

COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF

 *Thayer County
Health Services*

Exceptional Health... Close to Home



Pictured: TCHS Surgical Suite

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Pictured right: Audra Hergott, Radiology Director, performing a DEXA Scan on site at TCHS to measure bone density.

New ENT Providers to come to TCHS

Two new Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) providers, Nila Novotny, MD and Amber Citta, APRN, from Columbus Community Hospital will now be holding a bi-weekly clinic at the TCHS Specialty Clinic in Hebron. Otolaryngology is the medical specialty that deals with disorders and conditions of the ear, nose, and throat region, and related areas of the head and neck. If you have a problem that is related to your ear, nose, or throat, you may benefit from seeing an ENT specialist, who is also called an ear, nose, and throat doctor or an otolaryngologist. ENT related surgeries can also be conducted on-site at TCHS. The ENT clinic will specialize in ear, nose, throat, head, and neck conditions or disorders, such as hearing impairment, infections, ear ringing, sinus problems, swallowing issues, diseases, tumors, trauma, reconstructive surgery, and much more.



Nila Novotny, MD



Amber Citta, APRN

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Hope & Healing

Galen "Wink" Winkler - Juniata, NE

Galen Winkler, who goes by "Wink" of Juniata, NE, works for Norder Supply, and recently participated in Thayer County Health Services (TCHS) Corporate Wellness Program. The program identified risk factors and if one was categorized as having three or more, the program was required if the participant utilized Norder's insurance plan. Wink had participated in previous years through Norder and expected the same old, same old, but this year experienced something different and in the end, he was very pleased.

"The best part about the experience was working with Whitney Miller, MPA, Wellness Director. She is very personable and seems like the type of person that could adapt to any personality. The best part about working with her was her candor - I could be honest. Sometimes these programs make you feel like you had better answer it the "right way" or otherwise you would be in trouble but with Whitney, it was a situation where she asked me to be honest with her right from the start with no judgment and therefore I felt like I could be more open and honest in my answers. She knows it is not a perfect world and that the more candid and comfortable one can be the more help the program will provide. I will be honest, I am not the biggest fruit fan and I kind of hate it, but I have it in my refrigerator and I eat it every day, and that without a single doubt came from this wellness program," said Wink.

When asked if the program went the extra mile, Wink said that Whitney would admit that she made mistakes too. Wink and she would continually discuss portion sizes and to him, that made the biggest impact. Wink does not claim to be an expert on it now, but Whitney made him aware and he has been able to implement it in his life. **"She has a passion for wellness and truly believes in it and it shows,"** Wink stated.

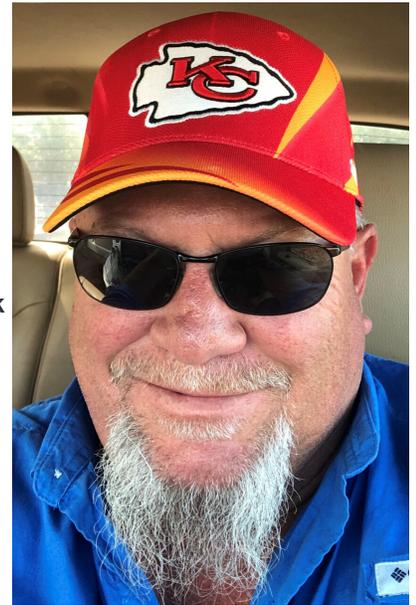
According to Wink, some programs can come across as robotic, and nothing would stick because they didn't make you care or invest yourself in it, but the program through TCHS provides participants with takeaways that are easy to implement and understand. The TCHS Corporate Wellness program was personalized and he was very impressed because it had the small-town touch that larger programs are missing and it showed him that TCHS really does care about each participant. **"That was something I could relate to because my employer, Norder Supply, and myself have the same goal, which is to provide a small-town touch that**

focuses on delivering personalized, caring customer service to each client we serve," said Wink.

"Whitney went above and beyond by addressing further risk factors that were identified through the sessions and not through the initial assessment. I am now more aware of portion sizes and fruit and vegetable servings

after the sessions," said Wink. When asked, Wink wasn't sure about his overall accomplishments because follow-ups were postponed due to COVID-19, but he said he does feel better in general. **"I do know I'm in a lot better direction than I was before. It is a process, not a magic pill. The staff that helped her during the blood draw were very nice and did a great job, which is rare coming from someone with hard to find veins. I was very impressed! I have nothing but good things to say about the TCHS Corporate Wellness Program; I recommend it to anyone on the fence about participating and I want to thank Norder Supply for investing in such a great program. If you are looking for something that will get you on the right path and pointed in the right direction, this is the program. It won't cure all your problems, but they will get your mind set in the right way so that you can help yourself. At the end of the day you still need to help yourself, they aren't going to do it for you but what they do does help and inspires you to make a life change,"** said Wink gratefully.

"I just want to say thanks to Whitney. When we concluded the sessions she said that if I ever wanted to call or just chat, she was more than happy to answer any questions about nutrition, etc. She kept the line of communication open even though her job was technically done and she didn't have to do that but it meant a lot that she did. Most people view a program like this as a royal pain and just a box you need to check off, but TCHS made it reasonable and engaging, which went above and beyond anything I expected," stated Wink.



TCHS HIRES NEW CEO

Paul Edwards
Chief Executive Officer



Thayer County Health Services is pleased to announce Paul Edwards as the new President/CEO. Paul, a lifelong Nebraskan who grew up on his family's farm between Ord and Loup City, brings 35 years of healthcare experience to the job. He joined CHI Health St. Elizabeth in 2001 as the Director of Clinical Research, where he managed the research network across Lincoln, Grand Island and Kearney.

In 2019, he joined the Pender Community Hospital District in Pender, Nebraska as its Chief Operating Officer. There, he focused on performance improvement as well as providing additional support in new business development and physician recruitment. He has in-depth experience in coordinating strategic initiatives, with a focus around Patient Experience and

Employee Engagement. Paul served as a medic and paratrooper in the US Army. He holds a Master's in Healthcare Ethics from Creighton University and a Master's in Business Administration from Doane University.

"I have a great desire to return to rural Nebraska and be a part of one of the leading Critical Access Hospitals in our State. TCHS is a forward leaning healthcare institution located in a beautiful part of Nebraska and represents what is good about rural healthcare. I'm looking forward to serving the surrounding communities, patients, employees, providers; any and all who come through the front doors of TCHS. It's an incredible opportunity to join the many fine employees and providers committed to serving those who look to TCHS for their healthcare needs," said Paul.

Paul and his wife Mindy have four sons. He enjoys hiking and Cornhuskers sports. Paul started at Thayer County Health Services on June 3. Please join TCHS in welcoming Paul and his family to Thayer County.



Laboratory Department



Pictured L2R: (Back Row) Kathy Bauhard, MT, Tamara Deepe, MLS, Natalie Waters, MLS, and Destiny Utter, PBT (Front Row) Jackie Haller, MT, Cody Pachta, MLS, Laboratory Manager, and Susan Linton, PBT

Our Laboratory Department has over 119 years of combined experience and our staff are certified through the American Society for Clinical Pathology or American Medical Technologists.

We offer a NEW in house analyzer with a large testing menu and were recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence in Newborn Screening!

For an appointment or questions please call (402) 768-7203.



Laboratory Services



In-house analyzer designed to efficiently deliver quality and timely results

Bi-Annual Reduced Price Lab Event - Wellness Labs at a fraction of the cost

Reference tests through UNMC

8 Analyzers - Large in-house testing menu

3 Medical Laboratory Scientists

2 Medical Technologists

2 Phlebotomists

Hematology, Chemistry, Molecular Biology, Urinalysis, and Blood Bank tests

For an appointment or questions please call (402) 768-7203.



Provider Corner

Dr. Hayli Karbowksi

The Importance of the Wellness Exam

Wellness exams are one of the most important components of medical care. Excitingly, they are generally covered at no cost and without copay on nearly all insurance plans. For infants and children, the wellness exams provide an opportunity to evaluate patients for appropriate development and weight gain, administer vaccines and answer questions parents and/or caretakers may have. The wellness exam allows a provider to pick up on very small developmental delays so we can refer to early intervention and get kiddos right back on track. We provide vaccines as a part of the Vaccines for Children program which provides vaccines for Medicaid, uninsured and underinsured children.

As children get older, the visits still provide opportunities to update vaccines but become less focused on development and more focused on social concerns. Navigating through pre-teen and teen years can be difficult for parents and children alike. Peer pressures, bullying, depression, anxiety and hormonal changes that often plague the pre-teen and teen years can make for a difficult time. At TCHS, the providers are here to help navigate through those muddy waters with education for parents or teens.

Early adulthood wellness exams provide a time to discuss reproductive health concerns and evaluate

for elevations in blood pressure. We can help with weight loss or smoking cessation if patients are interested. We provide preventive screenings such as pelvic exams, pap smears and mammograms. We can educate on prostate cancer screening and colorectal cancer screening. We provide a broad range of contraception options including IUDs and vasectomies. We perform colonoscopies right here at our hospital. Also, our physicians provide comprehensive OB and newborn care including vaginal as well as c-section deliveries.

In our Medicare population, the wellness visit changes. Medicare allows for a Welcome to Medicare Visit in the first year you sign up for Medicare. After that it becomes an Annual Wellness Visits. These visits are “hands-off” visits which means it is not a visit for a physical exam. Instead, it is a set aside time simply sit down and discuss your healthcare goals with your provider. These are so important because it allows patients and providers to make sure they are on the same page. We are able to discuss risk factors for diseases and any health screenings that are recommended. We can make sure we have a full list of your medical problems and the specialists you see so we can communicate in the most complete way possible. During these visits we can also discuss your Advanced Directives and Medical Power of Attorney and provide resources for talking with you family about those.

All of the providers at TCHS are confident in providing appropriate wellness exams for the entire family. We are here and available to schedule wellness exams at the Hebron clinic or any of the satellite clinics. Just call 402-768-7203 and we will get you scheduled and on your way to better health!

Video Interpreter Services

What happens when patients and caregivers don't speak the same language? For one thing, when there is a language barrier, the patient engagement rate drastically declines. Caring for patients when there is a language barrier is challenging. Particularly when it is a new patient or one being seen in the emergency room where there is no background information available.

Fully understanding what a limited English proficiency patient has to say is critical when providing patient care. Having onsite interpreters available for all foreign language encounters is not feasible for small rural hospitals and clinics. Even larger hospitals struggle to provide onsite interpreters for every language requested.

In 2016, a Stratus video interpreter was purchased for Thayer County Health Services by the hospital Guild for \$1,269.00. This video remote interpretation provides access to a larger pool of interpreters that are available immediately to enable effective patient provider communication when a language barrier is present. Video remote interpretation (VRI) is an effective solution for language barriers because it is instant, mobile and cost-effective. Stratus is the industry leader in VRI and they have 34 languages available over video, including American Sign Language.

The need for language services in healthcare is widespread. To better serve a patient population with increasingly diverse language needs, many healthcare facilities are implementing VRI. VRI enables providers to reach a wide range of qualified interpreters that are readily available and accessible via encrypted, HIPAA compliant

video, with just a few presses of a button. The implementation of VRI enables acute care providers to better serve and offer a higher level of care without a language barrier.

Stratus Video provides on-demand access to medically qualified interpreters that focus primarily on medical interpreting. These interpreters are tested to ensure language competence and they receive ongoing education on medical interpreting. These interpreters are available 24/7 and the average connection time for their link is approximately 30 seconds.



Thayer County Health Services is fortunate to be able to provide VRI services to our patients and their families. To find out more information about the language services we provide, contact Patient and Family Services at (402) 768-4626.

NEW CLINIC HOURS

We have adjusted our clinic hours to be more accessible and convenient for our patients. The new clinic schedule is as follows:

Mondays:

- Davenport Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon
- Deshler Clinic - 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Hebron Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Wednesdays:

- Davenport Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon
- Chester Clinic - 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 - 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month
- Hebron Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Fridays:

- Hebron Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Tuesdays:

- Bruning Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Hebron Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Thursdays:

- Deshler Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon
- Bruning Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Hebron Clinic - 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturdays:

- Hebron Clinic - 9:00 a.m. - Noon

New! Patient Family Advisory Council New!

Thayer County Health Services is forming a Patient Family Advisory Council with the goal of bringing the perspectives of patients and families directly into the planning, delivery, and evaluation of care as a critical part of improving safety and quality.

The core concepts of patient- and family-centered care are:

- Dignity and respect. Health care practitioners listen to and honor patient and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.
- Participation. Patients and families are encouraged and supported to participate in care and decision making at the level they choose.
- Information sharing. Patients and families receive timely, complete, and accurate information to effectively participate in care and decision making. Clinicians and hospital staff communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and

families in ways that are affirming and useful.

- Collaboration. Patients, families, clinicians, hospital staff, and health care leaders collaborate in policy and program development, implementation and evaluation, facility design, professional education, and the delivery of care

Patient Family Advisors are needed to join the council, and Thayer County Health Services is seeking community members to join. Patient family advisors are critical allies for quality and safety. Working with advisors helps build a shared agreement around safety and quality priorities. Patient family advisors help TCHS by sharing stories about their experiences, providing input related to materials and plans for improving health care quality and safety, giving feedback on their hospital stay, and much more. No special qualifications are required; TCHS will provide all the training you will need.

To sign up to be an advisor fill out an application at: thayercountyhealth.com/patient-family-advisory-council. For more information about the Patient Family Advisory Council, please call Stephanie Moody, RN, Quality Improvement Coordinator at 402-768-4629.

Connecting the Most Vulnerable

Written by Rita Luongo, Development Director

The Foundation for Thayer County Health Services was awarded \$2,500 in matching funds by the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) Connecting Elders to Their Family funding opportunity. This grant was made possible by the Alice DeVoe Donor-Advised Fund and an anonymous donor. The program provides matching grants to NCF affiliated funds to purchase electronic devices, complementary equipment, installation, training, and compensation for related staff time to connect patients and residents of hospitals, assisted living and/or nursing home facilities.

Thayer County Health Services will use this grant to purchase laptops, headsets, a Zoom account, and software to allow patients to connect with their family and friends through video calls, email, and other technology. "Humans are social creators and we need to feel connected to one another," said Rita Luongo, TCHS Development Director, "This program gives our older population a way to stay connected to loved ones."

The community funds in Hebron and Deshler were also recipients of funding through this NCF grant. "Although this project's goal was to help our older population, I think we all benefit", said Luongo, "Those of us with family members in the nursing homes or the hospital struggle with a lot of emotions. We feel guilty for not being able to be with them and worry about if they are alright. This project gives us peace of mind because we can see and talk to them through technology."





Radiology Department

In-house State-Of-The-Art Diagnostic Imaging Services



Pictured L2R: (Back Row) Shelly Pulliam, RT, Greg Richardson, RT, Ann Hubl, RT, (Front Row) Nicole Hamik, RT, Whitney Watson, RT, and Audra Hergott, RT, Director of Radiology

Our Radiology Department has over 102 years of combined experience and our staff have a variety of certifications, including, Radiography, Computed Tomography (CT), Mammography and Ultrasonography.

For an appointment or questions please call (402) 768-4645.



Radiology Services



State-of-the-art Equipment

- 80-slice CT scanner - allows for more specialized exams, faster scan time, and decreased patient radiation dose
- 3D Mammography with the use of Bella blankets to ensure the best possible exam for our patients; while ensuring patient comfort
- DXA on-site to perform screening bone density exams 5 days a week

6 Board Certified Radiologic Technologists

X-rays, Fluoroscopy/Barium Studies, Computed Tomography (CT), Bone Densitometry (DXA), Ultrasound, 3D Mammography, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Nuclear Medicine, Positron Emission Tomography (PET/CT), Ultrasound-guided biopsies, Lumbar punctures, and much more!

For an appointment or questions please call (402) 768-4645.

Good Fats vs. Bad Fats Written by: Whitney Miller, MPA, Wellness Director & Nutritional Services Director

Part of healthy eating is getting the right kind of fats. Believe it or not, your body needs fat. A small percentage of fat is necessary to protect your internal organs. This fat is called essential fat. For men, a healthy amount of essential fat accounts for 8 to 19% of total body mass. For women, a healthy amount of essential body fat is 21 to 33% of total body mass. In addition to your body needing fat for protection, fat is also essential in helping your body absorb certain nutrients such as Vitamins A, D, E, and K. So how much fat should come from your diet? 20-35% of your total calories for the day should come from fat. This seems like a large percentage, but keep in mind that 1 gram of fat is equivalent to 9 Calories whereas 1 gram of carbohydrate or protein is only equivalent to 4 Calories. This means that fat Calories add up much quicker than carb and protein Calories.

To take this one step further, the type of fat you consume matters. Generally speaking, fats that come from plant sources such as olive oil or canola oil are considered “good fats” whereas fats coming from animal sources, such as butter and lard, are considered “bad fats.” Bad fats contribute to high triglyceride levels as well as high cholesterol. Consuming more good fats than bad fats will increase HDLs (high density lipids), which are considered “good” cholesterol, which helps lower LDLs (low density lipids), which are considered the “bad” cholesterol. Some foods that contain good fats include avocado, nuts, seeds, and fish. Another consideration when thinking about good fats is taking note of what you use to cook with. Using pan coating spray or olive oil is a healthier option than butter or lard. An easy way to remember this is to know that oils that are liquid at room temperature are healthier than oils that are solid at room temperature.

It's never too late to start eating healthy. So start paying attention to the types of foods you are eating and make cooking modifications as needed. Reach for some peanuts instead of potato chips if you need a snack, and substitute fish in for one meal each week instead of that steak. Start using cooking spray or olive oil instead of butter in the bottom of your pan. These small changes will get you on your way to a healthier lifestyle in no time!



Whitney Miller, MPA, Wellness Director and Nutritional Services Director

Radiology Department Ensures Comfort During 3D Mammograms

While the typical annual mammography exam lasts just 15 minutes, it is an experience of heightened anxiety for most women. After all, every woman knows someone with breast cancer and is understandably anxious to learn the results of their own exam.

Thayer County Health Services has recently begun to use Bella Blankets during our state-of-the-art 3D mammograms. These protective coverlets for mammography are designed to remove the chill from the receptor plate, helping patients to feel more at ease and improve the overall experience. TCHS is continually working to enhance the atmosphere and make the mammogram as comfortable as possible to reduce patient stress during this important examination.

Bella Blankets are designed to protect the most delicate skin. Patients such as the elderly with thin skin, women who have cuts in the inframammary fold, or those who



require a second image after a needle loc procedure will especially benefit from the coverlets due to their added protection. Our mammography technologist also benefits from Bella Blankets, because it helps with positioning for patients that are small breasted or to immobilize perspiring breasts.

The one time use, FDA approved, disposable Bella Blankets, offer our patients peace of mind that TCHS provides a sanitary and caring environment and continues to go above and beyond when caring for our patients.

Support TCHS Through AmazonSmile

The Hospital Guild wants everyone to know how important it is for everyone to shop local whenever possible. Our local businesses need everyone's support now more than ever to survive during this difficult time.

For those times when you are unable to purchase something you need locally, the Hospital Guild would like you to consider shopping on the AmazonSmile website or through the app and use your purchase to help a local charity. This website is operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as you would find on Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products will be donated to the Thayer County Health Services Guild if they are selected as your designated charity. This may not seem like a lot, but when you have a large number of customers selecting the same charity, the donations can really add up.



SMILE.AMAZON.COM
Support Thayer County Health Services Guild Inc by shopping at AmazonSmile.
 When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate to Thayer County Health Services Guild Inc. Support us every time you shop.

The AmazonSmile Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation created by Amazon to administer the AmazonSmile program. All donation amounts generated by the AmazonSmile program are remitted to the AmazonSmile Foundation. In turn, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates those amounts to the charitable organizations selected. Amazon pays all expenses of the AmazonSmile Foundation; they are not deducted from the donation amounts generated by purchases made on AmazonSmile.

When visiting AmazonSmile for the first time, you will be prompted to select a charitable organization to benefit from your purchases. Selecting Thayer County Health Services Guild Inc. as your charity on AmazonSmile will enable the Hospital Guild to receive the donation funds generated by your purchases.

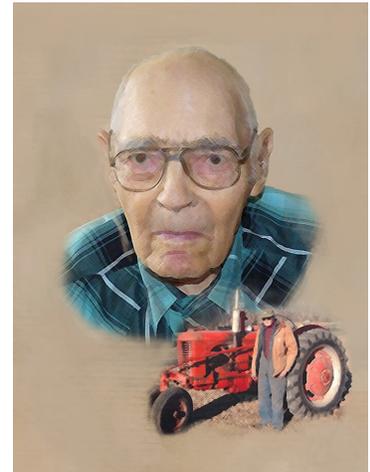
Committed To Healthcare

A Foundation for Thayer County Health Services Donor Profile, written by Rita Luongo, Development Director

During his lifetime, Johannes Dittbrenner was known to keep his commitments. If he made you a promise, you could count on him keeping his word. In his will, Johannes made several commitments to local charities and in particular, one to the Foundation for Thayer County Health Services. "Johannes' intention was for his gift to be used to advance the mission of Thayer County Health Services for the long term," said Attorney Dan Werner, Dittbrenner's professional advisor.

Upon his passing, the hospital foundation determined the best way to honor Johannes' wishes was to use his gift to establish an unrestricted endowment through Nebraska Community Foundation. Endowments are an important tool to keep organizations like the Foundation for Thayer County Health Services growing, thriving and improving. Contributions to the endowment account are never touched, but are invested for the future. Then a portion of the income earned by the endowment may be used to support local health care needs. The principal remains and grows, providing a steady stream of financial resources for years to come.

"We are endlessly grateful to Mr. Dittbrenner for his forever gift", said Rita Luongo, Development Director for Thayer County Health Services. "It is an investment not only in the future of Thayer County Health Services, but for all the local communities they serve."



The Foundation for Thayer County Health Services will now look to others to help in growing this endowment. "It is our hope that others will recognize the important impact this endowment can have and will want to contribute to it, sharing the vision of Johannes to ensure the viability of the hospital as a charitable and non-profit institution. In doing so, others will help continue the vital contribution our hospital makes to the health of Thayer County and the surrounding communities," said Werner.

If you would like to learn more about the Foundation for Thayer County Health Services' Endowment Fund, contact the Foundation office at (402) 768-4636 or foundation@tchsne.org.

Wearing Is Caring - Free Masks For The Entire County

Thayer County Health Services, as part of our Wearing is Caring campaign, recently acquired reusable cloth masks and has enough for each resident in Thayer County. The masks are free, and the purpose is to protect Thayer County and its residents from COVID-19 when social distancing is not an option. Masks are now available within your community or at your local TCHS satellite clinic. For more information, please contact Rita Luongo, Development Director at (402) 768-4636.

Please remember that wearing is caring and masks protect not only you but those around you. Thank you for your continued support, patience, and understanding as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve.



TCHS Board of Directors

Loren Wiedel- Board Chair

Karen Dahlkoetter- Board Vice Chair

Laura Tuma- Board Treasurer

Elisabeth Heitmann- Board Secretary

Connie Lichty- Board Member At Large

SCHOOL AND ATHLETIC PHYSICALS

Thayer County Health Services is now taking appointments for School and Athletic Physicals for the 2020-2021 school year at our clinics. Kindergarten and 7th grade will need a physical and immunizations. The NSAA is not requiring sports physicals except for upcoming Freshmen or those that did not get one last year. Your insurance wellness benefits may cover the cost. For coverage information contact your insurance provider for details.

For an appointment call 402-768-7203.



4 Person Scramble Golf Tournament

Reserve your team today 402.768.4636

Hebron Country Club, South 1st St. Hebron, NE