

# On the horizon

CAVALIER COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & CLINICS | SPRING 2021  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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# LETTER FROM OUR CEO

JEFF STANLEY  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



## Dear Reader,

It may come as no surprise that COVID-19 sets the stage for this annual report edition of On the Horizon. Just as the pandemic defines 2020, so do stories of dedication and teamwork; innovation and improvement; and a renewed appreciation of having access to quality care close to home.

Last year, Cavalier County Memorial Hospital & Clinics staff worked diligently and quickly to implement new COVID-19 protocols. Many difficult decisions were made. Many processes were improved—with one goal in mind: protecting our patients and frontline workers while maintaining the high level of quality for which CCMH is known.

Our 2020 patient satisfaction scores and “Top 20 Critical Access Hospital” award reflect this commitment to excellence. While the pandemic left many hospitals on shaky financial ground, you can also rest assured that CCMH remains viable.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to CCMH's very own healthcare heroes, both on the frontlines and behind the lines, and to the community for its continued support.

As you read this special edition, you will see that CCMH has never been more prepared to meet the evolving healthcare needs of all those we serve.

Sincerely yours,

*Jeff Stanley*



# Adapting to Changing Healthcare Needs

## 2020: CHALLENGES, CHANGES AND INNOVATIONS



DARLA RODER  
Chief Operating Officer

2020 presented some of the biggest challenges in healthcare history—but as COVID-19 spread across the country, Cavalier Community Memorial Hospital & Clinics took immediate steps to prepare for the pandemic.

A COVID-19 Committee was formed to create new protocols that would help ensure the safety of patients and staff, and address rapidly changing healthcare needs. This included establishing a limited visitor policy, implementing a process for drive-through testing using the

hospital's ambulance bay, and designating two exam rooms in the clinic for patients with COVID-19 symptoms.



*We did a lot of prep work to be as ready as possible for COVID-19 and to make sure we were able to accept a big flow of patients. Fortunately, we didn't get that until later in the fall, so we were even more prepared then.*



### **New telehealth option implemented**

While CCMH kept a steady eye on COVID-19, staff didn't lose sight of patients' other medical needs. When the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services allowed clinics to offer telehealth visits, CCMH was quick to get a new system up and running. "Our providers called patients who hadn't been coming in to check on how they were doing overall," says Darla. "We were also able to conduct Medicare Wellness Visits through the computer, or over the phone, which our older patients really appreciated."

### **Foregoing furloughs by thinking outside of the box**

While many healthcare facilities furloughed employees in 2020, CCMH used funds from the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to help retain staff. Employees had the option to reduce their hours or work on PPP facility improvement projects (e.g., painting, waxing floors) for 16 hours every two weeks. "This allowed employees to continue to make their regular wage and not have another layer of uncertainty during an already challenging time," says Darla.

I want people to know that we have processes in place to keep them safe," says Darla. "We care about them and their health, and we're well prepared for patients to come in and get the care they need."



# A Familiar Service is Back at CCMH

**A COLONOSCOPY COULD  
SAVE YOUR LIFE**

After a brief hiatus, colonoscopies are once again being offered at CCMH. **Dr. Mark Lamet**, who is board-certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine, brings more than 40 years of expertise to the hospital.

“We previously did colonoscopies from 2007 to 2018 before the provider left for a different opportunity,” says Jamie Nienhuis, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at Cavalier County Memorial Hospital and Clinics. “We had a good process in place that allowed people to stay close to home for this screening and we’re happy that we can now offer this service again.”

Colonoscopies are an essential diagnostic screening to ensure colon health or to catch potential problems before they can cause more serious health issues. The primary purpose of a colonoscopy is to diagnose colon cancer or find and remove polyps that could have potentially been cancerous if left undiscovered.

“I realize some people are anxious about having a colonoscopy,” says Dr. Lamet. “There are a lot of misperceptions out there, but the actual procedure is relatively comfortable. If we do find a polyp, which is a precursor to cancer, we can remove it. So, a colonoscopy is really a simple way to stay healthy.”

Results of a colonoscopy are shared right after the procedure, so the individual will know if the colon looks normal and healthy. If any polyps were removed, they will be biopsied right away to ensure the individual receives a follow-up as quickly as possible.

Because patients need a pre-procedure physical 30 days prior to having a colonoscopy, a referral is recommended. But CCMH works with everyone to help them get a colonoscopy if they are at the age where one is needed, or they have a cause for concern about their colon health. Giving us a call is a great place to get started: **701-256-6100**.

## When Should I Have a Colonoscopy?

### First colonoscopy at age 50

- If healthy, one every 10 years thereafter.
- If non-cancerous polyps are found, another colonoscopy is recommended in three years.

### If high risk for colon cancer

Typically due to family history of the disease:  
First colonoscopy is recommended by age 45.



# Delivering Personalized Care

## MEET OUR NEW OB/GYN PROVIDERS DR. STEPHANIE FOUGHTY & DR. NICOLE SAMPSON

We're excited to introduce two new outreach providers to Cavalier County Memorial Hospital & Clinics. Both bring a focus on obstetrics and gynecology to the CCMH medical team, with an emphasis on personalized care.

**Dr. Stephanie Foughty, M.D.** graduated from the University of North Dakota School of Medicine in 2012. As a family medicine physician, she provides comprehensive care for all ages and specializes in women's health and obstetrics, taking a holistic approach to healthcare.

"I believe that it is vital to view each patient as a whole, not just focus on their medical problems," says Dr. Foughty. "I value the time I spend with each of my patients because it's a chance to really get to know them. The personal connection I feel with women as they share life's milestones—from adolescence and childbirth, to midlife and menopause—is very rewarding. It's a privilege to be part of that journey with them."

**Dr. Nicole Samson, M.D.**, is another new face that will soon become very familiar at CCMH. Dr. Samson also earned her medical degree from the University of North Dakota School of Medicine, so she feels right at home in the Langdon area.

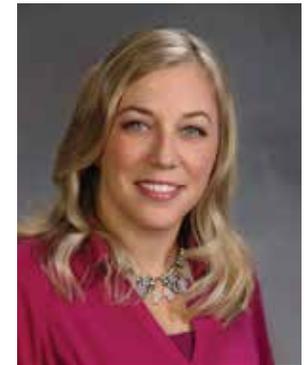
"Focusing on obstetrics and gynecology gives me the opportunity to create impactful relationships with my patients," says Dr. Samson. "Whether it's a prenatal visit with an expectant mother, a teen getting an initial exam or a woman experiencing pelvic pain, I want my patients to know that I'm there for them not only to provide the care they need, but to provide emotional support as well."

### Women's Health Services include:

- OB/GYN initial and follow exams
- Prenatal and postnatal care
- Reproductive health
- Endometrial biopsy
- Contraceptive care including IUD placement



STEPHANIE FOUGHTY, M.D.



NICOLE SAMPSON, M.D.

### Schedule Your Appointment

Both Dr. Foughty and Dr. Samson provide consults and evaluations for women in the area of obstetrics and gynecology. For an appointment, call **701-662-2158**.



CCMHF  
Langdon, ND

Date: January 11, 2021

Pay to the Order of: Cavalier County  
Emergency Food Pantry

\$ 5000.00

Five Thousand Dollars + 00/100

00/100 Dollars

For: Donation  
⑆123456789⑆101010

M. Yivertson  
Authorized Signature

# The CCMH Foundation

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

When the CCMH Foundation held its first annual Mardi Gras Chili Feed last February, no one could have imagined it would be the last face-to-face event the Foundation would hold in 2020. More than 100 people attended, including donors, community and Board members, and familiar faces from Cavalier County Memorial Hospital & Clinics.

“It was a great evening. A lot of people came out to show their support,” says Foundation Director McKinzie Sivertson. “Little did we know that the COVID-19 pandemic would hit just weeks later, and that was the last Foundation event until one of our favorite fundraisers, Lights, Stars and Diamonds.”

Each year, the Foundation raises funds through the sale of lights, stars and diamonds that are purchased in honor of someone close to them, or in remembrance of loved ones who have passed. Typically, the event ends with the reading of each person’s name at a ceremonial event. But there was nothing “typical” about 2020.

“It was one of those, ‘What do you do?’ kind of years,” says McKinzie. “We learned to make adjustments and move forward.” One adjustment was to have a virtual

ceremony, which included a Facebook live event as well as a special radio broadcast of the names of those being remembered. We will continue to do this broadcast each year so everyone gets a chance to listen.

Although the event raised close to \$8,500, and over \$4,000 was donated through the Memorial program, the Foundation fell significantly short of its 2020 fundraising goal. Yet it remained true to its mission of service.

Recognizing the financial hardships many local families were facing, the Foundation donated \$5,000 to the Cavalier County Emergency Food Pantry during the Christmas season. “It was a great idea that was decided by our board of directors,” says McKinzie. “If we could make a difference by helping put meals on the tables of families in our county, then we were all for it. It was also a way to help provide good nutrition and promote wellbeing for community members who may be sick, recovering from COVID-19, or struggling to make ends meet.”

The Foundation was able to navigate the pandemic due to good stewardship of its resources. At the same time, it is still feeling the financial impact of cancelling two major fundraisers. In “normal” years, the golf tournament and annual picnic night would raise more than \$25,000 combined.

“Even though we are stable financially, we’re still a nonprofit organization,” explains McKinzie. “We depend on philanthropic dollars to help ensure access to quality, personalized healthcare close to home now and for future generations.”

## HOW YOU CAN HELP!

There is no doubt that COVID-19 left an indelible mark on hospitals—and their foundations—across the country. While CCMH Foundation is no exception, McKinzie remains positive.

“Last year, we were especially reminded of how important our hospital and clinics are to our community,” says McKinzie. “So many people have asked, ‘What can I do to help?’ The Foundation will direct your gift to where it is needed most.”

Your tax-deductible donation will help provide Cavalier Community Memorial Hospital & Clinics—and our local healthcare heroes—with needed equipment and facility improvements.



To learn more about the Cavalier Community Memorial Hospital Foundation, visit [cavaliercountyhospital.com/foundation](https://cavaliercountyhospital.com/foundation) or call **701-256-6139**. Like and follow them on Facebook for the latest updates too!



## Weathering the Pandemic

### A HEALTHY HOSPITAL CONTRIBUTES TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY



CHRIS CARTER

Cavalier Community Memorial Hospital was put to the test in many ways in 2020. In addition to fighting COVID-19 on the frontlines, CCMH—along with every other hospital—incurred unexpected expenses and decreased revenue due to the pandemic. Yet unlike many healthcare facilities, CCMH ended the year on solid financial ground. That's not only important for the hospital's economic health but also for the community.



*As the largest employer in the county, CCMH provides a total of 96 full- and part-time jobs. Not only do these positions help people earn money, much of that money stays in the area, impacting businesses in and around Langdon.*



According to CCMH Chief Controller **Chris Carter**, staffing is generally a hospital's biggest expense, which is another reason CCMH must remain solvent. "We want to make sure we have adequately trained and competent staff," says Chris. "With certain credentials come a certain pay rate, and if we want to offer those services, we recognize that we need to make that kind of investment."

### Balancing affordable healthcare with long-term viability

Today, many rural healthcare facilities are struggling to stay afloat. While 2020 took a toll on CCMH, the hospital was able to recover with effective business planning and a continued focus on safe, affordable, quality care.

"We try to balance the ability to provide affordable healthcare to the community with the financial viability of the hospital so we can be here for the long term," explains Chris. "We work with an outside organization that researches market rates for like organizations. That way, we can make sure we're not charging too much, and at the same time, we're making enough margin to pay the staff and keep our doors open. It's a balance between making sure we provide affordable healthcare with running the facility in a financially responsible manner."

Being "financially responsible" is something CCMH doesn't take lightly. "The pandemic hit when we were in the middle of our budget season," says Chris. "So, we made adjustments based how we thought it would impact our finances. That planning helped us recover from the pandemic—from a financial standpoint—by the end of July."

Another reason CCMH needs to remain financially healthy is to cover the cost of capital upgrades and equipment. Those expenditures totaled \$550,000 last year.



“Each year, we carve out a certain amount of money for capital projects,” says Chris. “We identify what those items are with our department managers, and then prioritize them so we make sure essential items are taken care of first. We’re always looking for areas to improve upon to help the community get the best possible healthcare close to home.”

CCMH truly cares about the community. The facility’s Financial Assistance Program is an extension of this concern.

“*We want to provide affordable care to everybody—but we realize not everyone has the same earning power. So, we offer financial aid to help folks get the care they need. We have several avenues to help them out.*”

**Planning today—with an eye on the future**

“We’re always looking for areas to help the community be in a better place to get the best possible healthcare close to home,” says Chris. With this in mind, CCMH recently purchased the clinic building in Walhalla and added GI services to its offerings—and there are more exciting plans in the works for the future.

“Most Critical Access Hospitals use a tax or levy revenue to supplement operations. But this hospital is able to function on its own operations. It all comes down to good management. The folks here look at the hospital as their own and they really take a lot of pride in it. Over the last year, we’ve gone through a lot of changes; a lot of things we didn’t expect. But the one thing I discovered is that people here are very resilient and we can get through anything when we work together.”



**COMMUNITY RESULTS**



**\$4.6M**

**Wages & salary benefits  
in our community**



**425**

**Volunteered  
Community Hours**



**\$162,000**

**Financial  
Assistance**



**\$6,652**

**Community Health  
Education**



**\$550,000**

**Reinvested in  
Facilities/Equipment**

# QUALITY MEASURES



# Quality Measures Up

## CCMH'S COMMITMENT TO PERSONALIZED CARE



JANET NIENHUIS

Larger healthcare facilities may have one up on Cavalier County Memorial Hospital & Clinics when it comes to quantity of patients served. But when you look at quality of care, CCMH stands out as a leader in patient satisfaction.

“The last quarter of 2020 we were at 100% satisfaction in every category for our inpatient scores,” shares **Jamie Nienhuis, MSN, RN, chief nursing officer at CCMH**. “Granted, that’s based on a smaller number of surveys than a larger hospital may receive—but it’s still 100%.”

During a year that put unexpected strains on emergency departments across the country, CCMH’s commitment to quality prevailed. The hospital’s Emergency Room (ER) scored in the 96th percentile; up from 88th the previous year. But what does that mean to patients?

Percentile reporting indicates how a hospital’s HCAHPS [*Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems*] scores compare to other hospitals in a comparison group. That means CCMH is performing better than 96% of hospitals in its group.

Having more consistent providers on staff is contributing this upward trend. “We’ve also gotten better at making sure we meet our patients’ needs,” says Jamie. “For example, ‘response of hospital staff,’ and ‘Medical/Surgical’ also scored in the 99th percentile.”



### Recognized as a top performing hospital amongst rural hospitals

In 2020, CCMH was named a “Top 20 Critical Access Hospital for Best Practice in Quality” by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA)—further testament to the hospitals’ commitment to providing outstanding care. The award is based on in-depth evaluations of more than 1,300 rural healthcare systems across many critical areas, including patient perspectives and outcomes.

The NRHA recognizes the top performing hospitals from a list determined by The Chartis Center for Rural Health. “There is no better illustration of the value that rural facilities provide to their communities than

the annual identification and recognition of the top performing rural facilities. These groups serve as a benchmark for other rural facilities as they strive to achieve similar results,” states The Chartis Group.

CCMH is honored to receive the Top 20 award, but Jamie says it is the staff who really deserves the recognition. “This achievement is a reflection of the compassionate, quality care our team provides every day,” shares Jamie. “It says a lot about what patients can expect from our team whenever they entrust us with their healthcare needs.”

CCMH takes patient satisfaction and quality scores very seriously. Even when scores reach all-time highs, the hospital continues to focus on process improvements. Whenever necessary, adjustments are made and new protocols put into place to ensure the highest level of care is provided. It’s an approach that has worked well, with “service line performance,” “communication with doctors,” and overall “hospital environment” rated in the 99th percentile in the third and fourth quarters of 2020.

But to Jamie and her team, it’s not all about scores and percentiles—it’s about what the ratings mean to patients and their families.

“It means that when you come here, we’re going to give you excellent care,” says Jamie. “It means that you’re not necessarily going to get better care at a bigger facility. It means that we try really hard to always do what is right for our patients; to follow best practices; to listen to our patients—and to provide the highest quality of care to every patient, every day.”

# One Call Does It All!

Your free annual Medicare Wellness Visit can now be conducted over the phone or in person! Create or update your prevention plan, get personalized health advice, discuss your medications ... one call can help you do it all.

