

SPRING 2021

# MOMENTUM

LOCAL PEOPLE. TRUE STORIES. REAL ADVICE.

## PRIMARY CARE

Why it's so  
important

## THE NEXT LEVEL OF WOUND CARE

Program Coordinator Carmen Liebelt:  
New Wound Care Center is a  
“dream come true”

## DOUBLE DUTY

Rochelle Kubaskie  
takes on new role of  
leading Obstetrics &  
Infusion Center

## SLEEP TIGHT

Tips for a good  
night's rest from our  
sleep expert

# Letter from our CEO



**Mary Beth White-Jacobs**  
Chief Executive Officer, BRMH

## EXCELLENCE ONLY HAPPENS WITH EXCELLENT PEOPLE

Everything we do at Black River Memorial Hospital is about serving others, and to be successful, we need people to help people. No, we need *excellent* people. And, we have that with Kathy Piette-Smetana and Kristal Schreiber. They work in our Health Information Department and are two of our longest-tenured employees. They've contributed so much to BRMH over the years, and their careers speak to why we are in the 90th percentile nationally among organizations of our size in length of tenure. I have many shared memories over all those years with Kathy and Kristal, and you can read about their special friendship on the next page.

There are a lot of good folks helping people in our Black River Healthcare Clinic too. It's hard to believe it's already been open nine months. If you don't have a primary care provider or want to establish care with one closer to home, I urge you to connect with the clinic and make an appointment, because having one will lead to a healthier life. (Page 5)

I'm thrilled to let you know about an expansion of our services that grows care close to home. We've partnered with Healogics, the industry leader, to develop a Wound Care Center (Page 3) providing advanced care for chronic, non-healing wounds, opening in May.

And our new Infusion Center, where our first chemotherapy occurred in February, has a new director, Rochelle Kubaskie, who also guides our Obstetrics Department. Her leadership in both areas is so important, and she has an interesting story (Page 11) of having worked on both ends of the spectrum of life.

As always, it comes back to helping people, and you can depend on all of us at BRMH to continue to explore the best ways to improve the health of our communities.

Excellence Always,

*Mary Beth*

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# 80+ Years

## OF MEMORIES

A “stolen” neighbor, a cartwheel challenge, and a shoulder to lean on. Coworkers first and friends ever since, Kathy Piette-Smetana and Kristal Schreiber share a trove of cherished memories working a combined 84 years at Black River Memorial Hospital.

“There are so many” memories, Kathy says. “It’s a great place to work. It’s a family.”

The pair have worked together for 35 years, with Kristal joining Kathy in the Health Information Department after spending her first seven years at BRMH as a ward clerk. Kathy has spent her entire 42-year career in Health Information. Some of their duties have included medical coding, processing charges, and working to resolve insurance claim denials.

“It’s a good place to work. They treat us well,” Kristal says.

From transcribing doctor orders in the beginning to pushing a button now and “voila! It’s all done for you,” Kathy says, the friendship has grown as the hospital has too.

Kathy found great comfort in the friendship in February 2019 when she had “pretty dramatic health issues” and was mourning the loss of a coworker.

“Kristal and (her husband) Steve were there for the whole thing,” Kathy says. “It’s nice to know you have people in your corner.”

Many laughs have been shared as well, like the time many years ago when Kristal accepted a challenge to do a cartwheel in the office. She nailed it. “That’s something I never let her forget,” Kathy says.

The same can be said for “the fact Kristal took the best neighbor we ever had away from us three years ago.” That would be Steve, who lived next door to Kathy and her husband, Tony, for 30 years. Happily, the move was meant to be as Steve and Kristal were married in March 2020.

The couples are friends, and their good times will continue, but the work chapter of Kristal and Kathy’s friendship will end on April 30 when Kathy retires on the day of her 42nd work anniversary.

“I’m really happy for her, but I’m really sad for me,” Kristal says. “She sees the good in everything, always so upbeat and positive. She’s a wonderful person.”

The feeling is mutual. “She’s a great friend,” Kathy says. “I can tell her anything.”

Kristal Schreiber (left) and Kathy Piette-Smetana have been friends and co-workers for decades.

# 4 TIPS

## FOR BETTER SLEEP

Sure, counting sheep will work sometimes, but there are proven ways to help you fall asleep and get a good night’s rest, says Paula Voskuil, respiratory sleep technician at Black River Memorial Hospital. Here are some of the key ones:

### 1 IT’S A ROUTINE THING

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day helps stabilize your circadian rhythm, or body clock, releasing hormones at the right time to make you feel sleepy or awake. Varying from your routine can “jet lag” your body, Voskuil says, “and that really can throw off your sleep.”

### 2 LIGHTS OUT

Voskuil says you should turn off your screens at least an hour before bedtime. The blue light emitted from them “wakes your body up” and can prevent the release of melatonin, the hormone produced by your body that makes you sleepy.

### 3 CUT THE CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a stimulant, which is the last thing you need when trying to fall asleep. Additionally, dehydration can create barriers to sleep. So ditch that second cup of coffee for a glass of water, and better sleep may follow.

### 4 SUNNY SOLUTION

Anxiety “definitely will throw off your sleep,” Voskuil says, and she suggests a dose of sunshine. “For some reason, it can just lift your attitude.” During the darker months of winter, that can be a challenge, and B-Home Services and Supplies sells therapy lights that Voskuil says have shown to be effective.



# WOUND CARE ADVANCES TO THE **NEXT**

CARMEN LIEBELT WILL  
HEAD UP NEW CENTER  
OPENING THIS SPRING



Carmen Liebelt has been rendering wound care at Black River Memorial Hospital for 16½ years in her role as a physical therapist. It was time for a change—one she was hoping for.

Liebelt will be the program coordinator of the new Wound Care Center slated to open in the spring.

“I’m so excited about this project, I can’t even tell you,” she says. “This definitely has been a dream come true for me. I have worked on this project on and off for years, and this time persistence paid off. It was the right time for the hospital to pursue the expansion of this service line.”

The Black River Memorial Hospital Wound Care Center will offer an evidence-based, systematic approach to advanced wound care for people living with chronic, nonhealing wounds such as those suffering from diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, infections, compromised skin grafts and flaps, and wounds that haven’t healed within a reasonable time frame.

Patients will have individualized treatment plans, which may include specialized wound dressings, debridement, compression therapy, advanced cellular products and topical growth factors, edema management, and/or noninvasive vascular assessment. “Having medical providers as part of our Wound Care Center really brings out a whole new realm of possibilities,” Liebelt says. “We’re going to be able to give patients the care that they need.”

And that care will be close to home, eliminating the need for local patients to travel long distances for advanced wound care. “We are going to work with the patient’s provider team to ensure comprehensive care,” Liebelt says.

# 6.7 MILLION AMERICANS

The estimated number of Americans affected by chronic wounds, a number that is rising fueled by an aging population.

BRMH teamed with Healogics®, the nation’s leading provider of wound care, to develop the center. The partnership will give BRMH more freedom, access to new technology, and the ability to be progressive with its wound care treatment, Liebelt said. “That’s beyond exciting to me.”

The center will be located in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department and will be staffed by Liebelt, a physician medical director, advanced practice providers, and nursing staff. A referral will not be required to receive care at the center.

The Wound Care Center comes on the heels of the recent openings of the Black River Healthcare Clinic and the Infusion Center. “We thought this would be a perfect time and a great fit with all the new service lines we were offering,” Liebelt said.







# PRIMARY NEED

HAVING A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER  
IS ONE OF THE HEALTHIEST  
DECISIONS YOU CAN MAKE

Cost, access, and perceived need are among the main barriers to people having a primary care provider. Black River Healthcare Clinic addresses these issues for Jackson County area residents by providing another option where they can receive primary care that improves their physical and mental health at a lesser cost than emergency care or relying only on specialists. Dr. Esteban Miller, Black River Memorial Hospital's chief medical officer and hospitalist, summarizes some of the key benefits of having a primary care provider.

# 19% LOWER ODDS

of premature death is what adults in the U.S. who have a primary care provider experience compared to those who only see specialists for care.\*

# 26% OF AMERICANS SUFFER

from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, and a primary care provider is trained to detect physical symptoms that might be related to a mental health issue. \*\*

# NEARLY \$1,900 IS OVERSPENT

on average on emergency care (\$2,032) for each of 10 conditions treatable by primary care (\$167).\*\*\*

\* primarycareprogress.org

\*\* John Hopkins Medicine

\*\*\* UnitedHealth



## PERSONAL CARE

Having a primary care provider is about having someone you can count on, Miller says. “It’s having a relationship with a medical professional you trust, that you have time to build a rapport with, who knows you, that you can confide in, that you can connect with when you have a question.”

“On top of that, because they know you, they can take into account your personal history and your family history” to provide care that is consistent, high quality, and preventative. While some people don’t access primary care simply because they feel well, a primary care provider is often the first to detect signs of cancer, chronic disease, or other health concerns.

This relationship is particularly beneficial when a sudden health concern occurs. “There’s someone that can explain it to you, that can help navigate the complicated world of specialists, tests, big words, diagnoses, and even help make decisions,” Miller says.

## COMPREHENSIVE CARE

Mental health issues can produce physical symptoms, but that can be difficult for the patient to detect. “In primary care, we’re well trained to look at a broad differential diagnosis, to understand that our brains are a powerful organ, and there’s a lot of stigma around (mental health),” Miller says. “It’s hard for people to accept or think that it’s something mental health or behavioral health-related.”

A primary care provider can begin a conversation with you, and having behavioral health providers in the same building at the Black River Healthcare Clinic creates a “warm handoff,” he says. “It’s a lot easier for someone to say yes to that counseling appointment if their trusted primary care provider has recommended it.”

Tina Opelt is a nurse practitioner at the clinic. “If we’re not taking care of you as a whole person and we’re missing that mental health aspect of it, we’ve really missed the

boat,” she says, “and we’re never going to really achieve good overall health until we treat all of you.”

## AFFORDABLE CARE

A trip to the emergency room for care that doesn’t require it likely is going to result in seeing a provider you don’t have a relationship with and who isn’t closely familiar with your medical history, Miller says. On top of that, an ER visit can “require a lot of tests that are expensive.”

“In opening the (Black River Healthcare) clinic, we listened to customers in the community to give them another option to get care in a clinic setting instead of the emergency room.”

Nurse Practitioner Tina Opelt and Physician’s Assistant Jeffery Herried are primary care providers at the Black River Healthcare Clinic.





# INFUSE HOPE

## ONE PATIENT AT A TIME



Ashley Fjelstad, BRMH Infusion Center patient care coordinator, provides a chemo care bag to Peter Kowal, who holds a coloring page completed by a local child as part of the Infuse Hope campaign.

Scan here on your smartphone to read Peter's story.







### Help bring joy to our patients

Children of all ages are encouraged to take part in our new coloring campaign—Infuse Hope. The campaign is designed to help spread love and hope to local patients undergoing chemotherapy at our Infusion Center. Participating will infuse hope in patients who are facing a difficult journey.

Completed artwork can be dropped off at the main BRMH campus (Entrance D, Emergency Entrance, and the Black River Healthcare Clinic Entrance), B-Home Services and Supplies, or three other drop-off locations in the community: Hansen's IGA, Black River Falls Public Library, and Black River Child Care Center. Coloring pages also can be scanned and emailed to [excellence@brmh.net](mailto:excellence@brmh.net).

Additional coloring pages available to download at [brmh.net/infusehope](http://brmh.net/infusehope).





### CHEMO CARE BAGS

Patients undergoing their first chemo treatment at our new Infusion Center receive a Chemo Care Bag. This bag contains care products purchased using donations from Jackson County Bank employees and a certificate from Serene Clean for free cleaning services while patients are undergoing treatment. Patients also get a coloring page completed by local children as part of the Infuse Hope campaign.



### HEALTHY INCENTIVE

Hansen's IGA is donating a piece of fresh fruit (in the form of a coupon) to children who complete their annual physical at the Black River Healthcare Clinic. Pictured: Larkyn Byom receives her coupon from BRMH's Abby Julien.

### FUELING EMPLOYEE MORALE

Community members, local businesses, and individual BRMH staff members contributed over \$1,000 in cash and in-kind donations to the Employee Refueling Station. Though the refueling station has come to an end, it was a successful effort in improving the morale of hospital employees during the pandemic. Food and beverages such as sub sandwiches, fresh fruit, and snacks were made available for staff to enjoy while on break.





## JAIME CLARK-STREFF



The new Jackson County Animal Shelter features an open and bright layout, provides a safer, more comfortable home for its furry residents, and makes adopting them easier.

# A CHILD'S PROMISE GIVES ANIMALS A BETTER CHANCE

For that, we can thank Bruce Lee.

Rewind to the day years ago when a 12-year-old Jaime Clark visited the shelter to rescue a barn cat her family had adopted out but had been surrendered to the shelter. Jaime noticed the facility wasn't up to par.

"I said, whoa, we need to do better in our county," she says now. "We're going to get a better shelter. We're going to do better for the animals."

Turns out, it was more than just wishful thinking by a plucky kid. Jaime returned to Jackson County six years ago and followed through on her promise by jumping on board with the effort to build a new shelter Jackson County residents can be proud of.

The cat's name? You guessed it: Bruce Lee.

Jaime always has had a love for animals, which led her to become a veterinarian. She practices at Northwood Vet Service in Black River Falls and is the president of the Jackson County Humane Society, which has a close partnership with the shelter. Along with her ambition and a passion for community service, that put her in the ideal position to give the shelter project a fresh push.

Interested in adopting an animal?  
Call the shelter at (715) 284-0251.  
The shelter is open 1-4 p.m. every day  
except Sunday and Tuesday.

If you would like to nominate someone in the community who deserves a spotlight, email us at [excellence@brmh.net](mailto:excellence@brmh.net)



"I don't necessarily have a whole lot of my own money to put into it, so I make up for it by putting in a lot of time," says Jaime, who has been involved with fundraising \$300,000 for the new shelter over the past four years.

The new facility, which opened in May last year and is scheduling adoption visits by appointment only due to the pandemic, features:

- better ventilation and quarantine areas to prevent disease spread
- a drop-off room where animals can be left after-hours; at the previous shelter, outdoor kennels served this purpose
- a Real Life Room, a quiet place that includes furniture where families can meet with an animal they are interested in adopting. "You might get more of the animal's personality" in this setting, Jaime says
- a veterinary room where exams can be performed

Thanks to Jaime's vision, support from the Jackson County Humane Society and the County Board, and generous grants from the Lunda Charitable Fund and Black River Falls Area Foundation, everyone's hard work will allow more of Bruce Lee's four-legged friends to find forever homes.

So what would 12-year-old Jaime say about her future accomplishment? "She would say we're getting there. We're accomplishing a lot, but we still have a lot of things to do."



FROM BEGINNING  
TO END

*she cares*

NEW OBSTETRICS DIRECTOR  
ROCHELLE KUBASKIE BEGAN HER  
BRMH CAREER AS A HOSPICE NURSE







The Obstetrics Department is undergoing renovations that will supplement the specialized care provided by department employees.

Black River Memorial Hospital's dedication to excellence spans a patient's lifetime. Rochelle Kubaskie knows that as well as anyone.

The Black River Falls native was named the hospital's obstetrics department director in October. That came after 4½ years at BRMH as a home care/hospice nurse.

"Being on both ends of the spectrum of life has been amazing to see," says Kubaskie, whose new role includes oversight of the Infusion Center that opened in November.

Transitioning from end-of-life care to welcoming new life must have been quite the transition.

"It's actually more the same than you would think. It's a lot of supporting the family" through education and comfort, Kubaskie says. "It's a lot of the same type of nursing care."

She joined obstetrics at an exciting time for the department. One of its four rooms received a fresh coat of paint plus

"I just always enjoyed being around kids."

new furniture and beds; the other three rooms will get the same treatment when the COVID-19 pandemic is under better control. Two new labor beds also are on the way.

Department staff and patients continue to enjoy the Mamava, a free-standing, pod-like structure in the family lounge that gives mothers a private space to pump or breastfeed, complete with outlets, mirrors, and a seating area.

"It's going well, and it's very busy," says Kubaskie, who started out as a NICU nurse for 15 years at the La Crosse Mayo Clinic and earned her master's last year. "I'm learning a lot every day. We've got lots of people that have provided great support."

The same goes for the Infusion Center, which provided its first chemo treatment in February. "It's going to be really nice for community members to get chemo infusions and not have to spend the day driving to a different facility," Kubaskie says.

She's enjoyed the move from working

nights to days, giving her more time to spend with her family: husband Craig, daughter Teagan, 16, and son Noah, 14.

Becoming a mother herself was a natural fit for Kubaskie.

"I just always enjoyed being around kids," she says. "I knew from a very young age I wanted to be a nurse, and working with babies was always my dream. So being able to do that throughout most of my career has been pretty amazing."



### GET READY FOR YOUR BABY AT B-HOME

B-Home Services and Supplies sells a variety of pregnancy-related items including belly bands, maternity compression socks, pregnancy pillows, massage items, Medela pumping supplies and accessories, and Burt's Bees baby wash and lotion. B-Home also will special order something it doesn't carry in the store. The store is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

# FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH, THESE TIPS ARE MID MONEY

BRMH CFO Matthew Streeter believes a lack of self-care can lead to poor mental health, and that finances play a part in the equation. “If you have tons of anxiety about your financial situation, all the self-care in the world isn’t going to help,” Streeter says, “because you can do your yoga and have your meditation, and at the end of the day, you’re still worried about money.”

Here are his financial tips leading to better mental health:

## **CREATE A BUDGET, REDUCE ANXIETY**

Streeter advises tracking and categorizing every purchase you make over a month or two to establish your spending habits, and use this as a baseline for your budget. “It’s easier to become anxious when things are unknown,” he says. “So the point of having a budget and keeping track of your spending is to make the unknown known, and that helps reduce anxiety.”

## **TEST YOUR IMPULSE**

Redefine the impulse buy with Streeter’s simple strategy: create a wish list. When considering an impulse buy, add it to the list and wait 10 days; if you still want it, then make the purchase. “Basically what you’re doing is reducing it from an impulse buy to a thought-out buy,” Streeter says.

## **ASK FOR HELP**

Especially now, with many people facing financial struggles for the first time because of the pandemic, it’s important to seek help. Most hospitals, including BRMH, offer financial assistance programs, Streeter says. “You just have to let us know.” The state Department of Workforce Development can answer questions about unemployment insurance.

## **MORE TIPS FROM STREETER**

- Unless you are wealthy, do not pay for financial advisory services. “There are plenty of people out there who will do it for no cost.”
- The Personal Capital app does an “amazing job” tracking your investments, retirement, and finances.
- Keep a list of recurring expenses to learn what it costs to live for a month.
- “Never go grocery shopping on an empty stomach.”





# Nutrition FOR YOUR **BODY AND MIND**

## CHICKEN CLUB LETTUCE WRAPS



### INGREDIENTS

#### Lettuce Wraps

- 2 cups chopped or shredded cooked chicken breast (approx. 1 large chicken breast)
- ½ pint of cherry tomatoes (or 1 medium tomato, diced)
- 1 avocado, diced
- 4 slices bacon, cooked and diced
- 8 romaine or iceberg lettuce leaves

#### Dijon Mustard Dressing

- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup sour cream
- Ground black pepper, to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Dijon Mustard Dressing

1. In a small bowl, whisk together mustard, sour cream, and pepper. Set dressing aside to top lettuce wraps.

#### Lettuce Wraps

1. Divide diced or shredded chicken among four lettuce leaves. Top with avocado, tomatoes, bacon, and Dijon mustard dressing and/or additional toppings based on preferences.
2. Enjoy! To eat, simply pick up the wrap as you would a taco.

#### NUTRITION FACTS Serves 4. Amount per serving:

Calories	279
Total Fat	15g
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	68mg
Sodium	597mg
Potassium	682
Total Carbohydrate	8g
Protein	26g

Recipe provided by BRMH Registered Dietitian,  
Wendy Barth



## WORD SCRAMBLE

Look carefully at the jumbled words and try unscrambling as many of the anagrams as you can into real words related to spring.

1. OFGR	1. _____
2. FEUYRBTLT	2. _____
3. SRSGA	3. _____
4. ORMHTARWE	4. _____
5. SNTGLHUI	5. _____
6. UDB	6. _____
7. DDNLIAENO	7. _____
8. ORELWF	8. _____
9. EBE	9. _____
10. GLBDYAU	10. _____
11. OMLOB	11. _____
12. ERGEN	12. _____

## SUDOKU

Fill in the blanks so that every column, every 3x3 box, and every row, contains the digits 1 through 9 once. There is only one solution.

4		6		2				
	8		4				9	3
3				8	5			2
7		9						8
	5			7			4	
6						7		1
9			2	4				5
2	6				8		7	
				3		1		9

Difficulty Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Answers on the website: [brmh.net/momentum](http://brmh.net/momentum)



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# HEALTH & WELLNESS BLOG

COMING SOON!

At Black River Memorial Hospital, we're always committed to being an excellent resource for our community. That's why we're in the process of creating a new website that will enhance the user experience with great features, engaging content, vibrant design, and lots of useful information highlighted by our new blog, B-More, dedicated to providing you with an abundance of tools and resources to help you lead your healthiest life.



Health & Wellness Blog coming soon!