaissance man. In addition to being a physician, the Michigan native holds a world record, served on a SWAT team, is a state champion shooter, an Ironman triathlete, a hockey player, an ultramarathoner, a husband and a father—all by the age of 31.

When asked what inspired him to lead a life straight out of an action movie, he simply shrugged.

“It’s hard to say, man,” he said. “I just knew what my passions were and what my interests were, and I was like, ‘How can I combine all of these things and do them at the highest level?’ I just always wanted to do the most that I could with my life.”

HOCKEY DREAMS AND A CHANGE IN PLANS

Chinchén’s story begins with hockey, a sport he loved from an early age. He excelled on the ice and dreamed of playing professionally. His passion was so consuming that he admits he didn’t always focus on academics. Still, his grades were good enough to get him into college. But that wasn’t his priority—his goal was the NHL.

“My friends and family were like, ‘You need to have a backup plan. Why don’t you at least apply to one school?’” he said. “Thankfully, I got into the University of Michigan before I went off to play junior hockey in Traverse City. I ended up getting injured, so it was a good thing that I had that backup plan.”

After realizing business school wasn’t for him, Chinchén pivoted to medicine. He earned a neuroscience degree from the University of Michigan, then attended Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine in Kalamazoo.

EMERGENCY MEDICINE AND TACTICAL TRAINING

Medical school alone would have been demanding enough, but Chinchén continued to push himself. He served as a tactical emergency physician for the Wayne County SWAT team, where he had full arrest authority while providing medical support during active shooter incidents, barricaded gunmen situations and high-risk search warrants.



“The most important thing for me is getting satisfaction from actually helping people and making their lives better.” – Dr. John Chinchén

“I thought if I could get set up with a SWAT team, it’d be a great way to give back to my community and serve these guys if one of them got shot or injured or blown up—or even if they just sprained an ankle,” he said. “When I was still in residency training, I went through a full tactical training course for medics and a few docs who wanted to do the same thing I was doing.

“I came back from training in California, and I mean, it was full body armor, pistol, rifle—everything, just geared up like one of the guys on the team. Obviously, I wasn’t the first man in kicking the door down because that wasn’t my job—I was there to intervene medically. But I also needed to be able to protect myself in very high-risk situations. We did some high-level drug busts.”

FINDING HIS CALLING IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Chinchén was drawn to emergency medicine early on. His mother has been an ER nurse for decades, and job shadowing during his undergraduate years sealed his decision.

Before arriving in Mountain Home, he trained as an emergency medicine resident at Ascension St. John Emergency Department in Detroit—one of the busiest single-site Level 1 trauma centers in the Midwest. He said the fast pace and dynamic nature of each shift make emergency medicine the perfect fit for him.

“It’s just so engaging. You never know what’s going to walk through the door. Every day is different. Every patient is different,” he said. “EMS would call in saying they were bringing in somebody who’d been stabbed a couple of times, and we’d all rush into the trauma bay. Then literally right after that, the doc would walk into the next room, and it’s a little kid with a sore throat. From the first time I shadowed in college, I was just super enthralled. I was like, ‘Man, I can’t believe this is even a job.’”

During his residency, Chinchén demonstrated exceptional dedication,

setting a record for the number of procedures performed. He frequently stayed late after shifts and came in on his days off to gain additional experience in resuscitation and the management of critically ill patients. His commitment to honing his skills underscores his drive to be an excellent physician.

PUSHING THE LIMITS OUTSIDE THE ER

Chinchén’s drive to challenge himself extends beyond medicine. In college, he discovered Ironman triathlons and transformed himself from a hockey player who couldn’t swim into a finisher of one of the toughest endurance races in the world.

Marathons eventually weren’t challenging enough, so he moved on to ultramarathons, completing 50-mile races. And then there’s his world record—in 2022, he set a Guinness World Record for the fastest mile run while carrying a 60-pound rucksack, clocking in at 6:14. A British paratrooper broke his record the following year.

BALANCING FAMILY, MEDICINE AND ADVENTURE

With all of his high-intensity pursuits, it’s hard to imagine how Chinchén balances his career, training and family life. But his most significant recent achievement isn’t a race or a tactical mission—it’s fatherhood. He and his wife welcomed their first child, an 11-month-old daughter.

As for what’s next, the thrill-seeker says his extracurricular activities have only strengthened his passion for medicine and helping others, especially those experiencing some of the worst moments of their lives.

“I started my journey into medicine because I wanted to do the most that I could with my life after medical school,” he said. “The most important thing for me, professionally speaking, is that I get a lot of satisfaction out of actually helping people, making their lives better and truly making a difference.” ■

A photograph of four women in a room with a large window showing a scenic view of a forested hillside. On the left, a woman in a red sweater stands next to a black Baldwin grand piano. In the center, an older woman in a light green jacket sits on the piano bench, her hands on the keys. To her right, another woman in a blue top and black vest stands with her hands clasped. On the far right, a woman in a brown top and a colorful scarf sits on a grey ottoman. The background shows a lush green hillside under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

PLAY ME A SONG

VOLUNTEER MUSICIANS BRING JOY TO
BAXTER HEALTH PATIENTS, FAMILIES

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

“Just to see how it touches people’s souls—to see how they react—it purges their feelings. A hospital can be a very sad place, and I’ve had people, even staff, come up to me and say, ‘I was really sad, and this music lifted me up. Thank you so much for playing.’ It just makes people happy.” – Kate Rubadue

The mountains of Baxter County are famous for many things, not least of which is a rich musical heritage. From the folk and bluegrass originating in the hills and hollows to professional touring musicians performing at the local college’s concert hall, music is as much a part of the community as sparkling lakes and stunning sunsets.

Of all the music that fills this region, one performance resonates deeply with its listeners. At regular intervals throughout the week, melodies drift through Baxter Health thanks to a dedicated group of volunteer musicians who play for the benefit of healers and those healing.

“I can’t tell you how many times people have come up to me and shared a story about what I was playing and what it meant to them,” said Jeannie Alley, who started the volunteer program. “They’re so grateful for this ministry.”

A native of the area, Alley left the state for five decades before returning in 2017. During her years away, she taught music in Dallas, where she witnessed firsthand how music could work its magic on young people. Upon returning, she was inspired to bring that same uplifting power to Baxter Health’s staff, patients and visitors.

“When I moved back, I met with the hospital folks and said, ‘We have a wonderful hospital, especially for a town this size—it’s really something,’” she said. “But I also said, ‘There’s one thing we don’t have, and that’s music, and music is healing.’ Thankfully, they agreed, and we got started.”

This wasn’t just an idea—Alley was so convinced of the community’s need for live music that she made a personal investment to help launch the program.

“I bought a piano in Springfield—a Baldwin grand, six feet three inches—and donated it to the hospital,” she said, a note of pride in her voice. “A lot of people call it

a baby grand, but it’s not. It’s a real grand.”

As she predicted, word spread quickly. When she started recruiting musicians, she found no shortage of willing participants. People eagerly signed up for weekly time slots.

“I started out just wanting to stay involved in music a little bit. I wasn’t playing at church at the time, and I wasn’t doing much of anything,” said Betsy Johnson, a former music teacher. “When Jeannie asked me about coming to play and volunteering, I thought, ‘Sure, I need something else to do.’ But my goodness, it has evolved into so much more than that.

“One of the things I appreciate so much about our hospital is that nobody tells us what type of music to play. We don’t have any restrictions, so I can play the music that means the most to me, which is hymns and worship music. When I sit at a piano or a keyboard and start playing, I forget where I am. I’m just lost in what I’m doing.”

Kate Rubadue, a retired software engineer and Arkansas transplant, is another regular performer. A native Californian, she came to Mountain Home with a long history of volunteering in nursing homes and other care facilities, often incorporating music. She recently published a book about her experiences titled *Blessed Moments as a Volunteer in Music Ministry*.

“It’s just so rewarding,” she said. “Music touches everybody—it’s a universal language. I’ve played in Alzheimer’s units where residents are slumped in their wheelchairs, their heads hanging low. The staff wheels them up to the piano, and when I start playing, they lift their heads, and their eyes open wide.

“Just to see how it touches people’s souls—to see how they react—it purges their feelings. A hospital can be a very sad place. I’ve had people, even staff, come up to me and say, ‘I was really sad, and this

music lifted me up. Thank you so much for playing.’ It just makes people happy.”

The music ministry has also taken some unexpected turns. Debbie Fink, another volunteer musician, jumped at the chance to participate but wanted to contribute in her own way—by playing the harp instead of the piano.

“I felt like a harp is a good way to help people through difficult times, to touch them,” she said. “I’ve seen it so often. People will walk by while I’m playing and smile, or they’ll stop and talk, or they’ll ask questions about the harp.”

Fink doesn’t just play at the hospital—she also performs at the local hospice and even has gigs at a nearby restaurant. No matter the setting, she said, harp music weaves a certain spell over people. But the hospital, she added, is a unique place for music.

“There was one lady from Arizona,” Fink recalled. “She sat and listened for a while, then left, and then she came back and sat down again. Before I finished, she was in tears. She came over to me and said, ‘That is my favorite song. You touched my heart.’ That kind of thing happens a lot.”

As for the program’s founder, Alley has had to cut back on her playing due to health issues. Still, she said she will continue to play as often as possible, knowing how much it means to those who hear it.

“There are so many stories,” she said. “I was playing ‘Tomorrow’ from *Annie*, and this woman came up to me and said it was her daughter’s favorite song. She had died a year ago. The woman said, ‘I’m here today because my husband is having a heart procedure. I was sitting here drinking my coffee, talking to her, saying, ‘I can’t believe you’re not here with me today while your dad is having this procedure.’ And just then, you started playing Tomorrow.”

“When I say this is a ministry, that’s exactly what it is.” ■

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WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE



Baxter Health has joined an elite group as one of only three medical institutions in Arkansas to receive the highest Pediatric Readiness designation from Arkansas Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC).

In January, the hospital announced that the Cline Emergency Center had been awarded the Gold Tier designation for Pediatric Readiness by EMSC's State Partnership Program, officially naming it a Pediatric Ready Hospital. This designation is given to health care institutions that provide the highest quality care for children in emergency situations.

"Cline Emergency Center has found a passion for improving pediatric care," said Sarah Dewey, RN, PECC. "All of the diligent work provided by our team—including respiratory, EMS, pharmacy,

med/surg, and OB/nursery—has allowed us to set a higher standard of care for our pediatric patients."

ADDRESSING A NATIONAL CONCERN

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) reports that access to high-quality pediatric emergency care has reached

crisis levels in some parts of the United States. The organization cites the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, which found that the nation's 5,000 emergency departments handle more than 141 million patient visits annually, with approximately 20% of those visits coming from children younger than 15.



“As an emergency department that treats patients of all demographics, we are raising the standard for care delivery to a new level of excellence in pediatric care. Receiving this recognition is such an honor.”

— Sarah Dewey, RN, PECC





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“Children have unique anatomic, physiologic, developmental, and medical needs that differ from those of adults. These differences must be considered when developing emergency services, training ED staff, and stocking equipment, medications and supplies.”

– American Academy of Pediatrics

Despite this, 70% of children needing emergency care are treated in emergency departments that lack a physician or nurse pediatric emergency care coordinator, according to a recent issue of “Pediatrics,” the AAP’s newsletter. In other words, about half of the nation’s ERs do not have a dedicated pediatric care plan or staff trained specifically in pediatric emergency medicine.

“Children have unique anatomic, physiologic, developmental and medical needs that differ from those of adults,” the AAP wrote. “These differences must be considered when developing emergency services, training ED staff, and stocking equipment, medications and supplies.”

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

To address the growing number of pediatric patients at the Cline Emergency Center, Baxter Health formed a specialized team, led by Dewey and Caleb Pingel, MD, FACEP, Cline Emergency Center medical director, to enhance pediatric emergency care. The team also included: Kelly Dicks, MSN, RN, Cline Emergency Center director; Robyn Pyle, RN; Sierra Small, APRN; and Amorie Smith, APRN.



Together, they reviewed policies, procedures, equipment and medications in collaboration with other departments to improve pediatric care and ensure the highest quality service for young patients.

After a year of dedication and strategic improvements, Baxter Health’s Cline Emergency Center met and exceeded all criteria, solidifying its position as a leader in pediatric emergency care in the region.

“As an emergency department that treats patients of all demographics, we are raising the standard for care delivery to a new level of excellence in pediatric care,” Dewey said. “Receiving this recognition is such an honor.” ■

(Below, from left) Caleb Pingel, MD, FACEP, Cline Emergency Center medical director; Amorie Smith, APRN; Sarah Dewey, RN, PECC; Kelly Dicks, MSN, RN, Cline Emergency Center director; Robyn Pyle, RN; and Sierra Small, APRN



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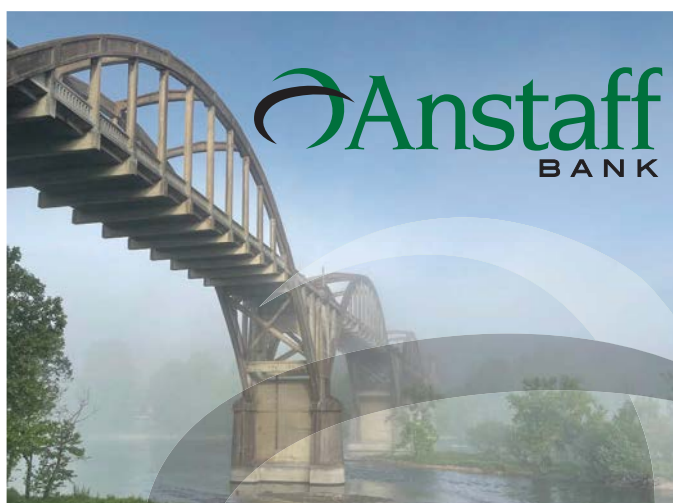


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NUTRITION

SPRING SALAD RECIPES

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FRESH AND FLAVORFUL

THREE LIGHT AND EASY SALADS FOR EVERY OCCASION

Easy Spring Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette

Adapted from a recipe by Oh Sweet Basil

This delightful spring salad combines crisp asparagus, peppery radishes, sweet peas, and fresh herbs, all enhanced by roasted chickpeas, creamy feta cheese, toasted pine nuts, and hard-boiled eggs. Tossed with a bright and tangy lemon vinaigrette, it's a perfect way to enjoy the flavors of the season.

- INGREDIENTS**
For the Dressing
- » ¼ cup pine nuts
 - » 1 bunch asparagus, tough ends removed and cut into 1-2 inch pieces
 - » 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
 - » 6 cups mixed baby salad greens (such as romaine, spinach, arugula, chard)
 - » 4 radishes, thinly sliced
 - » ½ English cucumber, thinly sliced
 - » ¼ cup fresh herb mix (mint, basil, parsley, chives), chopped
 - » ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)
 - » 1 cup roasted chickpeas (store-bought or homemade)
 - » 4 hard-boiled eggs, quartered

- For the Lemon Vinaigrette**
- » ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 - » 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 - » 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - » 1 teaspoon lemon zest
 - » 1 small shallot, finely minced
 - » 1 tablespoon champagne vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
 - » Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1:** Prepare the lemon vinaigrette in a small bowl. Whisk together olive oil, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, lemon zest, minced shallot, and champagne vinegar until well combined. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside.

- 2:** In a dry skillet over medium heat, toast the pine nuts, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fragrant (about 3-5 minutes). Remove from heat and set aside.

- 3:** Heat a small amount of olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add asparagus pieces and sauté for 3-4 minutes until tender-crisp and bright green. Remove from heat and set aside.

- 4:** Assemble the salad in a large bowl. Combine mixed baby greens, sautéed asparagus, thawed peas, sliced radishes, cucumber, fresh herbs, crumbled feta (if using), and roasted chickpeas.

- 5:** Drizzle the prepared lemon vinaigrette over the salad and gently toss to coat evenly.

- 6:** To serve, top with toasted pine nuts and quartered hard-boiled eggs. Serve immediately and enjoy!



Green Goddess Pasta Salad

Adapted from a recipe by Food & Wine

This pasta salad is not your average side dish—it's a vibrant, herbaceous delight featuring a creamy green goddess dressing made with fresh basil, avocado, and Greek yogurt. Tossed with tender pasta, crunchy veggies, and a sprinkle of Parmesan, it's the perfect dish for a picnic, potluck, or easy weeknight dinner.

- INGREDIENTS**
- » 12 ounces short pasta (fusilli, rotini, or penne)
 - » 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
 - » 1 cup snap peas, sliced
 - » ½ cup diced cucumber
 - » ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
 - » ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

- For the Green Goddess Dressing**
- » ½ avocado
 - » ½ cup Greek yogurt

- » ¼ cup fresh basil
- » 2 tablespoons olive oil
- » 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- » 1 garlic clove
- » Salt and pepper, to taste

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1:** Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain and rinse with cold water.

- 2:** In a blender, combine avocado, Greek yogurt, basil, olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic. Blend until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

- 3:** In a large bowl, toss the cooked pasta with cherry tomatoes, snap peas, cucumber, and basil.

- 4:** Pour the green goddess dressing over the salad and mix well.

- 5:** Garnish with Parmesan cheese and serve chilled or at room temperature.

Lightened-Up Greek Yogurt Chicken Salad Sandwich

Adapted from a recipe by Damn Delicious

This Greek Yogurt Chicken Salad takes the beloved classic and gives it a lighter, tangy spin by swapping out mayo for protein-rich Greek yogurt. Combined with tender shredded chicken, crunchy celery, grapes for a touch of sweetness, and a hint of Dijon mustard, this salad is as satisfying as it is wholesome. Serve it on whole-grain bread, in a lettuce wrap, or on its own for a filling and nutritious meal.

- INGREDIENTS:**
- » 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken
 - » ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
 - » 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 - » ½ cup diced celery
 - » ½ cup halved grapes
 - » ¼ cup chopped almonds
 - » Salt and pepper, to taste
 - » Whole-grain bread or lettuce wraps, for serving

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1:** In a large bowl, combine Greek yogurt and Dijon mustard.

- 2:** Stir in the shredded chicken, celery, grapes, and almonds.

- 3:** Season with salt and pepper to taste.

- 4:** Serve on whole-grain bread, in a lettuce wrap, or enjoy on its own.

These three salads are as versatile as they are delicious. Whether you need a quick meal prep option, a vibrant side for a gathering, or just a way to enjoy fresh seasonal ingredients, they are sure to become go-to favorites. Try them out and bring a burst of freshness to your table! ■



THE SWEETEST SOUND

THE POWER OF A NAME

HOW REMEMBERING SOMEONE'S NAME CAN FOSTER CONNECTION AND REFLECT GOD'S LOVE

Have you ever entered a room full of strangers—a place or event where you know no one, and no one knows you? As my grandmother would say, “You feel as welcome as a hair on a biscuit.” Sometimes, instead of being seen as a potential friend, we are perceived as intruders. Cliques exist everywhere—in neighborhoods, at work, and even in some churches. So, how do we find our place?

Several years ago, I took a Dale Carnegie leadership course based on his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. The entire premise of the course revolved around two key principles:

- 1. *Understanding that listening is different from just hearing. Truly listening to what someone has to say is half of a successful conversation.*
- 2. *Remembering someone's name. What a simple yet profound concept!*

Have you ever thought about that? Your name is uniquely yours. It sets you apart from everyone else. When someone—especially a new acquaintance—remembers your name, looks you in the eye, and calls you by it, it is one of the sweetest and most enduring sounds in any language.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10, verse 3, Jesus says:

“...*He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*”

How incredible it is to know that we are not just another lamb in the flock. Jesus sees us, recognizes us, and calls us by name. He knows his sheep, and his sheep know him. Jesus sees himself in the Father, and he sees himself in us. To some degree, we bear his mark—his love—and that makes us precious to him.

He is like a husband waiting in a crowded shopping mall, watching as people pass by. When his wife appears, he knows her instantly. He recognizes her features, sees in her eyes a reflection of his own love, and delights in her. She is the only one he embraces.

It is difficult to overstate what a tremendous privilege it is to be known personally, intimately, and lovingly by the Son of God. It is a precious gift he gives to all his sheep.

What a unique opportunity we have to give that same precious gift to someone we don't know—simply by remembering their name. ■

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