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National awareness day shines spotlight on rural health

National Rural Health Day is observed every third Thursday in November to bring awareness to the triumphs and challenges of rural health care. As one of the largest rural, integrated health systems in the country, Marshfield Clinic Health System will bring attention to its own rural-focused efforts on November 19.

National Rural Health Day was started in 2011 and brings “much needed attention to the ongoing efforts to communicate, educate, collaborate, and innovate to improve the health of an estimated 57 million rural Americans,” according to The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health.

This day of recognition has turned into a broader movement that engages policymakers, rural health stakeholders, and media to shine a light on rural health care.

“Rural Americans face a number of unique, interrelated challenges when it comes to their health and accessing health care,” said Dr. Susan Turney, Marshfield Clinic Health System CEO. “For more than a century we have seen it as our great honor to be part of addressing these challenges and providing excellent care to our families, friends and neighbors. The rural way of life is really who we are.”

On the Health System’s social media channels on November 19, you will see a series of posts that describe challenges unique to rural health care or that disproportionately impact rural communities. These posts will also include specific solutions the Health System has enacted to address these challenges.

You will see these posts on the main Health System Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as National Farm Medicine Center's Facebook page. For more information on National Rural Health Day, click here.
Dr. Eric Rogers, an emergency medicine physician at our Marshfield Medical Center-Eau Claire hospital, has been named Chief Medical Informatics Officer (CMIO) for Marshfield Clinic Health System. Dr. Rogers was the first doctor to join the Eau Claire hospital emergency department (ED) when it opened in July 2018 and has since been serving as department chair. He graduated from the State University of New York – Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, New York, in 2011, and completed his residency in emergency medicine at Albany Medical College – Medical Center in Albany, N.Y., in 2014.

Dr. Rogers will be transitioning into the CMIO role with the support of interim CMIO, Dr. Mark Van Kooy.

As CMIO, Dr. Rogers will serve as a partner to the medical staff and clinical and operational leaders in making the best use of the electronic health record (EHR) and in taking a broader view to understand how technology in a health system aligns with system strategic goals. It's a role that Jeri Koester, Chief Information Officer, sees as critical partner to the Health System information technology (IT) organization.

"I am thrilled Dr. Rogers has accepted this role," said Koester. "I look forward to our future work together."

Although the more immediate focus is on successful implementation of One System, the EHR initiative, the Health System’s continued transformation through acquisition and new construction are also drivers for developing the CMIO role.

“We’re opening new hospitals in numerous locations and our health IT is the glue that holds it all together,” said Dr. Rogers. “Going forward, this framework is so important. We need to get it right or be left behind.”

Selection for the CMIO role involved several actively practicing Health System physicians, as well as physician and clinical leaders. The process included Drs. Peter Humphrey, Kori Krueger, Michelle Manalang, Narayana Murali, Brandon Parkhurst and Michael Schmidt, with Pam Jochimsen, Jeri Koester and Cindy Strenke. Qualities sought in a strong candidate for this position include having the trust and confidence of their physician colleagues, the ability to operate in a complex organizational environment, and to have an interest in expanding their role and contributing to the success of the organization.
“There’s no tech background required and that can be learned,” said Dr. Bill Melms, Chief Medical Officer. “This is more about something we can’t (teach), which is the ability to connect with fellow providers and understand their needs as it relates to the health IT and patient care. We had a number of great internal candidates and believed we couldn’t make a wrong choice. I congratulate Dr. Rogers and deeply thank all who participated in the interview process, both interviewers and candidates.”

Providers really have a vested interest in their successful use of the EHR, said Dr. Rogers. “This is the future. Informatics is here to stay,” he said. “I am glad to have this opportunity, to have a voice and get involved. I can see the opportunities, too, that will come through implementing Cerner.”

Dr. Rogers has opted to not hang up his stethoscope entirely. He plans to still continue with his ED practice in a more limited capacity, which will help him maintain his perspective as an EHR end user, a viewpoint that will be helpful in solving provider IT concerns and problems.
Health System nominated for two IT-based awards

Marshfield Clinic Health System recently was nominated as finalists in the 2020 Technology Business Management (TBM) Council Awards for two separate categories: Application & Service Management Excellence and Thriving Through Disruption.

The Technology Business Management Council, a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to advancing the discipline of TBM, announced the finalists on November 12.

“I want us to take a moment to recognize the accomplishment of being finalists this year in two categories,” said Sara Scheu, Director of IT Business Management & Shared Services Information Services at Marshfield Clinic Health System. “We have not been part of the finalist group in any past awards, so this is a big accomplishment. Even more, we were nominated next to international multi-billion dollar organizations. I continue to be grateful for the work this team does in the discipline of Technology Business Management – incredible efforts and results.”

TBM provides technology leaders with standards and validated best practices to communicate the cost, quality and value of IT investments to their business partners. In turn, IT is able to drive optimization for the Health System.

“Think about it similar to managing household finances and balancing a checkbook” said Cindy Wildish Rasmussen, Solutions Manager at the Health System. "You need to know what you are spending your money on to ensure those dollars spent are providing something of value. In the case of the Health System, that means that they align with the goals of the enterprise."

The adoption and implementation of the TBM practices has had significant impact on the Health System. Positive impact includes the reorganization of the IT department and direct alignment to our business structure and needs.

In 2018, the Health System completed the build of an application portfolio. Each solution owner and analyst now has insight into the entirety of the applications owned by the organization. Previously, this was not the case because not all applications were known.

“Our leadership in IT saw this as valuable and put resource behind it," said Monica Braun, Information Services, TBM manager. "Backing of this concept is what made this happen quickly and got us on the national and world map. We dedicated resources to the app portfolio and TBM in general. It can't be done without that support at executive level."
For the Thriving for Disruption award, it was a new award with the COVID-19 pandemic influencing many health systems, including Marshfield Clinic.

TBM and finance teams at our Health System collaborated to generate a tracking process through our finance system for COVID-19 related expenses. The TBM team has a lot of experience with tracking costs and this was a quick move to help the whole organization. Second, within a week, the TBM team created a dashboard to highlight IT costs. The initial dashboard showed what we were spending and who was working on COVID-19 related projects. It also illustrated the quick efforts by IT to create a platform for our physicians to provide virtual visits during the pandemic.

“The Thriving Through Disruption award nomination came from working through Apptio, and with our IT ramping up telehealth and work-from-home efforts, and reporting those costs and all of the changes regarding that,” Braun said. “It speaks to our ability to work together in extenuating and tough circumstances.”
Turkey dinner take and bake orders from Marshfield Medical Center

Leave the Thanksgiving meal cooking to the culinary professionals in Food & Nutrition Services at Marshfield Medical Center in Marshfield this year. Order from a special Thanksgiving Take Me Home order form, which can be found at the main entrance to the Four Seasons Café.

Drop your order off and pick up it order up at the Four Seasons Cafe. Use the above order form with all the details. You also may call our Seasons Catering service at 715-387-7631 if you work off shifts and do not have access to the Four Seasons Café.

Orders must be dropped off in the designated location in Four Seasons Café by:

- Friday, November 20 for pick up after 1 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25.

Diwali celebration comes to Marshfield Medical Center-Weston

The Indian Society of Central Wisconsin celebrated Diwali by giving back to health care workers at Marshfield Medical Center-Weston.

The organization annually holds a major event in central Wisconsin to recognize the Hindu celebration of triumph and light. The pandemic thwarted this year’s event, but the group refocused on helping our health care workers. Festive decorations and food were brought in for the late afternoon and evening shift, Saturday, Nov. 14 in Weston.

“I don’t think this could’ve happened at a better time especially when we are dealing with a pandemic,” Hospitalist Keshani Bhushan, M.D., told WAOW Ch. 9 during an interview. Diwali is known as the festival of lights. That light is being reignited in our health care workers as they work tirelessly to keep themselves and our community safe.

“This is a moment where we can reflect on all the hard work that’s being
put in, but be hopeful and while we face this challenge, there’s light at the end of the tunnel," said Elvis Peters, M.D., Cardiology.
In memoriam: Dr. David J. Ottensmeyer, former Clinic president

Dr. David J. Ottensmeyer, 90, a Marshfield Clinic physician during the 1960s and '70s who also served as Clinic president, died on Nov. 8.

A private family service will be Wednesday, Nov. 25, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Huntsville, Alabama. Laughlin Service Funeral Home and Crematory, Huntsville, is in charge of arrangements. For Dr. Ottensmeyer's full obituary, please click on this link.

He constantly strove for knowledge and excellence and Frederick "Fritz" Wenzel recalls the man he describes as a visionary. Wenzel, retired Clinic executive director and Marshfield Clinic Research Institute director, joined the Clinic during Dr. Ottensmeyer's tenure.

“I knew David very well,” Wenzel said. “His primary clinical role was as a neurosurgeon and later he became very interested in clinic management and administration.

“David was exceptional and well thought of by his colleagues, a very important figure in the evolution of the Clinic's history,” Wenzel said. “We talk about Doctors Lewis, Lawton…but seldom do you hear about David. He was a real change agent and I had great admiration for him. He was a visionary. He looked toward transition at the Clinic.

“At the same time he was president, there was the move from downtown to the Oak Avenue location. There were a lot of arguments about that. He had to lead the discussions. He was the one who successfully navigated some difficult waters. That's a piece of history very few remember.”

Wenzel recalls a union election with Dr. Ottensmeyer as Clinic spokesperson. “There were certain things you could say and some you couldn't, but he did a very good job of talking to employees,” Wenzel said.

“I also had the opportunity to work with him when the Clinic went through a rough transition on the management side as the Clinic hired its first outside Clinic manager. That was a very interesting time for the Clinic. It was moving culturally from one mode to another under his leadership and it happened quite smoothly.”

David J. Ottensmeyer was born in 1930 in Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated from Denfeld High School, Duluth, Minnesota; attended the University of Minnesota and graduated in 1951 from what is now the University of Wisconsin-Superior with a bachelor's degree in biology, chemistry and physics. He served in the U.S. Air Force, flying air refueling tankers from 1952-55. After medical school, he joined the Army National Guard, was a medical officer in Wisconsin from 1960-75 and staff surgeon in New Mexico from 1975-76. He was an executive medical
officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Medical Corps from 1977-90, reaching the rank of Colonel.

A UW-Madison graduate, he completed his residency in neurosurgery in 1965 at University Hospitals, Madison.

He joined Marshfield Clinic and was on staff at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, from 1965-76. He later chaired the Neurosciences Department and Division of Neurological Surgery, and was medical director and Clinic president/CEO.

In 1975, he completed a program in health services management at Harvard Business School and in 1976 became president/CEO of Lovelace Medical Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, until 1986.

He also was a member of American Group Practice Association's Board of Trustees from 1978-84 and was its president from 1983-84. He was a charter member and regent of the American College of Physician Executives and was its president from 1984-85.

He and the former Mary Jean Langley were married June 30, 1954, and celebrated 66 years of marriage. In retirement, the Ottensmeyers moved to Huntsville, Alabama.

Survivors besides his wife include their daughters, Kathryn Joan Ottensmeyer (Hobby Presley), and Martha Langley Wilson (Peter); four grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; nephews and a niece. He is predeceased in death by his parents, two sisters and a nephew.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his name may be made to the University of Wisconsin-Superior Foundation or the Greater Huntsville Humane Society.