



2022

Annual Report

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## 2022 Board of Directors



**Bill Wood**  
Chairman



**Melissa Stewart**  
Vice Chairman



**Reid Grigsby**  
Secretary



**Jack Bates**  
Treasurer



**Priscilla A. Frase, MD**



**Steve Vines**



**Brenda Smith**



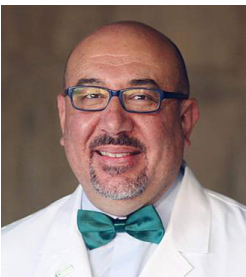
**Dennis Albino, MD**



**Robert A. Martin,**  
MD



**Roger Shaw III, DVM**



**Magdy Giurgius, MD**  
MD, FACS, MSc



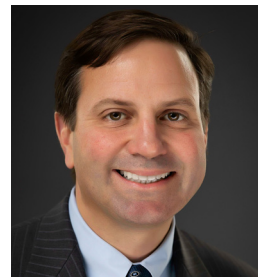
**Robert Stauffer**



**Shawn Marhefka**



**Susan Jolly, MD**



**David M. Gohn**

## 2022 Medical Staff Officers



**Susan Jolly, MD**  
Chief of Staff



**Robert A. Martin,  
MD**  
Chief Emeritus

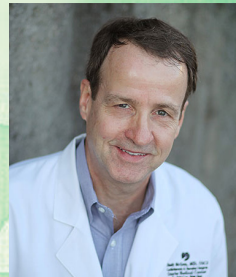
## 2022 Senior Leaders



**Thomas Keller,**  
President and CEO



**Lacey Carter**  
Chief Nursing Officer



**William McGee, MD**  
Chief Medical  
Officer



**Nichole Cook,**  
Chief Financial  
Officer



**Todd Tamalunas**  
Vice President  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Medical Group

# Focused On Your Health

Ozarks Healthcare is a not-for-profit health system that serves more than 100,000 residents across South-Central Missouri and Northern Arkansas. With our main campus residing in West Plains, Missouri, our health system offers a full spectrum of healthcare for all ages through our 114-bed hospital, behavioral health, therapies, pharmacies, rehabilitation, and home care services, along with specialty and family medicine clinics. Ozarks Healthcare has rural locations across an eight-county service area and is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations.

Our mission is to provide exceptional, compassionate care to all we serve.

We are committed to serving the health of our community with the following values at our core:

## **Accountability**

Accepting personal responsibility for doing the right thing

## **Superior Service**

Providing the highest quality of care, consistently exceeding our patients' expectations

## **Teamwork**

Having a unified commitment to demonstrate pride, responsibility, and accountability in working together to achieve excellence

## **Integrity**

Maintaining the highest standards of behavior, encompassing honesty, ethical practices and doing the right things for the right reasons

## **Compassion**

Expressing care and concern for others through our attitudes and actions

## **Enthusiasm**

Inspiring others by displaying a positive attitude in all we say and do

## **Respect**

Having a regard for life, dignity, and uniqueness of those served and serving

## Focused On Your Health in a New Facility

**O**n February 28, 2022, the doors to Ozarks Healthcare's largest expansion to date opened to the public for the first time. Located adjacent to the Ozarks Healthcare Shaw Medical Building and hospital, the expansion of approximately 100,000 new square feet in a new Medical Office Building includes specialty clinics and ancillary services, a new restaurant, coffee shop, gift shop, chapel, pharmacy, and more.

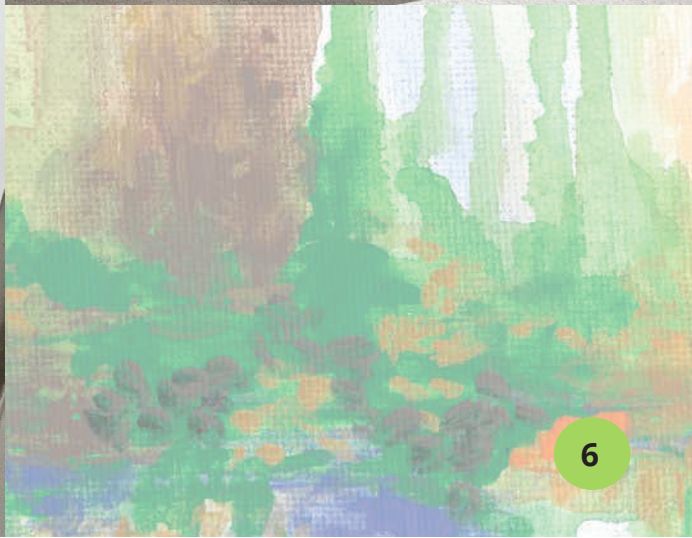
"We are more than excited to see our latest expansion project come to life," Tom Keller, Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. "This space is focused entirely on better serving the health needs of our community with a new level of added convenience. This is one of our largest milestones as a healthcare system, and we are grateful for the opportunity to grow our care for our patients and community."

The expansion project began in summer of 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As with most building projects over the past few years, the pandemic presented some challenges with the schedule of construction," Josh Reeves, Vice President of Development at Ozarks Healthcare, said. "We had some delays with equipment, but the teamwork of our construction and planning teams, including those at Killian Construction and Cromwell Architects and Engineers, have been incredible. We were able to use any delays to refine our design plans even more to create a space that we truly believe is one of the best healthcare facilities in Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas."

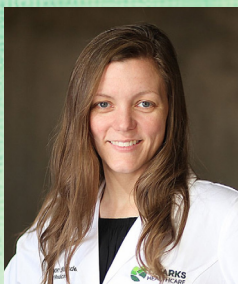
Specialty clinics and departments are spread throughout the three stories of the Medical Office Building. These include: Imaging, Laboratory, Patient Financial Services, and Registration departments on the first floor, Ozarks Healthcare's Heart and Lung Center, Orthopedics and Spine, Pain Management, and Podiatry clinics on the second floor, and Endocrinology, Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT), General Surgery, Infectious Disease, Neurology, Rheumatology, and Urology clinics on the third floor.





# Newcomers to OZH in 2022

## *New Physicians*



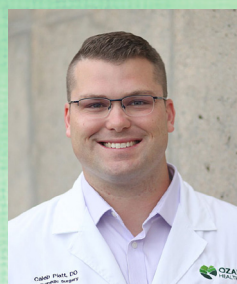
**Dr. Shannon Marsden,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care



**Dr. Anthony Campbell,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
General Surgery



**Dr. David Lish,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Podiatry



**Dr. Caleb Piatt,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Orthopedics and Spine



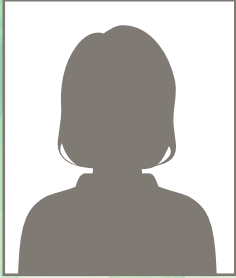
**Dr. Karen Johal,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Pediatrics



**Dr. Ryan Vaisler,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
West Plains Family  
Medicine



## ***New Mid-Levels***



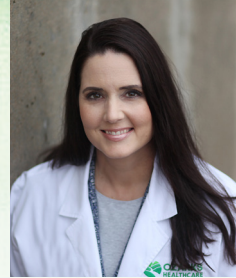
**Ashley Jamison, DNAP**



**Kevin Dahl, DNAP**



**Mary Kate Brasier,  
WHNP-BC,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Women's Health**



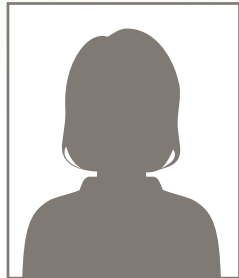
**Jamie Parrott,  
APRN, FNP-BC,  
AGCNS-BC,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care**



**Lisa Wade, FNP-C,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care**



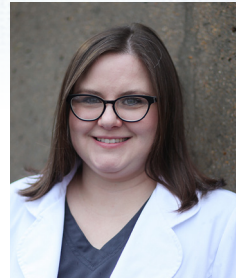
**Jade Moore, FNP-C,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Mountain Grove  
Walk-in Clinic**



**Lakynn Bradshaw,  
FNP-BC,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
West Plains Walk-in  
Clinic**



**Cypress Wood, FNP-C,  
Ozarks Healthcare  
West Plains Walk-in  
Clinic**



**Delica Johnson, DNP**

# Joining Forces to Grow for our Community

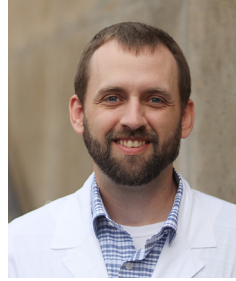
A staple in the local medical community, Ozarks Family Care decided to join Ozarks Healthcare and transitioned its name to Ozarks Healthcare Family Care – with both health systems’ goals of providing the best medical care for family, friends, and neighbors in mind.



**Dr. Jason Spurling,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care



**Dr. Scott Roush,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care



**Dr. John Washburn,**  
Ozarks Healthcare  
Family Care

“Opportunity to truly make a positive impact on a large scale affecting thousands of people is rare,” Dr. Scott Roush, Ozarks Healthcare Family Care, said. “When it occurs, sometimes, difficult decisions must be made. Pride, tradition, and fear of change must be bridled. We were presented an opportunity from Ozarks Healthcare to improve the healthcare of not only our local town, but all of south-central Missouri. After numerous discussions, it was felt the best way to achieve our goals was to join forces in a united effort to navigate the multiple directions medical care is moving. It is an exciting endeavor, but daunting as well, and

many challenges lay ahead. I look forward to the challenging work that is coming and the reward of seeing the health and productivity of a community evolve and improve. Please join with us on this journey and know that your individual medical care is still the most important end result of what we do.”

All Ozarks Healthcare family medicine providers work as a team to care for patients using their collective expertise. They also manage patients’ electronic medical records, medications, and screenings. Family medicine providers are able to provide expert diagnoses, treatments, and ongoing care for a wide range of acute and chronic conditions.

Ozarks Healthcare Family Care providers, including Roush, Dr. Jason Spurling, Dr. John Washburn, Dr. Shannon Marsden, and family nurse practitioners Jamie Parrott and Lisa Wade, have added years of experience to Ozarks Healthcare’s Medical Group.

“By joining Ozarks Healthcare, Ozarks Family Care’s patients benefit by having their medical records seamlessly added to Ozarks Healthcare’s single electronic health record system,” Keller, Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. “This simplifies access to any specialty services at Ozarks Healthcare needed. Our community is fortunate to have leaders from both Ozarks Family Care and Ozarks Healthcare working together to grow for our community and provide a seamless continuum of care.”

## Pharmacy Expansion



Over the past few years, the original Ozarks Healthcare retail pharmacy space in Parkway Center in West Plains quickly reached the need to expand for our community. Our pharmacy staff worked tirelessly through 2022 to open several new locations to grow pharmacy services across the region.

In March of 2022, the Ozarks Healthcare Pharmacy acquired Bradford Pharmacy in West Plains. The acquisition also coincided with the pharmacy's expansion of retail services through Ozarks Healthcare's new Medical Office Building. The previously named Bradford Pharmacy, located at 307 N. Kentucky Ave. in West Plains, transitioned to the Ozarks Healthcare Pharmacy entity while the Ozarks Healthcare Pharmacy located at 1211 Porter Wagoner Blvd. within Parkway Center in West Plains closed and transitioned its retail services for the public to the new Medical Office Building at the main campus.

The Ozarks Healthcare Pharmacy launched a Specialty Pharmacy, which dispenses specialty medications focused on treating conditions related to dermatology, Hepatitis C, oncology, and rheumatology. Specialty pharmacists will work closely with providers, supporting them through a simple referral process, sharing the most up-to-date medical information, and communicating directly with the patient's care team. The Ozarks Healthcare Specialty Pharmacy team includes

dedicated professionals who provide personalized patient education, side effect monitoring, and a 24/7 pharmacy support line. The team also assists patients in navigating prior authorizations, claims, and offer financial assistance, such as the 340B Drug Pricing Program, which is a federal program that requires manufacturers participating in Medicaid to provide outpatient medications to eligible healthcare organizations at significantly reduced prices.

The Ozarks Healthcare Pharmacy also acquired Davidson Drug in Thayer and Court Square Pharmacy in Gainesville. A new pharmacy space was added inside Ozarks Healthcare's clinic in Thayer, and renovations were made to the former Court Square Pharmacy space.

"Especially over the past two to three years, our pharmacy services have seen a higher demand," Katie Mahan, Director of Ozarks Healthcare's Pharmacy, said. "We are excited to grow our services to add convenience and reduce travel for those outside our health system's main campus in West Plains."

Each of Ozarks Healthcare's Pharmacy locations accept all major insurance plans and offer affordable rates for non-insured and underinsured patients through its 340B Drug Pricing Program.

## Helping Patients Breathe Easier with Robotic-assisted Minimally Invasive Lung Biopsies



History was made as Ozarks Healthcare became the first healthcare system in the region to implement Intuitive Surgical's Ion Endoluminal Robotic Bronchoscopy Platform. This cutting-edge, robotic-assisted technology enhances the care of patients with lung abnormalities, detects lung cancer earlier, and improves patient outcomes.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths. However, when diagnosed at the earliest stage, known as stage IA-1, the average five-year survival rate is 92 percent. Ion Intuitive is used to perform robotic-assisted bronchoscopy and is designed to address a challenging aspect of lung biopsy by enabling physicians to obtain tissue samples deep within the lung.

"Ozarks Healthcare has chosen the Ion Robotic-Assisted Bronchoscopy System because it provides more reach, stability, and precision," Dr. Praveen Datar, board-certified pulmonologist at Ozarks Healthcare Heart and Lung Center, said. "One key advantage for patients is the ability to determine a diagnosis in one procedure."

Before the procedure, a CT scan is taken to create a three-dimensional reconstruction of the patient's airways and detect any lung lesions. During the procedure, the three-dimensional pathway is displayed on a computer screen next to a screen displaying live camera footage inside the lung. The virtual imagery serves as a reference point for doctors as they navigate the actual lungs. A robotically-driven scope is passed down a sedated patient's throat and into the lungs. A camera inside the robotic catheter allows the doctor to view inside the lung from a computer screen. Once they reach the lesion, they get a tissue sample or samples if needed to biopsy. Real-time coordination with pathology can provide a diagnosis during the procedure.

Datar and his surgical team completed the first and successful procedures utilizing the new Ion Intuitive scope through the year.

## Bringing Highly Advanced Robotic-Arm Assisted Joint Replacement Surgery to the Operating Table

Waves in technology continued to be made at Ozarks Healthcare with the use of Mako SmartRobotics™ in the operating room. The first of its kind in our region, this innovative robotic technology allowed surgeons to start personalizing total knee, partial knee, and total hip replacement procedures to each patient at Ozarks Healthcare requiring joint replacement.

Mako SmartRobotics™ combines three key components, 3D CT-based planning, AccuStop™ haptic technology and insightful data analytics, into one platform that has shown better outcomes for total knee, total hip and partial knee patients.

“With Mako SmartRobotics™, we know more about our patients than ever before, and we’re able to cut less. For some patients, this can mean less soft tissue damage; for others, greater bone preservation,” Dr. Caleb Piatt, orthopedic surgeon, Ozarks Healthcare Orthopedics and Spine, said. “Mako’s 3D CT allows myself and my fellow surgeons to create a personalized plan based on each patient’s unique anatomy before entering the operating room. During surgery, we can validate that plan and make any necessary adjustments while guiding the robotic arm to execute that plan. It’s exciting to be able to offer this transformative technology across the joint replacement service line to perform total knee, total hip and partial knee replacements.”



## Back in Service: Spine Surgery helps Local Mechanic Refuel



For Earl Rogers, well-known mechanic and friend to many in Thayer, Missouri, summer of 2022 was all about getting his life back.

After suffering from severe back pain for a stretch of time, Rogers reached the point earlier in the year of what he thought was no hope.

"Over a year ago, my pain started in my legs – of course, people like me kind of let things go," Rogers said. "It gradually got worse and went to my back, and eventually, I couldn't sleep. It affected my work and my social life and about drove me crazy. The pain took over – my mind and my body."

Having worked at Rogers "Buddy's" Service Station in Thayer for over 40 years, Rogers has made many lifelong friends who have become return customers to service their transportation. Rogers described the back pain he experienced as something that affected not only his life but that of his friends and community:

"My day begins at 7:30 in the morning and ends at anywhere from 5:30 to 7:00 at night on concrete, pumping gas, all day long. We service a lot of cars and do a lot of mechanic work – there's a lot of pulling, tugging, lifting – it's all physical labor. So many friends saw me going downhill. When I started having back trouble, we started closing the station one day a week. I just couldn't take it. I had a lot of my friends and customers worried about me."

At this point, Rogers decided he had to get medical help. He visited his primary care physician and was referred to see Dr. Edwin Roeder at Ozarks Healthcare Orthopedics and Spine. After conducting X-rays, Roeder sent Rogers to his colleague, Dr. Troy Caron, orthopedic surgeon at Ozarks Healthcare Orthopedics and Spine. Caron suggested treating Rogers with pain injections first before visiting the next option – surgery. Into his treatment, Rogers agreed injections weren't the fix-all – surgery was the answer.

"I told him I had reached my limit," Rogers said. "Dr. Caron said, 'Earl, I can help you get back to at least a 90-percent better life.' I told him to set the surgery up as soon as we could. And on June 3, I had the surgery and walked out of there the same afternoon with feeling back in my toes."

Caron diagnosed Rogers with spinal stenosis, which is one of the most common conditions he sees in patients at his clinic. "Earl had moderate to severe spinal stenosis," Caron said. "This is when the spinal canal where the nerves travel gets narrow and starts to pinch off the nerves. I performed a minimally invasive decompression, which opens up the space where the nerves are getting compressed."

A little over a month out from his recovery, Rogers said he was taking it easy and continues to check in with Caron to make sure he's progressing with healing properly.

"I feel better than I have in over a year," Rogers said. "My mind is back – I'm getting what I call my old Earl back."

Rogers says he has a mission now of fixing more than just his friends' cars – he wants to help others feel as good as he does post-procedure.

"I was scared and never had surgery – I know others may be scared too to get help," Rogers said. "I go with my gut. I didn't have any doubts with Dr. Caron - he was dead-on positive and knew what was wrong. I know a lot of people who have pain like I did, and if I can help one person to not go through all the pain and misery, telling my story is worth it."

Caron can attest to patients not seeking help soon enough – while understandable, fear is a concern he wants to address quickly with his patients when it comes to procedures like Rogers's.

"I'm glad to see patients get better from this procedure," Caron said. "It can make a significant difference in their quality of life. People like to lump all spine surgeries together – this is not a fusion procedure where rods and screws are placed. Minimally invasive decompression is still spine surgery, but it is done in the out-patient setting, and patients are up on their feet the same day of surgery."

"Stories like Earl's mean we are growing our medical group and serving our purpose of helping patients get medical care they need close to home, without having to interrupt life," Tom Keller, Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. "Adding to our infrastructure of physicians and specialties helps us accomplish just this. Being focused on our community's health means we are focused on growing for our community."

Now back to his "normal Earl," Rogers says he is nothing but full of gratitude for Caron and his help in getting his life back.

"I thank God I went to see him," Rogers said. "I'm not pushing myself to overdo it like he told me, but I'm feeling so good and love it."

## Ozarks Healthcare's ACHC Certification for Level II Primary Stroke Center

Ozarks Healthcare achieved its Level II Primary Stroke Center certification through the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) in 2022. Certification is a process through which healthcare organizations demonstrate compliance with national standards. Certification by ACHC reflects an organization's dedication and commitment to meeting standards that facilitate a higher level of performance and patient care.

In October of 1996, Ozarks Healthcare administered tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) for the first time. tPA was the first treatment for acute ischemic stroke to receive Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in 1996. The timely administration of tPA can save lives by dissolving the clots in a blood vessel during a stroke, which can also limit the long-term damage from a stroke.

The neurological care at Ozarks Healthcare has evolved since its start over 30 years ago. With the health system's status as a Level II Stroke Center, Ozarks Healthcare's "neuro warriors" are able to treat stroke at first sight and can help patients recover from neuro damage, working across multiple therapy specialties.





# Stroke Community Education Dinner

**D**r. Clara Applegate, neurologist at Ozarks Healthcare Neurology, presented an engaging conversation about stroke, stroke prevention tips, and how to respond in the event of a stroke at a special community education dinner in June of 2022.

Approximately 40 attendees gathered to ask questions and have one-on-one discussions with Dr. Applegate after the dinner.

This was the first time to host one of our traditional community education dinners since before the COVID-19 pandemic - we enjoyed seeing the smiles of so many from our community. We are always honored to share important health education with others.



## Neuro-Warriors

The neurological care at Ozarks Healthcare is noteworthy because several elements come together in ways you rarely see in hospitals this size — or almost any size for that matter.

“We have a small center, but it’s a center of excellence,” Dr. Clara Applegate, the department’s neurologist who’s been in practice here for more than 30 years, said. “We had the first stroke team in southern Missouri, which we opened within a year of the publication of tPA as a treatment for stroke. We not only said we were going to be a Level II stroke center, which means being able to do everything including tPA for treatment of stroke, but once we did it, we’ve remained a Level II stroke center all these years.”

Applegate is used to the “small but mighty” tag; for the bulk of her career in West Plains, she’s been the only neurologist here, committed to treating people who might not otherwise have access to care.

“The No. 1 diagnosis here is migraines,” she said. “Alzheimer’s is probably 20 percent of my practice. Epilepsy is a significant part of my practice; I do adults and children. Parkinson’s and stroke are probably 10 to 15 percent each.”



In her work, Applegate is surrounded by a team of medical professionals, one of whom is Sharon Sowder, a speech language pathologist. With 35 years in her field and 16 working for Ozarks Healthcare, she’s another rarity in a hospital this size.

“I have a wide variety in my caseload on a daily basis,” she said. “I see stroke patients, head and neck cancer patients, Parkinson’s patients, ALS. I also have a subset called augmentative communication where I evaluate patients for a speech-generating device. That’s new.”

Sowder has the most seniority among the department’s 15 therapists, but regardless of tenure, the range of expertise on display here daily is broad. That, combined with frequent collaboration with other specialists, helps patients get what they need all in one place.

“The collaboration is key, in my opinion, especially for a stroke patient where you’re coordinating with the physical therapists, the occupational therapists, the discharge planners, the doctor, the nurse,” Sowder said. “Everything is coordinated to provide everything for that patient when they get ready to either go home or go to a nursing home. We’ve set that up for success once they leave our building.”

A fellow professional with whom Sowder frequently collaborates is Doug Dunbar, a physical therapist certified in LSVT Big, a treatment protocol focusing specifically on Parkinson's patients.

"LSVT Big addresses mobility issues that you see in Parkinson's patients, such as the typical shuffling gait, no arm swing and balance issues," he said. "Parkinson's is a progressive neurological disorder, and there is no known cure. However, some of the symptoms can be controlled with medication, so the sooner we get the patient after diagnosis, the better. Sharon (Sowder) and I treat a lot of the Parkinson's patients together because Parkinson's has a voice component as well."

Dunbar said bringing different specialists together, each with their own toolbox of treatment methods, means Ozarks Healthcare professionals can not only treat patients but educate families as well. Being able to provide these services through a small-town hospital is particularly meaningful, he said.

"We have a lot of clinics, and each has an LSVT-trained staff member there with the exception of one, and we're working on getting that corrected," he said. "We're able to offer that service to eight or nine counties, so patients aren't having to drive to Springfield or St. Louis or somewhere to get that expertise. We're here to see patients at all levels and accommodate their needs in a timely manner."

Integrating the work of the department into the wider Ozarks Healthcare community is the job of Tracy Litchfield, stroke and STEMI coordinator. Her role, while typically less visible to patients, serves a critical function in the department's mission to promote stroke awareness, inform other medical specialties and hold itself accountable to high-performance standards. "I spend a lot of my time collecting data, evaluating that, implementing education for both our patients and our staff, whether that be patient discharge information or education we can do to improve things for our patients from a staff standpoint," she said. "I also play a role in keeping other medical personnel at the hospital up to date. We do annual online training and complete competencies with staff members to make sure they understand how to treat an acute stroke patient, how to administer the medication, all those things."

Litchfield, who's been at Ozarks Healthcare for five years, stepped into this job last year. She said what she enjoys most is working in a team environment.

"People here want to work together for the good of our patients and the good of our communities," she said. "I like that I get to see the process from beginning to end, whether I am directly at the bedside with a patient or just looking at it from a data-gathering standpoint.

"I get to see how they came in and everything that we do for them, and then get to see there was a good outcome. It's nice to know I can evaluate data with the stroke team and be able to say this is what we're doing well and this is an opportunity for improvement. I think that's probably what I enjoy the most."

*Story credit: Dwain Hebda, Wheelhouse Publishing*

*Photography credit: James Moore, Wheelhouse Publishing*

## Girls on Film: Ozarks Healthcare invests in New Digital Mammography



The new expansion at Ozarks Healthcare is more than just fresh paint and coordinated exam rooms. It's also home to new medical technology that improves outcomes and the patient experience.

Nowhere is that fact more evident than with the hospital's new digital mammography equipment, which not only delivers a higher degree of detail, but it also allows women to complete this critical screening in less time and with less discomfort.

"Those mammograms are so important," Michelle Haney, patient navigator, said. "As we've reached out to remind women about their screenings, we tell them we have the

3D mammogram screening now and they're really excited about it. They feel very reassured, very confident and they're very happy that they don't have to travel outside of West Plains to have access to that."

The technology, which is fast becoming the industry standard, improves upon previous mammography technology in several ways, starting with the complexity of the images.

"The easiest way to understand it is to think of your breast as a cake," Glenda Kentner, chief mammographer who's been with Ozarks Healthcare for 30 years, said. "With regular mammography, you see a little spot, like a little area on the icing. What 3D does is it takes off that top layer of icing and you can see under it. Then, if you need to look further, you can see under that. It goes in millimeters and it goes all the way through the breast, taking one little layer off at a time."

The new imaging technology is also more accurate when reading denser breast tissue, as is typical in younger women. This is changing the decades-old school of medical thought about who's really at risk of breast cancer.

"We're finding cancer in women younger and younger," Laurie Birchfield, Imaging Director, said. "I think that's the biggest

impact I've seen, and I've been dealing with 3D mammography for probably the last eight years. With younger women, you can't always feel those knots until we get them on the 3D. With this technology, we can see through the dense tissue that we couldn't see with digital mammography on its own, so we're picking it up sooner, which is better."

The new technology also performs its task in a way that's less stressful on the patient, Kentner said.

"Everything that we do is more advanced," she said. "We usually do two projections per picture, which the ladies seem to find very easy to do. Before, we had some say, 'I just can't hold my breath and stay still that long.' As of yet, we've not had that problem while getting these images."

The two digital mammography units also feature Smart Curve design, which makes the screening process more comfortable.

"Smart Curve is more focused on the paddles," Birchfield said. "At one time many years ago, paddles were very, very square. Smart Curve focuses on a new curved paddle design that forms a little bit more to the breast tissue. This is something that really helps the patient's comfort."

The new technology, which was put into service in early March [of 2022], is already garnering rave reviews from patients and healthcare workers alike. And that's good news considering the backlog of screenings the hospital is still dealing with created by the pandemic.

"I think if we can take something positive out of COVID, it raised awareness of people's health," Haney said. "A lot of people passed these types of things off as not being serious until, all of a sudden, they see how the littlest thing can turn into a big thing. Everyone knows somebody who has been affected by cancer. And here, we're a tightknit community, so a lot of our patients who do have cancer, we know them and we have coworkers that know them. It's like part of our family getting sick."

The next chapter for the 3D mammography is already in the works, as Ozarks Healthcare plans to christen a mobile mammography unit this fall, bringing the imaging technology to even more patients throughout the hospital's service area.

"We want to see an increase in the healthy lifestyle of all of the women in our community," Haney said. "With every conversation we have, we make it personal because these are our neighbors. These are people that we see in the grocery store every day. This is personal. We try to express the importance of the test. We tell women all the time, if you're not going to get screened for yourself, then do it for your granddaughter, do it for your sister, do it for your cousin, your mother. Give them peace of mind. We are very focused on generational growth and education."

*Story credit: Dwain Hebda, Wheelhouse Publishing*

*Photography credit: Jason Masters, Wheelhouse Publishing*



## Local Breast Cancer Survivor shares Story of Survival and Encourages Awareness through Ozarks Healthcare Foundation's Mobile Mammography Campaign



Originally launched in 2021, the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation's fundraising campaign to purchase a mobile mammography unit for Ozarks Healthcare continued in 2022. Alongside the campaign, stories of breast cancer's effects on our community members like Dianne Hoover continued to touch and inspire us.

Hoover is a West Plains local by way of transplant, a mother, grandmother, widow, and breast cancer survivor. Having been connected to healthcare through working as an associate assistant for the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation almost 20 years ago and later as Volunteer Director for Ozarks Healthcare At Home: Hospice (at the time, Ozarks Medical Center Riverways), Hoover was no stranger to the medical field or the word "cancer."

Hoover's role in healthcare took on a new meaning when her husband, Rick, received a diagnosis of myelodysplastic syndrome, a disorder caused the production of blood cells is disrupted, from Dr. Charles Morgan at Ozarks Healthcare's Cancer Treatment Center.

To spend more time as a caregiver for her husband during his illness, Hoover transitioned to serving as Volunteer Director of Ozarks Healthcare's Hospital. During his care, Hoover said she was reminded that she was beginning to ignore her own health.

"I retired early from the hospital for him," Hoover said. "In those 4 years, I neglected myself which is what caregivers sometimes do. I put off things like mammograms."

While Hoover's husband received care at Ozarks Healthcare's Cancer Treatment Center, Monica Oaks, mammogram technologist at Ozarks Healthcare, became her figurative angel on her shoulder, reminding her of the importance of checking in on her own health.

"I had gotten to know Monica through our volunteer dinners," Hoover said. "She would come and help and was just wonderful. Every time she would see me and my husband in the Cancer Treatment Center, she would say you need to have your mammogram! That sweet little face – she was always telling me."

After Hoover's husband passed away, she knew something was not right with her health, but a diagnosis of breast cancer took her by surprise.

"I knew I wasn't well," she said. "I started on my medical list and worked my way down. Because of Monica, I made my appointment to get my mammogram when I maybe would have put it off longer. I feel like she saved my life. I caught it early and feel like it was a huge blessing."

Hoover had her cancer surgically removed just a few months after her husband's passing. While her surgery was successful, the news of a cancer diagnosis is something Hoover says she will never forget.

"You never know how you're going to feel until you hear those words," Hoover said. "Even with my experience working in healthcare and being in the hospital, those words when they are talking about you are just mind-blowing. You think about everything in life you could miss out on. I have grandchildren and children. It hits you hard and you think about all the things you could miss out on. You start playing it over and over in your mind - all the things you don't want to think about. But I have so much faith in our Cancer Treatment Center and doctors and having them there to help me navigate the system made me so much more comfortable than if I were someone who didn't have any of that. I wouldn't go anywhere else. We're so blessed and lucky to have what we do here."

While Hoover has always been an advocate for breast cancer awareness, especially since her sister and aunt passed away from the disease, she said she never thought the impact would affect her so directly. Because of her experience and enthusiasm for our health system, Hoover decided to share her story and make a special donation to the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation's fundraising campaign for a mobile mammography unit. Hoover is making it her personal goal to schedule her mammograms regularly and wants to encourage other women to do the same.

"I put off things during COVID, and I know others did too," Hoover said. "I will be better about scheduling mammograms now. Catching it early is one of the best diagnoses there is."

# Beautiful Minds: Ozarks Healthcare Behavioral Health Center celebrates 25 Years



Over the past several years, mental health issues have garnered more and more attention, prompting the medical community to step up to provide help to those who need it. Ozarks Healthcare Behavioral Health Center (BHC) has been well ahead of that curve, marking 25 years of providing mental health services in a caring, compassionate environment.

“The attention to mental health issues has changed a lot, mainly due to acceptance,” Richard McGee, who’s been with the practice for a decade and its director for nine years, said. “The stigma around mental health has been a deterrent for a lot of people to seek services for a long time. There’s far more acceptance of mental health as a treatable condition, and that’s allowed more people to seek help.”

McGee said at the heart of the practice’s sustained growth is its variety of services and the many ways in which Ozarks Healthcare BHC provides access to patients.

“One of the phrases we use is, ‘There is no wrong door,’” McGee said. “The people who come in for our services come from a variety of backgrounds, and they also come with a variety of issues. Some are very severe, some chronic, some acute, some are people who just need a little bit of help. Services run the gamut, with the big ones being medication services, counseling, case management and crisis services. We also have some walk-in services that are available. During COVID, we were doing a lot of services over the phone, and we still do some over the phone. It really depends on the individual.”

It’s a far cry from the earliest days of the practice when services were largely limited to medication and counseling, notably psychiatry. McGee said the growth of the behavioral health center has been thanks to continued investment by hospital leadership, which has expanded the center to 110 employees. Still, it’s a challenge to meet the demand.

“The State of Missouri has been very progressive about pushing for mental health services,” he said. “Our area is unique because we cover the seven counties of South Central Missouri, which represent roughly nine percent of the state’s land



mass. It's a big area we have to cover, and it's only two percent of the population. Based on the need for services and the referrals that we see coming in, we are a relatively large part of the organization, but as community mental health centers go, we're not huge."

Ozark Healthcare's continued commitment and investment recognizes the importance of this category of healthcare, despite the challenges of market size and patient need. Jennifer Wheeler, clinic manager, has worked here for 22 years and watched as the small practice grew into a cornerstone of healthcare for the region.

"Smaller communities like ours, there are a lot of little mom-and-pop mental health places that offer counseling, but there's no psychiatry even close to us," she said. "It's at least an hour's drive to see a psychiatrist if you don't come to us."

Longevity is one thing, maintaining a consistently high quality of care over time is something very different. Here again, Ozarks Healthcare BHC has distinguished itself, ranking in the 99th percentile for patient satisfaction, per tracking service Press Ganey.

"We put a very high focus on patient satisfaction," Wheeler said. "We have a group of behavioral health employees who make up the patient experience team. We meet every month and we talk about different ways that we can increase patient satisfaction. We also have drop boxes around the clinic where people can put in comments and suggestions. I think our No. 1 thing is we make sure our patients are heard. When they tell us they would like to see something different or that they need something different or another service, we listen to that and we act upon it. That's one of the things we're most proud of."

Ozarks Healthcare BHC achieved another milestone recently, earning the designation of a certified community behavioral health organization.

"That means we basically meet the highest level of certification that you can obtain for a mental health organization," McGee said. "It's a national standard established by SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services organization. It took us several years to develop policies and procedures and put in all the programs that help us meet that."

The practice continues to set the bar for community mental healthcare and wellness. It will soon open a crisis intervention center, which acts like an emergency room for mental health conditions, as well as a substance abuse disorder program. It's also stepping up efforts to reach into area schools and law enforcement to provide various educational programs and healthcare services on behavioral health issues. It's an ambitious agenda and not without challenges, but one Wheeler is confident can be fulfilled as the department embarks upon its second quarter-century of service.

"I am proud to be a part of behavioral health," she said. "It's been an amazing journey and experience for me. I had never worked in the medical field before, so I didn't know what I was getting into. But I have thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a great group of people with great big hearts for our patients."

## Breaking the Stigma: Ozarks Healthcare Behavioral Health Center brings Mental Health Advocate Kevin Hines to West Plains



To help raise awareness of suicide prevention and destigmatize mental health, the Ozarks Healthcare Behavioral Health Center (BHC) hosted award-winning mental health and suicide prevention activist and speaker Kevin Hines to the West Plains Civic Center on Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

In 2000, 19-year-old Hines attempted to take his life by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. Many factors contributed to his incredible survival and story of hope, including a sea lion which kept him afloat until help arrived. Now a best-selling author, global public speaker, and award-winning documentary filmmaker, Hines travels the world sharing his story with people of all ages, along with the art of wellness and the ability to survive pain with true resilience.

"Mental health is a topic that is always important, and we are excited for Kevin to share his message of hope, healing, and recovery with our community and local students," Tianna Niesen, mental health therapist at Ozarks Healthcare's BHC, said. "We hope that Kevin's message will inspire us all to be more mindful of our mental health, and as Kevin says, recognize that 'it's okay not to be okay, but it's not okay not to ask for help.'"

The Ozarks Healthcare BHC provided two opportunities for community members to hear Hines speak on March 22 for free. The first session

was held for area schools and college students. Hines walked out to a packed arena of students from Ozarks Healthcare's service area. The second session was open to the public to attend.

Event sponsors included the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation, West Plains R-7 School District, Willow Springs School District, Missouri State University – West Plains, Air Evac Lifeteam, Crossway Fellowship Church, Pomona Christian Church, local State Farm agent, Ramona Heiney, and West Plains Councilwoman Jessica Nease and Dr. Jesse Rhoads.

Local health experts from Ozarks Healthcare's BHC were present to help provide mental health services at both events. South Howell County Ambulance District and Air Evac Lifeteam also were generously present to provide onsite medical services as needed.

# Ozarks Healthcare opens Crisis Stabilization Center

Ozarks Healthcare's Crisis Stabilization Center located at 1100 Kentucky Ave. (entrance on 6th St.) in West Plains opened to the public in late fall of 2022. The Crisis Stabilization Center is operated by Ozarks Healthcare's Behavioral Health Center (BHC) and is a medically monitored program funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) that provides an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization.

In 2021, Missouri Governor Mike Parson set aside \$15 million dollars to fund six new crisis stabilization centers across the state. Ozarks Healthcare's BHC was awarded funding from the Missouri DMH to establish a crisis center in its Service Area 18.

"We are proud to add more services to support the needs of our community," Tom Keller, Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. "Our Crisis Stabilization Center will help address the issue of those in crisis needing real-time care and reduce these types of visits to our Emergency Department and strain on our healthcare staff and also those in law enforcement who may not always have all the resources to help these individuals."

The Crisis Stabilization Center provides services including: psychosocial assessment, psychiatric evaluation and medical services, crisis intervention and brief therapy, peer support, case management and referral services, such as Medicaid applications, community resources, employment application assistance, housing application assistance, transportation assistance, and referrals for physical and mental health.



Anyone in a mental health crisis who requires stabilization either through brief therapy techniques, medication management, or both, adults who have case management needs, including assistance to accessing sheltered housing, or adults who are currently abusing substances and require urgent assistance in accessing inpatient substance abuse facilities are considered eligible of the Crisis Stabilization Center's services.

While plans are in place for the Crisis Stabilization Center to eventually serve as a 24-hour model, its hours are currently 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

# Growing the Future of Healthcare - M\*A\*S\*H Camp



Ozarks Healthcare hosted a M\*A\*S\*H (Medical Academy of Science and Health) Camp during summer of 2022 for approximately 100 area students interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. M\*A\*S\*H Camp put a twist on the traditional concept of a summer camp and gives students hands-on opportunities to explore different areas of the healthcare field and learn from physicians on Ozarks Healthcare's main campus.

"While we had to put a hold on our M\*A\*S\*H Camp over the past couple of years due to COVID-19, we

are excited to be able to relaunch this amazing opportunity for young people in our area who are interested in any aspect of healthcare this summer," Karlee Marvin, Education Supervisor at Ozarks Healthcare, said. "From surgery to clinical patient care, Ozarks Healthcare providers from multiple medical specialties were onsite to share their experiences and offer interactive exercises to give students real glimpses into the healthcare field."

The program was created for students who will be entering into grades 7-12 in fall of 2022. A three-day session was held for students entering grades 9-12, and a one-day session was held for students entering grades 7-8 on July 14. Lunch, snacks, a set of scrubs, and a certificate of completion were provided to each student in attendance.

Students explored different healthcare careers, including orthopedic surgery, radiology, pulmonology, emergency medicine, rehabilitation services, primary care, nursing, and more. Ozarks Healthcare physicians also provided occupational information to students, including education requirements, salary ranges, and the benefits of practicing in their fields of expertise.



## Growing the Future of Healthcare - Ozarks Healthcare's First Nursing Externship Cohort



**F**ourteen nursing students completed Ozarks Healthcare's pilot of a nursing externship program in 2022. Nursing students who were a part of the cohort spent ten weeks of the summer months gaining knowledge and real-life clinical skills across the health system.

"These nursing externs learned hard and soft skills, including communication, attitude, teamwork, critical thinking, professionalism, empathy, adaptability, and initiative in strong work ethic," Karlee Marvin, Ozarks Healthcare Education Supervisor and Nurse Residency Coordinator, said. "This was our first time to host nursing externs, and we are excited to be able to continue educating a younger generation of nurses here in our community. We are already looking forward to our next nursing externship cohort to start in January of 2023."

Ozarks Healthcare's Externship Program is for students who have successfully completed the first year of nursing school. Similar to the health system's nurse residency program (Ozarks Healthcare's Nurse Residency Program is a 12-week program for graduates of nursing school), the externship program features rotations through different departments of Ozarks Healthcare's hospital, which exposes students to different sectors of healthcare and the organization's culture of compassionate care.

## Growing the Future of Healthcare - Nurse Residency

**M**ore than 20 new registered nurses (RNs) were added to Ozarks Healthcare's staff through 2022 upon completion of our health system's nurse residency program. Ozarks Healthcare's Nurse Residency Program is a 12-week program for graduates of nursing school that features rotations through different departments of the hospital.

Graduate nurses spent time in approximately 28 departments of Ozarks Healthcare's hospital over the course of the program.

"It has been an honor to guide these new nurses as they expand their skills at Ozarks Healthcare and prepare for their beginning years of providing compassionate care to patients," Karlee Marvin, Ozarks Healthcare Education Supervisor and Nurse Residency Coordinator, said. "We are proud to welcome these new nurses to our team at Ozarks Healthcare."

In addition to exposing nurse residents to its culture of care and teamwork, Ozarks Healthcare's Nurse Residency Program provides didactic and clinical experience across multiple departments and specialties so that residents have the chance to identify a health specialty or department they are most interested in working upon completion of the program.

Nurses from Ozarks Healthcare's latest residency cohorts accepted positions in Ozarks Healthcare's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Emergency Department (ED), Medical/Surgical (Med/Surg) Department, Cardiac Step-down Unit (CSU), Surgery, and Obstetrics (OB) Departments, along with Ozarks Healthcare At Home and Wound Care.

Ozarks Healthcare's Nurse Residency Program begins in January and June of each year. To be eligible, applicants must have completed an RN program within six months and have current RN licensure, preferred or scheduled, with successful completion of the NCLEX within 90 days.



# Growing the Future of Healthcare - Healthcare Workforce Development Consortium

**A**s healthcare workforce shortages continue to be an issue nationwide and locally, the Howell County Commission announced its funding of a partnership between Ozarks Healthcare, the South Central Career Center (SCCC), and Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) to create a healthcare workforce development consortium that will increase sustainability of healthcare careers and recruit more students to professions in healthcare that exist in the community.

The consortium is funded by the Howell County Commission through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the amount of \$380,000 received during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation.

ARPA funds were issued by the federal government to provide additional financial relief in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 at the state and local level. One of the purposes ARPA funds may be used for include response to negative economic impacts, including job training for industries such as healthcare that have suffered employee shortages.

“The Howell County Commission is excited to work with Ozarks Healthcare, the South Central Career Center, and Missouri State University-West Plains, to fulfill a need for a larger and stronger local healthcare workforce,” Mark Collins, Howell County Presiding Commissioner, said. “Through funding this consortium, we will be helping meet the healthcare needs of our community and generations of community members to come.”

The Howell County Commission's funding for the consortium will also create a job opportunity for a career pathways coordinator. The coordinator will work with local school districts and consortium members to guide students who are interested in healthcare careers beginning in 2023.

“Healthcare workforce shortages are one of the main threats to providing quality care in rural Missouri,” Tom Keller,



(Continued)

Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. "We are extremely grateful for the focus the Howell County Commission has put on helping our local health system and community partners replenish and grow the healthcare workforce. Because of the investments of the Howell County Commission, we will be better able to continue caring for our community's wellbeing and create and fill more local healthcare job opportunities through this consortium."

Each partnering organization involved in the consortium will help meet the overall goal of building the local healthcare workforce. Ozarks Healthcare will provide tuition reimbursements and scholarships with a work commitment. Scholarships will be funded through the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation.

"Our Foundation is here to support our health system and our patients," Josh Reeves, Vice President of Development and Advocacy at Ozarks Healthcare, said. "Ensuring a strong frontline of caregivers is a part of that mission. In the state of Missouri, there are currently 36,479 full-time nursing and nursing assistant positions vacant. Given current rates, Ozarks Healthcare will need to fill over 150 registered nurse (RN) and 70 licensed practical nurse (LPN) positions over the next three years. By increasing ongoing financial support for students in the healthcare field and opportunities for gaining training locally, our Foundation will be contributing towards the medical care of families and friends within our community."

MSU-WP will focus on increasing capacity in its nursing program.

"Our nursing program enrollment is now at the highest limit established by our accrediting agency," Dr. Dennis Lancaster, MSU-WP Chancellor, said. "That's why Missouri State-West Plains plans to soon seek approval to raise that limit in order to meet the demand for registered nurses in our area. Having a partnership with Ozarks Healthcare and the South Central Career Center will mean that a concerted community effort can focus on not just getting more students through our programs but, more importantly, increasing the quality of health care throughout the region. We thank the Howell County Commission for their assistance and great vision in helping make this partnership a reality."

The SCCC will focus on a younger generation of those composing the future of the healthcare field by providing early healthcare education to high school students and certificate programs that cater to non-traditional students. The SCCC will also take a proactive role in sharing the diversity of the healthcare field to students.

"Through the Nursing Early Admissions Track and by partnering with thirteen area high schools, the South Central Career Center will be able to train the next generation of practical nurses for earlier entry into the field," Josh Cotter, SCCC Director, said. "This program will reduce the amount of time from post-high school graduation to program completion from approximately 22 months to only eight months. We could not have done this without the partnership of Ozarks Healthcare, Missouri State University-West Plains, and the support of Senator Eslinger and Governor Parson."

For the duration of 2022, consortium members focused heavily on introducing the initiative and recruiting students at local education institutions.



## Recognizing Exceptional, Compassionate Care

Three Ozarks Healthcare nurses were honored with The DAISY Award® For Extraordinary Nurses for their level of compassionate care throughout the year.

The DAISY Award is part of the DAISY Foundation's programs to recognize the super-human efforts nurses perform every day. The not-for-profit DAISY Foundation is based in Glen Ellen, CA, and was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes. Patrick died at the age of 33 in late 1999 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families.



### **BJ Richardson, RN**

BJ Richardson, registered nurse (RN) in Ozarks Healthcare's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), was honored with The DAISY Award® for the compassion she showed to a patient and his family during his care. Richardson has been a nurse for 30 years at Ozarks Healthcare. Richardson was nominated to receive a DAISY Award by Dr. Sandra Abrams for the compassion she shared with her husband, Keith, while being under the care of Ozarks Healthcare's ICU due to complications of COVID-19. Keith passed away due to the severity of his complications. Abrams wanted to recognize Richardson for the heartfelt care she provided during his hospitalization:

"We will be forever grateful for the love and compassion BJ showed my husband, Keith," Abrams said. "When I was finally able to see him through his door, BJ would be sitting by his side, holding his hand and helping him calm his breathing and anxiety that comes with COVID-19 pneumonia. While my heart was breaking, I was so thankful to have someone with him who was so compassionate and caring."

Abrams and fellow staff from Ozarks Healthcare surprised Richardson with a presentation of her DAISY Award during National Nurses Week.

### **Savannah McCune, RN**

Savannah McCune, registered nurse (RN) in Ozarks Healthcare's Obstetrics (OB) Department, was awarded The DAISY Award® for the level of compassionate care she provided to a mother and her newborn during delivery. McCune was

(Continued)

nominated to receive a DAISY Award by Gretchen Sansegraw, who recently delivered her newborn at Ozarks Healthcare's Women's Center.

Sansegraw wanted to recognize McCune for keeping her calm and making the delivery process a special experience for her and her family:

"When I discovered I would be having a C-section, I was very nervous and scared," Sansegraw said. "Savannah held my hand and promised she would take care of me. SHE DID! She literally had me laughing while I was on the operating table. She took photos of the first moments of my son's life, and that was incredibly special for my husband and I. Post-op, she never left my side until she knew I was okay and so was my baby ... She helped me feel like a human being again after a long and tiring labor and delivery. She was an incredible support through the entire process, and I will forever have love and respect in my heart for her!"

Sansegraw and her family, along with some of Ozarks Healthcare's staff, surprised McCune with the presentation of her DAISY Award.

### **Layken Doss, LPN**

Layken Doss, licensed practical nurse (LPN) at Ozarks Healthcare in Mountain View, was nominated to receive The DAISY Award® by Terry Hodge, who is a foster parent to several children, for her compassion and ability to work with children as they receive primary care. Hodge wanted to recognize Doss always making doctors' visits a pleasant experience for her and her family:

"My family has been going to OZH in Mountain View for many years," Hodge said. "I have always had a good experience every time. I currently foster children so I am in and out needing assessment or just overall primary care. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of a Daisy Award than Layken. I don't feel like clinic nurses get enough credit ... she is always pulled in many different directions. Sometimes, she is answering the phone or sitting at the desk checking people in. I have always seen her roaming and drawing blood. She is one of two nurses I will let draw my blood because she is so good at it. When I have to bring one of my children in, sometimes they are scared and nervous, and she will have them laughing and smiling before they leave. I will always try to get in to that clinic because from the time we walk in, our experience is the absolute best it can be. Layken is just one of those nurses who you know cares about her patients and treats them like family. She was meant to be a nurse and is deserving of this Daisy Award!"

Hodge and her family, along with some of Ozarks Healthcare's staff and Doss's family, surprised Doss with the presentation of her DAISY Award while she was working at Ozarks Healthcare in Mountain View.

## Ozarks Healthcare recognized at 22nd annual HealthCare Service Excellence Conference



Ozarks Healthcare was recently recognized through multiple awards at the 22nd annual HealthCare Service Excellence Conference hosted by Custom Learning Systems in Orlando, Florida.

The Summit Awards ceremony and Night of Excellence is a North American wide recognition program established by the HealthCare Service Excellence Conference. Pinnacle Achievers in each of the 18 award categories are eligible to receive the prestigious Summit Award, which recognizes significant achievement and dedication in improving initiatives in the following areas:

**Service,** Quality, **People,** Finance, Growth, Community

- The quality of service for patients/customers
- The quality of work life for professionals
- The performance of organizations

At the Night of Excellence on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, 78 Pinnacle Achievers and 23 Summit Award Recipients were recognized.

Ozarks Healthcare Summit Award winners for 2022 included:

- Jessica Affholder, Ozarks Healthcare Neurology - Service Excellence Advisor First Year
- Karlee Marvin, Ozarks Healthcare Emergency Department - Implementation Coordinator
- Louise Thompson, Ozarks Healthcare Environmental Services – Exceptional Employee

Ozarks Healthcare Pinnacle Achievers for 2022 included:

- Chelsey Vanwinkle, Ozarks Healthcare Behavioral Health Center (BHC) – SEA Super Coach
- Sarah James, Ozarks Healthcare Therapies – OASIS Team Captain
- EZ Niles, Ozarks Healthcare IT Department – OASIS Super Coach
- Josh Reeves, Ozarks Healthcare Vice President of Development and Advocacy – Motivating Administrator
- Sarah James, Joy Anderson, Holly Isom, Brandilyn Stephens, Amy Tucker, Hope Smith, Dewayne Cook, Valarie Williams, Amber Osborne, Melynni Yarber, Melody Hubbell – OASIS Team
- Tianna Niesen, Myriah Wallace, Billie Weaver, Toni Autrey, Mandy Lindsey, Addy Van os Keuls, Chelsey VanWinkle, Ozarks Healthcare BHC – DO-it Improvement Project
- Ozarks Healthcare Dermatology – Medical Clinic of Choice

Ozarks Healthcare also received first place in a video competition related to the concept of service excellence. A group of Ozarks Healthcare staff members traveled to Orlando to be recognized at the conference's awards ceremony and attend breakout sessions on a variety of educational topics.

Custom Learning Systems is recognized as a leading expert in helping healthcare organizations transform their service delivery by creating a culture of engagement and accountability. The company achieves this through dynamic educational initiatives, personalized coaching, and consulting. Ozarks Healthcare is one of hundreds of healthcare organizations have partnered with Custom Learning Systems in their journey to excellence in patient satisfaction.

## Honoring 1,200 Years of Service at Ozarks Healthcare

Ozarks Healthcare celebrated a combined total of 1,218 years of experience at Ozarks Healthcare from 72 employees at our 2022 Longevity Banquet.

Ozarks Healthcare recognized coworkers annually who have dedicated ten or more years of service to serving the health of the community. Staff being celebrated this year were able to commemorate their service with a small gathering at Rubydoo's Vintage Events in West Plains.

"One of our goals is to be the provider and employer of choice," Tom Keller, Ozarks Healthcare President and CEO, said. "We can't do that without our staff. It's because of these staff being recognized and their hard work that we have been able to make significant strides to this goal."

Ruth Warren, Senior Executive Assistant in Ozarks Healthcare's Administration Department, received recognition for 48 years of service, the longest tenure of any Ozarks Healthcare staff member to date.



## The One and Only Ruth Warren calls it a Career



When people say Ruth Warren is one of a kind, they aren't just employing a well-worn figure of speech. Not only does 48 years make her a singular example of dedication to Ozarks Healthcare, but within the context of the organization's history, it's a phrase that fits literally.

The hospital created the position of executive assistant to the CEO a few years into Warren's tenure here, and she's been a mainstay of the executive administrative team ever since. Many have come and gone in the hospital's top executive role — five CEOs and five interim CEOs, by her recollection — among whom she alone has been the common denominator.

"I think I just enjoyed the people the most," Warren said to explain her longevity. "I have a

relationship with the board because I support the board of directors, and I support the medical staff. Every day is something different and I think that's the thing that's kept my work interesting. At the time I started, there were directors under the CEO, but we didn't have many vice presidents or assistant administrator positions. That has grown tremendously over the years. I think all of that constant change has kept my interest. There was no time to get bored."

Warren grew up in Thomasville and graduated from Alton High School. After one year of business college in Springfield, she joined Ozarks Healthcare as the only on-staff medical transcriptionist, reporting for work on Christmas Eve in 1974.

"The lady that was in the position before me had resigned, and I started on Christmas Eve to allow extra training time with her," she said. "I don't remember how long I was the sole transcriptionist, but it was a few years before we hired a second one."

In addition to her transcription duties, Warren assisted the executive leadership with typing correspondence and other one-off tasks. Then one day, human resources came calling with a new opportunity.

"We'd had a CEO change, and the HR director came to me and asked if I was interested in this position, the executive assistant to the CEO," she said. "I took the position, and I'm the only one who's ever had it since."

To say Warren's seen a lot over almost half a century is a gross understatement. During her tenure, the hospital reinvented itself several times over, bringing online an ICU, additional operating rooms and surgical space, the emergency department and most recently, the stunning medical office building. Multiple new services and medical specialties also blossomed during her career.

"Looking back, I think what probably stands out to me the most is how much smaller we were back then," she said. "I think it was 66 beds at that time. The medical staff was very small, probably only eight physicians or so. We had one general surgeon, and the others were general family practice physicians who did a variety of services. They did their own surgeries at that time, and we had no specialists to speak of compared to what we have now. Another thing that stands out to me is we had one emergency room, and there was a physician on call. When someone came to the emergency room, the nurse called the physician on call to see that patient."

Not only have the physical dimensions, medical services and market reach of Ozarks greatly expanded since then, but so have the more pedestrian aspects of her career.

"Back then, we had typewriters. Over the years we moved to computers and a lot more automation. Electronic scheduling versus paper calendars written in pencil, that sort of thing," she said.

For all of this change, her core function has remained steadfastly the same: supporting the many chief and secondary executives who have come along through the years, as well as countless board members. Warren said she always looked at her role in part as a navigator, helping new leadership get their bearings with names and faces and fielding inquiries of who to call or how to get things done.

"I think being able to adapt as each new CEO came in, being able to provide the support they needed and being able to guide them with what they needed to know is probably my greatest accomplishment," she said. "That's the expectation of the job, to be that resource. A lot of my responsibility is helping them get to know the organization through policies and practices in addition to the people. There's still a lot to that. People come to me and ask, 'What's the process for this?' or 'Who do I contact for that?' and 'Who can help me do this?' and 'Do you know if we have a policy that directs us on what to do with this?' I still have that role, not just with the CEO, but the vice presidents and many directors."

As for her decision to retire at year's end, Warren said there's no intrigue to it — after 48 years and one pandemic, she's just ready for a change. Instead of tending to C-Suite executives, she's looking forward to soaking in more time with her husband, two sons, daughter-in-law, and especially her 15-month-old granddaughter, Evelyn Noelle.

Asked if she was tempted to ride it out to an even 50 years in the role, she chuckled.

"Maybe just a little bit," she said. "But not enough."

*Story credit: Dwain Hebda, Wheelhouse Publishing*

*Photography credit: James Moore, Wheelhouse Publishing*

## Encouraging Wellness at the Earliest Stages of Life



**K**ayala Cooper, occupational therapist at Ozarks Healthcare Therapies, stayed busy leading Ozarks Healthcare's first pediatric yoga classes. For Cooper, this project started as an idea in her college days – now, she's been able to bring that dream to life through our Therapies Department.

"Pediatric yoga started for me as a final project in college, and working here is the first opportunity I've had to make it actually happen!" Cooper said. "Yoga is such a great way for kids to help with their anxiety and stress, emotional regulation, body awareness, memory, balance, strength, and flexibility."

Cooper said storytelling in a relaxed environment helps get kids moving.

"We present the class in story form to help engage the kids and integrate the poses with the story," she said. "The kids seem to have so much fun in the class, and we have had a great turnout and would love to see this continue to grow."

Over the course of the summer, a full room of children from toddlers to adolescents joined our therapists for weekly pediatric yoga sessions.

Ozarks Healthcare physicians and staff also came together during the later summer months to provide free athletic physicals for student athletes entering grades 7 through 12 in the 2022 – 2023 school year at Ozarks Healthcare Therapies

and all of Ozarks Healthcare's clinics surrounding West Plains. Hundreds of student athletes from West Plains, Alton, Gainesville, Mountain Grove, Mountain View, Thayer, Winona, and Mammoth Spring were able to be checked by Ozarks Healthcare staff to ensure they were ready for a healthy sports season.





# The Story in Numbers

1,379

Number of Coworkers as of  
December 31, 2022

80

Number of Volunteers as of  
December 31, 2022

735

Inpatient Surgeries

2,550

Outpatient Surgeries

114

Licensed Beds

5,246

Discharges

499

Births

26,362

ED Visits

581

Home Health Admissions &  
re-certifications

79,645

Primary Care Encounters

37,939

Specialty Encounters

158,188

Behavioral Health Center  
Encounters

217,699

Therapies Encounters

77,603

Imaging Procedures

## Prescriptions Filled



# A Foundation at Work: Supporting Health and Wellness through Our Community



**T**he Ozarks Healthcare Foundation has never been busier doing exactly what its name suggests – laying a firm groundwork for the health system it supports – than through the year of 2022.

Several business ventures fall under the non-profit's umbrella, which all support the Foundation's philanthropic work in supporting hospital patients and their families in Ozarks Healthcare's community, along with growing healthcare technology, education, training, and recruitment programs.

The support is actually two-fold: in addition to supporting Ozarks Healthcare, the Foundation's businesses provide further economic stability for the communities they serve.

"Our special teams of employees and volunteers work hard to make all pieces of our Foundation work," Karen Yarbrough, Ozarks Healthcare Foundation Manager, said. "Our thrift stores alone set impressive new income records through 2022 – this is largely due in part to the teamwork and the passion of the people we have in place who have big hearts for the work they are doing. With the addition of our coffee shop, we hired 12 new employees through the year. This does not count our volunteers who have found a special calling to spend their time for a meaningful cause with us."

The Foundation's thrift store in West Plains showed a sales increase of more than \$5,000 from the previous year and set profit records for the months of April, July, August, September, and October in 2022. After its original opening in the late '90s, the growth and attention the store has received over the past few years has been impressive, staff said.

"I have worked here for several years and the amount of growth we have undertaken is astounding and all thanks to the support of our community," Emmily Andrews, lead supervisor at the West Plains Ozarks Healthcare Thrift Store, said. "There would have been no way for us to have this size nor reach without our community's generous donations and compassion for what we do."

Having a later operation start in 2018, the Foundation's thrift store in Thayer had an entire record year in 2022, showing a sales increase of more than \$48,000 compared to the previous year and set profit records every month of the year.

"We are totally blessed by the generous outpouring of support from our surrounding communities in the ways of donations, shopping, kindness and friendship that helps us thrive," Angelika Sims, lead supervisor at the Thayer Ozarks Healthcare Thrift

Store, said. “We are always happy to help our customers have a positive and affordable shopping experience from a great variety of merchandise and it is with a grateful heart that I can say we are always happy to serve our community - without them there would be no us.”

Inside Ozarks Healthcare’s main campus, the Foundation continued to make waves with the reopening of its hospital gift shop in a remodeled space and the grand opening of its new coffee shop that proudly serves Starbucks Coffee. The original gift shop closed during COVID-19 and through Ozarks Healthcare’s latest expansion project to allow for construction. The gift shop is primarily operated by volunteers through the Foundation.

“It’s been so special to welcome shoppers back to our space,” Yarbrough said. “Even though we’ve only been up and running a few months, people from the community have already been doing holiday shopping, sending flowers or balloons to their loved one who may be in the hospital, or picking up a gift to brighten someone’s day.”

The Foundation’s coffee shop has also set records in sales nearly every month since its opening in March of 2022. The coffee shop processed more than 58,000 transactions since its opening through the end of 2022. Through the year, nine new employees were hired to make special-crafted beverages, including several from a younger demographic of the community. Coffee shop manager Zac Trotter said this younger workforce has demonstrated great pride in the work they are doing for the Foundation and their community.

“The staff we have brought on board to help run the Foundation’s coffee shop have done a phenomenal job showing enthusiasm and respect for the work they are doing each day,” Trotter said. “It’s so rewarding to hear customers coming to grab a coffee and hear their surprise when our staff remember their favorite selections and greet them with a smile. Customer service is a huge topic of discussion in our world today, but I’m proud to say there’s no shortage of it among our team. It’s amazing to watch these individuals take pride in being a part of something bigger themselves.”



## Celebrating Ozarks Healthcare's 30th Annual Lights of Life Ceremony




The holiday season was celebrated at Ozarks Healthcare with several beloved traditions, including our 30th annual Lights of Life and Tree Lighting. A wonderful turnout of community members gathered with Ozarks Healthcare staff to enjoy our new Christmas tree that is displayed in our main entrance.

Janina West was the guest of honor for the 30th Annual Lights of Life Ceremony, and shared about her husband, Jeff, and his journey as a cancer patient at Ozarks Healthcare. Jeff was a patient at our Cancer Treatment Center for several years, until his passing in 2015. After Jeff passed away, West started a tradition of making gift bags filled with items of comfort to share with our cancer patients through the holidays.

After Jeff received his cancer diagnosis, West said he lived by the mantra, "Nobody should ever take your hope away." West continues to share this legacy with others and plans to serve at Ozarks Healthcare as a volunteer in the future.

Over 300 individuals were honored with a "light of life" through the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation at this year's ceremony. A banner listing their names was proudly displayed in Ozarks Healthcare's main entrance through the holiday season.




**Lights of Life**  
 December 12, 2022  
 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
 1000 N. University Avenue, Clarksville, MO  
 All proceeds benefit the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation  
 For more information, please contact:  
 Amy Papp  
 Director of Special Events  
 amy.papp@ozarkshc.com  
 417.885.1100

## Saving Lives One Bid at a Time

# Saving Lives One Bid at a Time



The Ozarks Healthcare Foundation hosted a special benefit auction at the end of the year for a special cause – funding scholarships for future students entering the healthcare workforce.

“We are excited for the potential this auction has to help our community for years to come,” Josh Reeves, Vice President of Development at Ozarks Healthcare, said. “The future of healthcare has largely to do with the educational opportunities of our local students. This auction helped us start creating more financial avenues for our local youth to access healthcare education and find careers through our scholarship program.”

The Foundation welcomed community members to donate items such as cars, trucks, boats, land, and farm or construction equipment to the auction. Ozarks Healthcare also donated office items, commercial-grade kitchen equipment, and more to the auction.

Proceeds, which totaled to be more than \$57,000, were used to help fund scholarships to students entering the healthcare field and support the Foundation’s mission of helping Ozarks Healthcare provide high-quality, compassionate healthcare through development of equipment, technology, wellness programs, and more.



## 2022 Foundation Board



**Ken Joplin,**  
Chairman



**Newt Brill**



**Nancy Shaw**



**Robin Morgan**



**Shawn Marhefka**



**Bob Eckman**



**Kevin Gleghorn**



**Thomas Keller,**  
President and CEO

## 2022 Foundation Staff



**Josh Reeves**  
Vice President of  
Development and  
Advocacy



**Karen Yarbrough,**  
Foundation Manager



**Dianne Hoover,**  
Foundation Assistant



**Emmily Andrews,**  
Lead Supervisor  
West Plains Thrift Store



**Angelika Sims,**  
Lead Supervisor  
Thayer Thrift Store



**Zac Trotter,**  
Lead Supervisor  
Coffee Shop proudly  
serving Starbucks Coffee

# Foundation Finances

## Mobile Mammography Unit



Raised for the Mobile  
Mammography Unit

**\$800,000**

Granted more than \$1.3 million for various OZH programs including



Facility improvements



Equipment for Cancer  
Treatment Center



Education



Kevin Hines Event



Awarded \$1 million USDA  
grant for a new clinic



Awarded \$3 million HRSA  
grant for facility improvements

Began the



- Began consortium
- Awarded \$380K from the Howell County Commissioners
- Raised more than \$50,000 from an auction for scholarships



**OZARKS**  
HEALTHCARE