

# thrive

Pender Community Hospital | Spring 2021



**THE PCH SURGERY TEAM**

**PG.6**

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# From the Medical Director

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Hello everyone,

Welcome to the latest edition of Thrive, our community publication keeping you up to date on all the latest happenings at Pender Community Hospital & Medical Clinics.

This is an exciting issue! We're celebrating some of the most valuable members of our PCH family—those who have been with us for 30, 40 and even 50 years! Their dedication to their patients is unmatched, and we are so fortunate that they've chosen PCH to be their professional home. They each took the time to share a favorite memory from their work through the years.

In another article, we'll hear from a range of people who've received the COVID-19 vaccine, why they chose to get it, and their experiences with it. Plus, Dr. Matthew Felber helps break down how vaccines work to protect us—it's a can't miss article.

Our surgery team gets a shout out in this issue, as well. While PCH may be a small-town hospital, we offer big city level surgical services from an expert team. Learn about the members of our surgery team and how they work together to provide exceptional care—with a special highlight of our two CRNAs.

And, we'll hear about the important work of our local blood drives—particularly the donation and use of convalescent plasma during the ongoing pandemic.

Plus, the Wisner Apothecary has moved. We'll highlight the new location and benefits for you!

We hope you enjoy this edition of Thrive. As always, we welcome any feedback—we're here to serve you and the greater community.

Yours in good health,

**DR. COLE REHA**

PCH Medical Director



# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



*L to R: Teresa Powley, Mary Tonjes, Jodie Jordan, Ann Grell, Mary Neumann  
Not Pictured: Christine Glissman*

## 30 YEARS

### ► **Ann Grell | Medical Imaging Secretary at Pender Community Hospital**

**Hired As:** Inpatient Nurse Aide

**Favorite Memory:** “The time has gone fast! My time here has meant a lot of learning and experience. And a lot of friends. And my favorite memory would have to be almost all of my grandkids were born here at PCH! Another memory was moving into the new hospital. Although that one was bittersweet.”

### ► **Mary Neumann | Registered Nurse in the Outpatient Specialty Clinic at Pender Community Hospital**

**Hired As:** Inpatient Registered Nurse

**Favorite Memory:** “It is so nice to work in a small hospital because you really become family and family is a big part of it. My favorite memory are the friends I have made and the friendships that have continued as our lives go in different directions. Another memory is my weekend staff started changing the white uniforms to colored and the boss was not impressed.”

### ► **Christine Glissman | Night Shift Unit Secretary at Pender Community Hospital**

**Hired As:** Inpatient Nurse Aide

**Favorite Memory:** “After being hired as an aide, a few years later I became the night shift unit secretary from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Then the nurses switched to 12 hour shifts and I’ve worked 6PM – 6AM ever since. My favorite memory is the friendships I’ve made—not only with coworkers but patients as well.”

## 40 YEARS

### ► **Teresa Powley | RN Charge Nurse at Legacy Garden Rehabilitation and Living Center**

**Favorite Memory:** “The best word to describe my time at Legacy Garden would have to be rewarding! I am the lucky one to have the residents in my life! I don’t have one favorite memory- I have lots! Stories told by the residents about their lives are golden and I cherish every minute that I get to spend with them!”

### ► **Mary Tonjes | Rehab Services Office Assistant/Rehab Tech at Pender Community Hospital**

**Hired As:** Inpatient LPN

**Favorite Memory:** “What has meant the most to me is all the people that I have been privileged to work with. There is nothing better than working in a small community hospital because over time all of these people become your family. In good times celebrating events and births and in difficult times lifting each other up during tragedies and deaths. These people, moments and experiences are what have meant the most to me and will be cherished forever.”

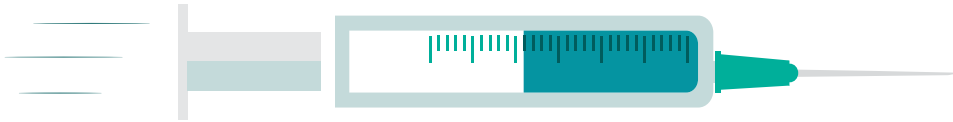
## 50 YEARS

### ► **Jodie Jordan | LPN in the Outpatient Specialty Clinic at Pender Community Hospital**

**Hired As:** Inpatient Nurse Aide

**Favorite Memory:** “My time at PCH has meant being able to create lifelong friendships with my coworkers over the years! My favorite memory about working at PCH is all of the weekends spent on the floor with my ‘weekend buddies’. We went through some tough times and some good times but always learned a lot along the way! But, my how times have changed! When I first started all nursing staff wore white dresses, white hose, shoes and nursing caps! There were almost no disposable items like gloves and needles so everything was reusable and had to be sterilized.”

# Breaking Down the COVID-19 Vaccine



## WHY PEOPLE ARE GETTING IT & HOW IT HELPS KEEP YOU SAFE

As we continue to adjust to the ebbs and flows of the COVID-19 pandemic in our lives, there is cautious hope for light at the end of the tunnel with the continued distribution of vaccines in our community and beyond.



**Dr. Matthew Felber**, one of our physicians at Pender Community Hospital & Medical Clinics, is sharing some helpful information to help break down the science behind vaccines and how they help keep us safe and healthy.

At their core, vaccines are a first line of defense against certain illnesses. Dr. Felber explains a few of the common ways vaccines achieve this response.

“Vaccines work in a few ways. This can be by using a dead part of a virus or weak live part of a virus to generate an immune response. Or they can contain cells which teach the body to recognize a part of a virus to generate the immune response and antibodies when exposed to it,” Dr. Felber explained.

By introducing our bodies to certain illnesses via a vaccine, we build immunity without needing to get seriously ill. And, like any medical innovations, they need to meet specific standards before widespread use.

“One important thing to know about vaccines is that they are all rigorously tested in a lab before being tested on volunteers that need to meet a certain number of

requirements,” Dr. Felber said. “Only after those tests show that they actually work and have a low risk of side effects are they eligible to be widely distributed.”

And despite a seemingly short timeline, the COVID-19 vaccines needed to pass the same rigorous testing protocol to ensure safety and efficacy.

“In my opinion the COVID-19 vaccines are very safe,” Dr. Felber said. “Most vaccine trials have 5-10,000 volunteers in their trials. These vaccines had over 100,000. Because so many people had COVID it made it easier to get volunteers for the study and there was a great amount of funding invested into them, which helped accomplish the testing more quickly than other vaccines.”

As more people become eligible to receive their vaccinations, all of us at Pender Community Hospital & Medical Clinics believe having information you can trust is essential to making smart decisions for your health.

“Vaccines are an important part of wellbeing and healthcare. And the COVID-19 vaccine is important to help protect yourself and your loved ones,” Dr. Felber said. “But if you have any doubts about vaccines don’t listen to rumors or get your information from the internet. Talk with your healthcare provider. They’re here to do what’s best for you.”

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, go to [vaccinate.ne.gov](https://vaccinate.ne.gov) or call **531-249-1873** or toll free **833-998-2275**.

# In Their Own Words:

WHY I CHOSE TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE.

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## JOANIE FRANZLUEBBERS

"I chose to get the vaccine as I've seen how the COVID virus affects people. COVID doesn't pick and choose by age or health. There is no way to tell if you will get a severe or mild case. I was caring for my parents who both had COVID, and I contracted COVID from them. My dad is in his 80's and my mom is in her late 70's. My father smoked for years and has heart issues, he had a mild case of COVID. My mom who is healthy had a severe case of COVID.

I did have side effects from both shots that were not pleasant. Seeing firsthand how COVID affects people, I believe I did the right thing getting the vaccine."



## KELLIE BLOEDORN

"I chose to receive the COVID vaccine because I work in a high-risk job setting with the potential of being exposed to COVID. I know people who have died of COVID and have seen how COVID patients are dealing with nasty aftereffects months after their exposure. I do not want this to happen to others or myself. As a nursing mom, I talked with my doctor and did my own research. There is no live virus in the COVID vaccine, which means I could not get COVID from it or give it to my baby, but my baby would get some of my immunity.

My overall experience receiving the COVID vaccine was great. My only side effect that I experienced was a sore arm. I had to remind myself that side effects can occur with any vaccine and are normal. I would choose to get the COVID vaccine again. I know that I am doing my part in combating the fight against COVID by receiving my vaccine."



## TONY CRIPPEN

"I got the COVID vaccine because I had a very severe case of COVID last fall and didn't want to get it again. I was really sick for two weeks and spent 8 days in the hospital, and still don't feel completely over it. It felt like I had it again for about 36 hours after the first shot, but it still wasn't nearly as bad as actually having COVID. I think getting the vaccine helps keep people safe and will get us back to normal."



## MARVIN VAN KIRK

We spoke with Marvin's son Larry to learn more about his COVID vaccine experience.

"Because my father is 103 and in a nursing home, we thought it was important for him to get the vaccine so we could see him again and help keep it safer for the whole nursing home. It had been almost a year since we saw him, and we wanted to see him. Plus, it just made sense at his age. While we weren't there with him for the shot, from what the nurses told us, he had no negative effects. We're very happy he got it so we can see him and spend time together again."



## THE PCH SURGERY TEAM:

PROVIDING EXPERIENCED & COMPASSIONATE CARE CLOSE TO HOME

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The Pender Community Hospital surgical team has decades of combined operating room experience to put patients at ease with their compassionate, knowledgeable care. Working at a smaller community hospital like PCH means they care for patients from pre to post-operation for a truly comprehensive care experience.

Dedra Nelson, RN, BSN Surgery Outpatient Clinic Manager at PCH, who has almost three decades of experience in surgery as a nurse and technologist, shared, “The same staff who are with the patient at the outpatient clinic for pre-surgery care are there for surgery and post-op care. It truly allows the patient to get comfortable with the team. That’s an experience you can only get at a small hospital like Pender.”

The team comprises nurses, surgical techs, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and more, all who expertly balance working in surgery and the outpatient clinic. It’s part of the job when working at a community hospital like PCH. Everyone wears many hats to ensure the best patient experience possible.

“The team has good communication skills between themselves in order to manage the schedule between the clinics and surgeries,” Dedra explained. “In the case of emergencies, the staff is only a call away.”

The ability of the team to work well together and seamlessly manage an ever-changing schedule makes them an invaluable asset to PCH and the community. Patients can feel confident that they will receive exceptional care before, during and after a surgical procedure.

Two of the team members essential to the success of our team are our CRNAs Deb Topp and Chris Reha. As advanced practice nurses able to administer anesthesia, their roles are critical for surgical patients.

Deb Topp has been a practicing CRNA for 36 years and at PCH for 10 years. When asked about her role she summed it up like this: “The role of the CRNA in a critical access hospital like PCH is varied and includes all ages and every level of health possible from birth and before to a patients last breath.”

Chris Reha began his CRNA career in 2009 and has been at PCH for almost a decade. Over the years he’s found that working in a smaller hospital is exactly where he should be.

“Working in a small town is extremely rewarding due to the personal connections you develop with your patients,” he shared. “You can take care of different generations of the same families all in a short amount of time. Also watching babies that were born when I first started grow into amazing children is priceless.”

Our surgery team is certainly one to be proud of. Dedra sums up their passion and dedication best:

**THE PCH SURGERY TEAM HAS MANY YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH A COMMON GOAL OF TAKING GREAT CARE OF THEIR PATIENTS EVERY DAY.**

# PCH Auxiliary & LifeServe Blood Center Make Donating Blood Safe & Simple



## Did you know that with one blood donation you help three people?

donating blood. Danielle, LifeServe Blood Center’s Director of Marketing and Public Relations, explained, “Each blood donation is separated into red blood cells, platelets and plasma, which go on to help three people in need.”

LifeServe Blood Center is Pender Community Hospital’s blood provider and works closely with the PCH Auxiliary to facilitate our community blood drives. They partner with hospitals in Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota to receive and process blood donations and distribute them back to the hospitals for their patients.

“All of the blood collected at our drives goes right back to our partner hospitals,” Danielle shared. “We have partnered with PCH for many years and are so happy to be able to provide this important service for the community.”

Dianne Johnson, PCH Auxiliary Facilitator, appreciates the importance of the LifeServe partnership.

“We run five blood drives a year and LifeServe helps make that possible,” she shared. “And if there has been one bright spot in the events of the last year, it’s that people truly realized the importance of donating. We had multiple people come out to donate for the very first time!”

Most often PCH blood drives take place at the Pender Fire Hall as it provides a large space for people to donate quickly and safely.

That is one of Danielle West’s favorite ways to demonstrate the positive impact of

“We want everyone to know that making a donation at one of our blood drives is safe,” Dianne said. “Donors come by appointment so we know how many people will be there at any time, everyone wears masks, the fire hall is large to allow for distancing, and there is disinfection done between each donor. Plus, the LifeServe staff are so caring and knowledgeable—they put donors at ease.”

But the most important message Dianne has for the community about blood drives is this one: donating blood saves lives. “We need donors—plain and simple,” she said. “Without blood donations PCH can’t provide patients the care they need. In as little as 10 minutes you can change someone’s life for the better.”

## WHAT ABOUT CONVALESCENT PLASMA?

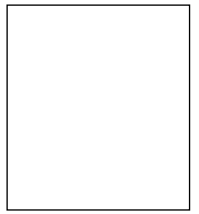
Convalescent plasma donated from those who previously had COVID-19 can help treat current COVID-19 patients. Thanks to the many donors who stepped forward, Danielle says they are in a great position to provide hospitals with this invaluable blood product.

“We were fortunate to have many donors step up and donate convalescent plasma,” Danielle shared. “And we are now at a position where we have supply on hand to last several months and are pausing collection until if or when the need arises again. Looking forward, we still have a great demand for blood donations for other patients in need.”

## HOW TO DONATE?

Take part in PCH’s next blood drive! To find the time and place call Lifeserve at 800-287-4903 or visit [www.lifeservebloodcenter.org](http://www.lifeservebloodcenter.org).





## WISNER APOTHECARY HAS MOVED!

118 18th Street  
Wisner, NE 68791  
**402-529-3550**

Hours: Monday – Friday,  
9:00 am – 5:30 pm  
Closed 12:30 pm - 1:00 pm



### NOW OFFERING:

- Drive-thru
- Expanded over-the-counter section

