

THE Caring CONNECTION

Summer 2020



Dear BVRMC Community,



As our team is putting this newsletter together a month prior to you receiving it, we do not know what will be happening around Storm Lake, Iowa, and the United States. Of course, we hope that you are reading this while enjoying some of your favorite summer activities.

If we have learned anything from the past few months, it is how important it is to have a strong community that comes together and supports each other during times of crisis.

I want to thank the school systems for finding innovative ways to reach kids while being at home. To the Storm Lake Police Department, Buena Vista County Sheriff's Office and other local authorities for having our back when we need you and finding creative ways to keep people at home.

Thank you to all essential service workers out working long hours so we can have much-needed food, supplies and, of course, toilet paper. I think everyone has a newfound respect for the mail carriers, cashiers, grocery store and meat packing employees in our community.

Thank you to the community for staying home, we know it was (or still is) very hard. To have many milestone events like birthdays, school activities and family gatherings cancelled was difficult.

Most of all, I want to thank my BVRMC team. Simply amazing. I do not know what the future holds but I know that I want all of you by my side during any crisis. From the nurses who worked long hours not knowing who would walk through the door, our doctors who lead the charge and to so many employees who pivoted on a dime to ask, "How can I help?" We strive on having a great culture for employees to work, and you really see who rises to the top when the crisis is real and not a drill.

Again, since we don't know what will be happening when you read this newsletter, the most important message we want to send is how thankful we are for being your community hospital, the patients we care for and the employees and doctors we get to work with.

Thank You,

Rob Colerick

CEO, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center



Emergency Services thanks our community.



Dr. Garrett Feddersen and his mom, Nancy Feddersen, designed a new pattern for gowns together.

Dear Community,



As I'm writing this, I know our hospital is doing everything we can to take care of you during this scary time. These are the moments we train for, but hope we never have to actually live through.

I want to tell you I am very proud of the BVRMC team. We started preparing months prior to any COVID-19 cases coming through our doors. Supplies, staffing and workflows were under constant scrutiny where our team kept asking, "How can we do this better? How can we do this faster? How can we help more people?"

While we asked these questions, the answers and guidance from national agencies often changed just as we were printing off the new policy. To constantly keep a team of 400-plus employees up-to-date and ready to serve patients is not an easy task, but we really tried and hope the results show in the care we provided.

The way this hospital and our community has come together is why I choose to practice medicine in a small town. You are my family and friends, and I appreciate knowing you beyond just another number.

Sincerely,

Dr. Garrett Feddersen

Medical Director of Emergency Services



Purchasing Crew



Lab Staff

The Power of Positivity
What a Good
Laugh
Can Do for You

Even in the most trying of times, infusing some humor into your day is one of the best ways to keep calm and carry on. When you laugh, your brain releases endorphins, the body's natural mood boosters. Laughing can also boost your respiration and heart rate, like a mini aerobic session. A good laugh ripples through your body, causing muscles to tense and then r-e-l-a-x.

Laughter is also good medicine for the soul. What better way to defuse fear and anxiety than with a giggle? Even a forced smile has been shown to raise spirits. Here are five tips to help you add more laughter to your life:

1 Find the humor in a bad situation. There are genuinely sad situations that aren't laughing matters, but many have an ironic or ludicrous side. Next time you feel stress rising, take a minute to think about the irony and allow yourself to laugh over the things you cannot control.

2 Remind yourself of funny moments from the past. Perhaps a friend told you a great joke, your kids did something amusing or you watched a funny movie that had you in stitches. Call on these moments and relive them to relieve sadness or anger.

3 Connect with people who laugh a lot. Laughter is contagious, so make a point to chat or interact with positive people who aren't afraid to laugh at themselves or find humor in life's situations.

4 Get a pet. Animals are great for boosting happiness and encouraging laughter because they love to play and they do amusing things without even realizing it.

5 Join a group that's built for laughs. Start a "funny movie night" with friends or try a virtual happy hour with co-workers.

Dear Community,



I've often seen that the toughest times bring out the best in people, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception to the rule. Both our employees and our community have pulled together to get us all through this. Within the hospital, we have seen department lines dissolve as everyone works together to support each other and the work that needs to be done. It meant so much to the departments that would be hardest hit with patient surge to have staff from other departments stepping in to offer help when they could have easily turned away.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of our amazing community and staff by offers to sew face masks and protective gowns, or to use 3D printers to make face shields that would offer another layer of protection to our frontline staff. Knowing that we were going to have adequate PPE (personal protective equipment) did so much for employees who were nervous about coming to work.

In addition, we received generous donations of food from several local restaurants that did not bat an eye when we requested that items be individually packaged for the safety of our staff who are BVRMC's most valuable asset.

The toughest thing by far we had to do as caregivers was implementing the visitor restriction. Separating our patients from their loved ones goes against everything that we are, but it was necessary to protect the patients when they were at their most vulnerable. Families, while worried, were gracious and understanding that this was necessary when we assured them that we would provide the best care possible for their loved ones.

Thank you,

Sarah Naberhaus

Director of ER/Ambulance



VT Industries of Holstein, IA, donated homemade masks to BVRMC.



One of our BVRMC nurses wearing an Alliant Energy donated shield.



BVRMC drive-through station for testing.



Social distancing from the nursery.

Dear BVRMC New Moms and Dads,



Thank you for your understanding of our COVID-19 procedures during one of the most special days of your life. It hurt us that we couldn't let your family and friends visit and meet your new baby as you imagined, even though we knew it was for your safety and ours. We hope your First Embrace Obstetrics main memory is the first time you held your baby and not all the abnormal procedures happening around you.

Thank you for choosing BVRMC for the most important day of your life.

Trish Winger

Director of First Embrace Obstetrics



Coping in Stressful Situations

Everyone responds differently to stress brought on by a disease outbreak, financial crisis, natural disaster or other traumatic events. Health care workers and first responders, older and at-risk adults, people with mental or behavioral health conditions and anyone experiencing high levels of anxiety and fear may respond strongly to the stress of a crisis.

Intensely stressful situations take a toll on the body, particularly when difficult circumstances extend over a long period. When the body goes into “fight or flight” mode, it quickly floods the bloodstream with cortisol and adrenaline. For short durations, the stress response can help you deal with difficult events, and once they are over, your hormone levels return to normal. However, the long-term activation of the stress response can disrupt your body’s systems.

Symptoms of stress often include:

- Anxiety
- Back pain
- Depression
- Digestive problems — constipation, diarrhea or upset stomach
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia (trouble sleeping)
- Palpitations (the feeling that your heart is racing)
- Shortness of breath
- Stiff neck
- Weight gain or loss

Managing Stress

The first step in coping with stress is recognizing when you’re experiencing it. Next, you need to choose healthy ways to deal with your stress. You may want to try several techniques to find the ones that work best for you. If you can’t avoid the event or thing causing your stress, change how you react to it:

- **Concentrate on the present.** A lot of stress builds up when we worry about what happened in the past or will happen in the future, especially things we can’t control. Concentrate on present conditions you can change.
- **Tackle problems one at a time.** It’s easier to work out a solution to one problem than to many. Isolating problems also tends to make each one less intimidating.
- **Ask for help from family, friends or professionals.** People who care about you are usually willing to lend a hand when you need it. They may also give you a different perspective on your troubles.



“Most people don’t think to exercise during a stressful time, but it’s very beneficial. Take time to exercise; afterwards you will feel more energized, sleep better, etc. After you get some good sleep and feel more energized, it’s way easier to eat well. Stressful eating is not a good outcome for anyone.”

— Evan Franzmeier, BVRMC Fitness & Health Center Manager

- **Set realistic goals.** Take small concrete steps to deal with tasks instead of overwhelming yourself with goals that are too far-reaching for busy times.

Taking Care of Your Body

Stress often suppresses your immune system, so make sure to give your body every chance to stay healthy. Take care of your body and mind to alleviate some of the negative effects of stress.

- **Make time for things you enjoy.** Get away from your daily stresses with hobbies or other activities that help you unwind.
- **Plan relaxing activities.** Focus your mind and body on a calming activity. Relaxing may be as simple as deep breathing, petting your dog or taking a walk in the woods. Other relaxation strategies include yoga, tai chi and meditation.
- **Exercise and eat a balanced diet.** Exercise releases your nervous energy, helps boost the immune system and improves sleep. It also distracts you from the stressful situation and reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol. A balanced diet ensures that your body gets the nutrients it needs to fight off disease.
- **Rely on social support.** The support that family, friends and co-workers have to offer may be crucial to reducing anxiety. Social involvement with others will also help you avoid isolation and depression, conditions that can increase stress, especially at this time. Call a friend or set up a video chat to stay connected with others.

Estimada Comunidad,



Muchas gracias por su comprensión durante estos tiempos difíciles. Lo que esta sucediendo en nuestra comunidad y en todo el mundo es muy diferente a cualquier otra cosa. BVRMC les agrédase por apoyarnos en estos tiempos difíciles. Por favor quédese en casa, juntos podemos evitar la propagación de El COVID-19 y proteger a los más vulnerables.

Blanca Villegas

Certified Medical Interpreter



Dr. John Pymm and Blanca Villegas giving a live interview in Spanish on Storm Lake Radio.

Dear BVRMC Community Volunteers,



I always tell people I have the best job because I work with great people like you. Thank you to everyone who reached out to ask how they could help our BVRMC team.

- Multiple people sewed homemade masks used in nonclinical settings.
- A team of seamstresses came up with a pattern and sewed washable gowns just in case we ever ran out of those supplies.

By volunteering your time, you showed your faith in us as your hospital. I really look forward to seeing you in your normal volunteer roles.

Thank you,

Mary Drey

Volunteer Services Coordinator



Kathy Pomrenke



Susan Fitzpatrick's husband modeling new hospital gown.



Kathryn Donahue



Patti McKenna



Linda Brooks delivered 145 handmade masks to BVRMC. Many ladies from Freedom Quilts in the Fonda area made the masks that are available to employees and patients.



Pharmacy Information

For your safety, during the COVID-19 pandemic, BVRMC Pharmacy is offering curbside pick-up, mail and delivery.

Thank you for your understanding during this time of change.

Jeff Jorgensen

BVRMC Pharmacist

Dear Community,



Marketing experts say people are bombarded by up to 10,000 marketing messages a day. It's a constant effort to provide BVRMC information in a way you can receive and understand. Added to the challenge are the multiple languages spoken in our community.

Thank you to major employers that helped by educating your employees on BVRMC information and COVID-19 education. You helped us reach people in many languages.

I want to thank our local media for helping to get our messages out. Our local newspapers helped by printing our press releases. Storm Lake Radio was always available to conduct interviews and think outside-of-the-box on creative ways to entertain people stuck at home.

Thank you to our Facebook fans who helped by liking and sharing our daily updates. Social media only works when you help make our content popular.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *The Caring Connection*. We also hope the next issue is able to return to focusing on our standard health education.

Thank you,

Katie Schwint

Executive Director of Community Development



Our Safety and Employee Health Team. Left to right: Quin Kelly, Health & Safety Coordinator; Kysa Radke, Health & Safety Assistant, CNA; and Jerri Louis, Employee Health & Infection Preventionist.

Maurices in Storm Lake donated \$5,000 for the COVID-19 cause.



Dr. Feddersen being interviewed by Chris Boeckman at Storm Lake Radio.



Diagnostic Imaging Team



Making rainbow hearts for the Bistro.



BVRMC Bistro.

Ways to Have a Staycation at Home

Are your most recent travel destinations Las Kitchen, St. Sofa and El Porch? With social distancing, school closures, changes in work arrangements, travel restrictions and stay-at-home guidelines keeping us home more, you may feel like you need a getaway more than ever. Even if you can't travel far from home right now, a little creativity can go a long way toward boosting your spirits. The following staycation ideas can help.



Keep calm and carry on. Aaahhh, taking a deep breath can help ease tension. Create a home spa day with a stress-relief candle, relaxing music, gentle yoga poses, a bubble bath or foot soak, skin and hair treatments — whatever may make you feel better inside and out.



Get your groove on. Going stir-crazy and want to be more active? Liven things up by learning a dance routine. Perhaps you've always wanted to master the dance to Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Now's your chance! Check out online videos to learn other popular dances.



Let your creative juices flow. A day of art therapy can do wonders for thinking differently. Allow your imagination to run wild with paint, construction paper, stickers and other art supplies you might have stored away. Have some coloring books and colored pencils on hand? Coloring is a relaxing activity for all ages. Want to get the whole family involved in a project? Challenge all family members to do a self-portrait or one of a family pet!



Go on virtual tours. If your planned vacation was canceled or postponed, there are ways to satisfy wanderlust with the benefits of no packing, lines and crowds. Several famous tourist attractions from around the world offer tours you can take with your computer or smart device. Museums include the American Museum of Natural History, The British Museum and the Louvre. Observe favorite animals with virtual views of the San Diego Zoo and Monterey Bay Aquarium. Take your online journey further by learning about photography techniques or foreign language tips that can enhance your next real-world travel experience.



Refresh and reorganize. Keeping your home clean and clear of clutter can help you feel more relaxed, like walking into a tidy hotel room after a busy day. Consider rearranging furniture for a new perspective. Tackle closets and other storage areas to see if you have items that can be sold or donated. Organize pictures and other memorabilia in photo albums or scrapbooks. Often these are things we'll get to "later," so being able to get them done now can be a great feeling of accomplishment.

Keeping You Connected

Staying in tune with your physical and emotional well-being is important, and we're here to help. Visit bvrnc.org for the latest updates on how we are responding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear Community,



I reflected many hours before beginning to write my feelings regarding the COVID-19 experience we are currently living through. Where will we be by the time this publication is published and distributed for you to read? During my employment at BVRMC, I have always been impressed by the dedication and community that is felt within our hospital walls. We certainly are family caring for family. My only regret is not allowing as much family to visit during your loved ones' illness as we attempted to keep our staff and other patients safe.

During our preparation to care for patients, the staff worked diligently to accommodate the changes that were necessary for the safety of themselves and patients. I am tremendously impressed by the community response to our needs for PPE and other supplies. Many times supplies showed up on our doorstep before we even knew to ask for them. BVRMC is an amazing health care organization and we remain committed to be the hospital of choice to care for all in our community.

Thank you for all of your support as we continue this journey and return to a normal state.

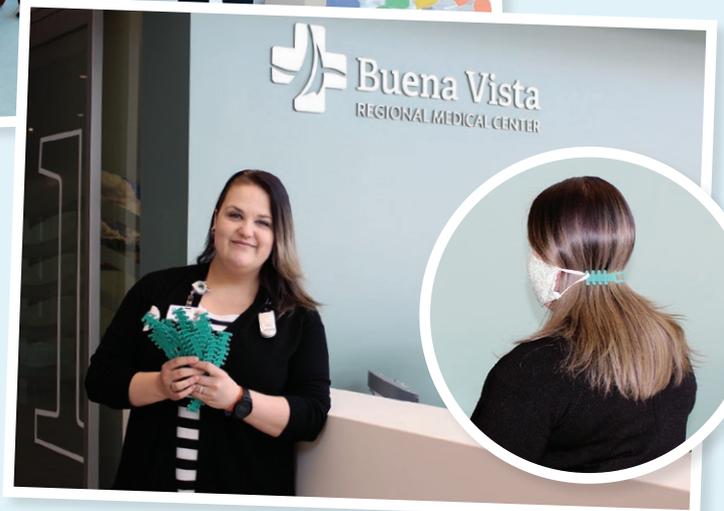
Deb Colshan

Director of Medical Surgical/ICU

Lynn Overmohle, BVRMC Patient Access Coordinator, shown with "Ear Savers" she and her husband printed on their 3D printer.



Medical Surgical team with BVRMC caring hearts.



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Thank
you

BVRMC COMMUNITY!

We are truly grateful for the outpouring of support by generous community members who wish to assist BVRMC during this time of uncertainty.

Iowa is a special place where we take care of each other. Thank you for your commitment to our dedicated physicians, employees, patients and community. We are honored to serve you!

– *All of us at BVRMC*

