

# Wellness HUB

SUMMER 2024

6

INFUSION SERVICES:  
ELEVATING THE  
PATIENT EXPERIENCE





# A LETTER FROM THE CEO



Greetings from Your Community Hospital,

As I review the content of this edition of the Wellness Hub Newsletter, it brings to mind the many changes that we have experienced here at the hospital. First, there are many different eras of construction melded together to form one medical hub. From one end of the block to the other, community health services are provided at the hospital and clinic for your convenience.

As with any long-standing service organization, the people are what makes the hospital, and over the years we have had some outstanding board members, providers, hospital leaders, and staff members pave the way toward what we are today. Time and time again I hear stories of the friendly, caring atmosphere that is experienced with each encounter. That is something that we can all be proud of!

The one common thread in all the individuals who have come before us is their commitment to providing local health care services to our local community. I can assure you that your current leadership team is hard at work evaluating services, exploring ways to increase access, and recruiting providers to join our team. As part of our strategic plan, we work every week on initiatives to improve our community connections. Our pledge to you is that we will continue to focus on personal, high-quality health services for all that seek care at RCH.

Our current newsletter focuses on a couple of our key departments that provide personal touches to our patients. Case Management is an often unrecognized valuable cog in the wheel to help to certify your inpatient hospital stay with your insurance company and then to offer assistance with after-hospital

support. We have the luxury of spending one on one time with our patients, working to meet their needs for post-hospitalization. The Infusion Department is another example of personal service. Our staff offer emotional support and highly skilled infusion services in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. It's the personal touch that makes a difference in what could be a very trying time.

Carter Gallick, PA has come back to XCEL Orthopedics. Previously working with Dr. Delisca as an athletic trainer, he recently became a licensed Physician Assistant and has rejoined us in that capacity. We are delighted to have Carter back with our orthopedic team and providing clinic services in our two locations.

In addition to the commitment to our patients, we have a strong sense of commitment to our community in and out of the hospital. It is our philosophy to give back to local organizations and support them with staff volunteers or financial donations. Our staff continue to make us proud as they support endeavors like the Mobile Market, Care Closet, and Habitat for Humanity Stud-a-Thon. The generous spirit of our team is a reflection of the guiding principles of the visionary community members who chartered the hospital as an independent community hospital those many years ago. The hospital stands as a comfort to the community in its time of need and is a major pillar in the greater community.

I hope as you read about our current happenings and reflect on our history in Rochelle, you will share the same pride that the staff at RCH feel when they come to work each day. We are lucky to be here and our dedication is to you, our neighbors and friends.

Karen Tracy, RN, Chief Executive Officer

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

# AMY HATFIELD AND JACKIE KOENIG, CASE MANAGERS

Left: Amy Hatfield, RN  
Right: Jackie Koenig, RN

In their role as case managers for Rochelle Community Hospital, Amy Hatfield, RN, and Jackie Koenig, RN, coordinate care for every patient, from the initial hospital visit until discharge. Located on the Medical/Surgical floor, their office is a “hub of the hospital,” a safe, comforting, and welcoming space where patients, families, and healthcare staff come together to promote healing and recovery.

Working closely with everyone in the hospital from hospitalists, nursing staff, and CNAs to the finance and insurance departments, Amy and Jackie holistically assess a patient’s situation to determine an appropriate discharge plan.

### Case Management Department

At RCH, both Amy and Jackie have extensive experience as floor nurses, allowing them to use their medical expertise in their case management role to see the “big picture” of each individual patient’s situation.

On any given day, they may speak with the Family Healthcare Clinic about advanced directives, home health services, or community resources; chat with Orthopedics about the swing bed program; or answer calls from the ER to help with advice or counseling. “No day is the same,” says Amy. “That’s part of what I like about this job. Every day is different. Every patient is different.”

This multidisciplinary approach to health care is what creates RCH’s patient-forward, compassionate environment. Importantly, Amy and Jackie stay with their assigned patient throughout the entire process, creating a truly comprehensive health care experience.

When they are assigned to a patient, Amy and Jackie go into the patient’s room with the physician to meet with the patient and family to go over the care plan. As nurses, they “fill in the gaps” during the care process. For example, they can look at patient charts and catch things that might fall through the cracks, such as missing labs or referrals. Physicians also educate them “in the moment,” such as why they are choosing a particular treatment. Their medical

experience and qualifications then allow them to share this information in a way that patients and families can understand.

Communication is essential in this role, says Jackie, because they work with every department in Rochelle Community Hospital. “It’s a true partnership,” says Amy. “We all work together really well as a team to come up with the best plan of care for the patient.”

Once they build a patient’s case and come up with a discharge protocol, the final part of the case managers’ job is to present the plan to patients. It is 100% the decision of the patient, family, and caregivers whether they follow the plan, explains Amy, but “we recommend what’s best and why. It is our job to guide, teach, and educate.”

### Compassion & Community

Beyond clinical care at the hospital, Amy and Jackie handle “behind the scenes” administrative work such as prior authorizations, Power of Attorney (POA)

paperwork, and advanced directives. They help patients and families navigate the complexities of insurance, including Medicare, and provide guidance for transition into a larger hospital system, assisted living, or hospice.

Without a dedicated social worker at the hospital, Amy and Jackie also “dip their toes” into social work roles to aid their community. For example, despite not having on-call duties, Amy may field calls from the House Supervisor during nights, weekends, or holidays to address urgent matters that arise. In one particular instance, Jackie recalls donning their “detective hats” to find an advocate for a hospice patient without family, ensuring the patient’s peace and dignity.

Leading with empathy and compassion, Amy and Jackie are a community lifeline during stressful and uncertain times.

### Amy Hatfield, RN, Case Manager Coordinator

A lifelong resident of Rochelle (she was born at the hospital!), Amy Hatfield, RN, has worked at RCH for 13 years, 11 of them as a case manager. She was drawn to the position because she was looking for a new way to support her community. Her work schedule is a great fit for her family, and she loves the challenges of the constantly-evolving field of health care. Although she misses nursing, Amy loves using her hands-on experience and medical knowledge in a different way: “It’s nice to know that you’re making a difference in people’s lives right here in your own community.”

### Jackie Koenig, RN, Case Manager

Before becoming a case manager, Jackie Koenig, RN, was an as-needed floor nurse at RCH for three years. She also was a high-acuity ICU nurse at UW Hospital (University of Wisconsin). Despite missing the adrenaline of being on the floor, she appreciates the work/life balance offered by this position and loves that she can still use her “medical brain.” Jackie, a resident of Rochelle, is especially grateful for the collaborative, supportive environment at RCH. “I also live in this community,” she adds, “and I really love that we serve and care for those in our community.”





# INFUSION SERVICES: ELEVATING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

In the Outpatient Infusion Services at Rochelle Community Hospital, we are dedicated to providing a safe, comforting space for patients who are undergoing treatments such as chemotherapy, iron therapy, steroids, antibiotics, Multiple Sclerosis medications, and numerous other services, including pump removal and wound care management.

Infusion Services is dedicated to improving the patient experience during a time filled with anxiety and fear of the unknown. In addition to personalized treatment, we're one of the only facilities in the area that accept outside doctors' orders for treatment.

If a patient in our community receives care at a larger facility in Chicago or at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, for example, their physician can set up treatment right here in our hospital. One of our staff physicians co-signs orders from doctors outside our system, allowing patients to receive their treatment locally instead of traveling out of town or even out of state. This option helps to alleviate some of the stress of undergoing infusion treatment, allowing patients

to focus on their wellbeing instead of the hassle of making travel plans.

Our commitment to care goes beyond medical treatment, such as with RCH's "All About Me" fund that provides monetary and other support to patients in Ogle County to help alleviate the financial worries associated with cancer treatment.

## Community Health & Wellbeing

One of the ways in which we prioritize the well-being and comfort of our patients is to create a warm and inviting environment. Our infusion room is equipped with five soft lounge chairs that can be partitioned with curtains. Many patients prefer having the curtains open, says Donna Williams, RN, Senior Infusion Nurse, so they can socialize with fellow patients and staff. For patients who prefer more privacy or who are unable to sit upright in a chair for extended periods of time, we also have a private room equipped with a bed.

Additionally, our staff establishes genuine connections and spends quality time with each patient. Each patient deserves undivided attention, and RCH staff ensures that patients feel informed and supported every step of the way. As one patient who expressed strong gratitude for such personalized treatment told Donna, "You really listened to me."

If patients have questions about their illness or diagnosis, Donna and her colleagues provide comfort by talking about what to expect during each step of their treatment, such as possible side effects, and suggesting ways to make them more comfortable. "We always take the time to explain things because there is a lot going on during treatment. It's nice to help them through their journey and try to make things as comfortable as possible for patients. I love it," shares Donna, whether that includes coming in on the weekend to remove a chemotherapy pump or keeping a patient's favorite drink in stock.

## Personal Infusion Journey

Donna, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2013 and underwent chemotherapy, speaks from experience when she says that patients at RCH's infusion department receive personalized care. Swiftly transitioning from a routine mammogram to surgery in less than two weeks, she received her first dose of chemo at a large hospital near her home, which she describes as a long, stressful process. After this experience, she chose to have her remaining infusion treatments at RCH, despite the 35-minute drive from home, because she was more comfortable and wasn't lost in the shuffle.



Donna Williams, RN, Senior Infusion Nurse

From her own experience, Donna also understands the emotions and challenges associated with acute and chronic illnesses. Speaking highly of her chemotherapy treatment as a patient at RCH, she explains that "it was inviting because you got to know the staff and other patients. For me, it was more comforting to be in this friendly environment. I felt like I was going to coffee klatch!"

Before transitioning into her role as an infusion lead, Donna was a floor nurse in ICU/Medical-Surgical and the stress lab at RCH. Assisting in the infusion room and experiencing patient care first-hand helped Donna discover her passion. She now primarily focuses on infusion, although she does continue to work as a back-up in the stress lab and Convenient Care (calling herself a "jack of all trades") because of her desire to positively impact the lives of others.

For Donna, helping patients in critical cancer treatment takes her full-circle back to her first rotation as a nursing student. Overcome with emotion and not knowing what to say to the patient, she ran out of the room in tears and even questioned her desire to be a nurse. "Now," emphasizes Donna, "here I am! I love it. It's nice to help them through their journey and try to make things as comfortable as possible for patients."

Referring to the staff-patient relationship in Infusion Services as "one big family," Donna notes that "we really get to know the patients, and they get to know us. You build this bond with the patients - There is a lot of comfort and trust involved in this relationship."



# ROCHELLE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL CHAMPIONS CAREER ADVANCEMENT



Rochelle Community Hospital offers an abundance of opportunities for professional growth and development, as exemplified by the journey of our own Carter Gallick, ATC, PA-C. Just a few years after joining the health care team at the hospital, Carter's career trajectory took a significant leap from Athletic Trainer to certified Physician's Assistant.

Starting in January 2021 as a certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) at XCEL Orthopedics at RCH, Carter demonstrated highly proficient skills in acute injury treatment and rehabilitation services. He also created meaningful connections with his clients in our community. Dr. Gadini O. Delisca, MD, board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon with XCEL Orthopedics, recognized Carter's potential early on, observing that Carter is "bright, hardworking, and has a lot of compassion."

Dr. Delisca quickly became a mentor and advocate for Carter. Although he thoroughly enjoyed his work as an athletic trainer, Carter expressed to Dr. Delisca his desire to gain more insight into the medical side of orthopedics. Dr. Delisca not only supported Carter's decision to learn more - he suggested that Carter attend school to become a certified Physician's Assistant and then return to start his career as a PA at XCEL!

"When Carter made the decision to pursue PA school after being an athletic trainer with our practice," explains Dr. Delisca, "I felt it would be a great fit for him. We are very pleased to have him on our team." For Carter, the decision to become a PA-C was easy, given his admiration for his role model: "While working as an athletic trainer, I always looked up to Dr. Delisca. I always wanted to mimic his knowledge and skill set."

Under Dr. Delisca's guidance, Carter has transitioned seamlessly into his role as a PA-C at XCEL Orthopedics,

where his responsibilities include a wide spectrum of patient care from assisting in surgeries to creating treatment plans. One of the most rewarding aspects of his new role, shares Carter, is to see his patients heal and thrive: "A big driving force for me is getting patients back to enjoying what they do in life."

Carter's remarkable evolution from certified Athletic Trainer to working with his mentor, Dr. Delisca, as a certified Physician's Assistant, highlights Rochelle Community Hospital's unwavering dedication to nurturing the dreams of our healthcare professionals. At the heart of our mission, we are committed to providing high-quality health and wellness services to our community, and we achieve this by helping our staff reach their full potential.



# RCH IN OUR COMMUNITY

## Northern Illinois Food Bank Mobile Market Pantry

At Rochelle Community Hospital, we sponsor the Northern Illinois Food Bank Mobile Market Pantry, providing a convenient location for the distribution of nutritious food to our area. Offering several Mobile Market Pantry events throughout 2024 decreases food insecurity, aligning with our continued investment in the health and well-being of our community. RCH is committed to improving the social determinants of health by offering access to high-quality health care.

Mobile Market's first date was March 12, 2024 and the next two are scheduled for June 6, 2024 and August 8, 2024



## Rochelle Middle School Builders Club



In March 2024, The Employer of Choice Team put together a Care Drive at Rochelle Community Hospital to support Rochelle Middle School's Care Closet by encouraging donations of basic essentials that go to students in need. Those essentials included shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body soap,



deodorant, brushes/combs, hair accessories, lotion, and feminine hygiene products, along with cash donations.

Thank you to everyone who donated and helped those kids who aren't able to get these items at home. We appreciate you!

## RCHA Sponsors Habitat for Humanity's Stud-a-Thon



Earlier this year, RCH made a difference in the lives of a Habitat for Humanity partner family by creating a message of hope, encouragement, or inspiration on their new home. RCH employees and the community were able to decorate five studs by signing their name, writing a heartfelt message, and/or offering



words of encouragement to the new homeowners. The studs were then used to help build the home. It meant so much to have the staff and community come together to support and encourage a local family and Habitat for Humanity. Thank you to everyone who participated!





Lincoln Hospital 1913 - 1942

## ROCHELLE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: AN EVOLUTION OF HEALTH CARE

In the heart of Rochelle, a beacon of health has stood the test of time, evolving with the community's needs and overcoming obstacles from the Great Depression to World War II.

“...the people of this community area, who, because of much personal effort and sacrifice of time and money, made the Rochelle Community Hospital what it is today, an asset to the community and a benefit to everyone.”

– Leslie E. Springmire, *Dedication, A History of Rochelle Community Hospital, 1990 and 1995.*

Rochelle Community Hospital's rich history began over 100 years ago, in 1913, when Dr. A.W. Chandler founded Lincoln Hospital in a downtown Rochelle apartment building. Changing hands when Dr. Louis Petritz purchased the facility in 1924, Lincoln Hospital operated successfully until it closed its doors in 1930

due to financial hardships brought on by the Great Depression. The area was without a hospital until March 1931, when resident Marie Talcott reopened the hospital and functioned as its Superintendent. Supply issues during World War II created operational difficulties, however, and Mrs. Talcott planned to close the hospital in 1942.

Spurred on by the collective desire for a permanent community hospital, Rochelle city government, including Mayor W.B. Henry, together with prominent local residents took over the hospital's lease and renamed it Rochelle City Hospital. To further establish permanency, Mayor Henry appointed a Board of Trustees and levied a tax to facilitate operations. The need for a new hospital building became apparent at this time and, again, was hindered by World War II instability and the lack of space on which to build.

Help arrived in the form of a generous gift from community leader Amelia McConaughy, who in 1942 sold the property on which RCH now stands today

to the City of Rochelle for the grand sum of \$1.00. With a new name and new location, the Rochelle City Hospital officially opened in 1945. But just 17 years later, the hospital required improvements and expansion to continue serving the growing population of our rural community.

### A Community Rallies

Over the next several years, Rochelle community members collaborated to retain healthcare services in the area. In 1964, following extensive deliberation and challenges due to lack of funds, the Rochelle Community Hospital Association was formed and became a legal entity in 1965. The Association acquired ownership and management of the hospital from the city and established a private, nonprofit hospital: Rochelle Community Hospital.

Despite securing the hospital, the Association still did not have enough money to keep the facility up and running. In addition to lack of funding, it was deemed necessary to have a separate hospital management system, which up to this time had been operated by the City Clerk. The City of Rochelle had sold the hospital to the Rochelle Community Hospital Association for \$1.00. Now operating under its new



1965. Not-For-Profit hospital board meets. The Association acquired ownership and management of the hospital from the city and established a private, nonprofit hospital.

(and current) name, Rochelle Community Hospital still required funding for its expansion, and the grassroots campaign to save the hospital began.

To kick off the campaign, two hundred women initiated a door-to-door petition to establish a hospital taxing district encompassing various townships in order to fund the hospital. The petition ultimately failed, but this effort illuminates the community's strong commitment to the hospital.



Amidst the petition failure and other challenges, the community once again opened its hearts and checkbooks for the hospital. As Les Springmire describes, at one meeting a concerned Board of Trustees member off-handedly stated, "I would give \$1,000 for a start, but I don't have my checkbook with me tonight." Another board member, a banker, picked up a paper napkin and told the other board member, "Here, put your money where your mouth is. Write your check on this, and I will honor it at the bank." Sure enough, this "check" was honored and the deposit made to the Rochelle Community Hospital Association the next day!

The Association faced the challenge of raising funds for the expansion, but an outpouring of community spirit resulted in a highly successful community fundraiser between 1966 and 1967, during which the Association exceeded their target amount by raising \$1.37 million. From business to individuals, people donated what they could - local industries, farmers, doctors, and even schoolchildren. This amazing "team effort" by the community saved the hospital, which stands today as the cornerstone of personalized, exceptional health care.

### Hospital Initiatives

Rochelle Community Hospital remains committed to meeting community health care needs by enhancing patient care through individualized attention and expanding medical services. Examples include upgrades to equipment such as a CT scanner and a breast MRI machine; the addition of board-certified physicians; and the transition from CRNAs to board-certified anesthesiologists. The hospital's medical staff recruitment efforts also reflect a commitment to ensuring access to specialized care without the burden of travel.

For Chief Executive Officer Karen Tracy, RN, community members are at the forefront of every decision the hospital makes. As she explains, "We prioritize the community in our decision-making process. We aim for accessible, high-quality, and welcoming healthcare experiences with caring staff at the forefront. Our goals for improvements and quality initiatives are all related to how we can better serve our community with state-of-the-art facilities and high-level services."

To further enhance our services, RCH has an informal partnership with OSF in Rockford, explains Karen, which a mentorship in which OSF offers support with



*RCH is proud to provide patients with the newest technology and state-of-the-art equipment, including this MRI machine which allows for improved testing time and upgraded image quality and is readily available for appointments.*



*Our food and nutrition department goes above and beyond for those in the hospital and outside of the hospital in the community. Here, at the holiday food drive, they provided over 100+ meals for those who wouldn't otherwise have a holiday meal.*

cardiology and pulmonology telehealth coverage and infectious disease treatment protocol, both of which help RCH expand local medical services, reducing the need for patients to travel out of town. Adds Karen, "We will continue to work with OSF until we can offer these services in our own community."

### Community Outreach & Engagement

From assisting with Medicare wellness visits to panel presentations in high schools to encouraging careers in healthcare, RCH actively engages with community members of all ages. For instance, hospital staff give panel presentations for anatomy and physiology classes at the Rochelle Community High School, and Chief Nursing Officer Rhonda Marks, RN, participates in a behavioral health coalition with local police and fire departments. RCH also is actively looking into hiring a telehealth psychiatrist and a counselor.

Karen has worked at the hospital for 32 years in various roles including staff nurse and the quality and risk coordinator. Her relationship with RCH, however, began at a very early age. "I was born at the hospital, and it is very important to my family," explains Karen. "I remember my brother going to the ER as a child, and I remember visiting my siblings when they were born. The hospital really has been in my mind's eye throughout my life."

Under her leadership, RCH emphasizes the importance of "common sense" training for staff. Greeting everyone and lending a helping hand go a long way toward making patients feel valued and cared for. Karen calls this the "frosting on the cake" of working at the hospital: Walking down the halls and helping people get to their destination are the "fun parts" of her day.

The day-to-day smaller actions are not actually that small when you're talking about patients and getting care for themselves and/or loved ones. The significance of small acts of kindness and attention to detail in patient care make all the difference. The hospital's level of attention to detail makes life easier for people, and it's not something often found in larger healthcare facilities.

Something else you may not see at larger healthcare facilities is the hospital CEO pitching in to help with



*The RCH cardiac rehabilitation team and staff wear red each year on National Heart Day to support and create awareness of the importance of heart health.*

housekeeping! "If there's water on the floor, I'll grab a mop," says Karen. "We pay attention to these very important things." Every day when Karen gets to work, she also makes a habit of checking for a wheelchair at the hospital's Second Street entrance. If there isn't one available, she promptly retrieves one from the emergency center. Emphasizing the importance of this routine, Karen explains that "the last thing we want is for someone struggling to help their mom, cousin, or friend out of a vehicle, only to find there's no wheelchair accessible for them."

Every act of kindness, no matter how large or small, contributes to the culture of care at the hospital. "The thought process for our team is filtered through the belief system that we are all a family," emphasizes Karen Tracy. "We add a special touch to health care by treating everyone the way you want your family to be treated."

Rochelle Community Hospital's philosophy echoes what Les Springmire says in his History, that "this hospital truly belongs to the people of this community."





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## FIND US AT THESE RCH & COMMUNITY EVENTS

**JUL  
21**

**Sponsor of Community Swim  
at Spring Lake Pool**

*July 21, 2024 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.*

**AUG  
06**

**National Night Out at Atwood Park**

*August 6, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.*

**AUG  
08**

**Mobile Food Pantry from  
Northern Illinois Food Bank**

*August 8, 2024 from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.*

**AUG  
18**

**Lincoln Highway Heritage  
Festival Parade**

*August 18, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.*

**AUG  
20**

**Community Blood Drive with RRVBC**

*August 20, 2024 from noon – 6:00 p.m.*

**SEP  
09**

**RCH Foundation 24th Annual Golf  
Outing at Fairways Golf Course**

*September 9, 2024*