

February, 2022

COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF

 *Thayer County
Health Services*

Exceptional Health... Close to Home

StarCare Life Flight
Photo by TCHS



WWW.THAYERCOUNTYHEALTH.COM

February 2022

Thayer County Health Service's Newest Employees

Ellie Banks
Environmental Services



Kyle Bergmeier
Paramedic



Chelsey Anderson
Radiology Technician



Megan Collins, CMA
Clinic Medical Assistant



Grant Anderson,
PA-C, PhD.
Provider,



Penny Befort
Respiratory Therapist



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BRIAN ROKUSEK

TCHS President & CEO



The past 18 months have brought immense changes to most of our lives and Thayer County Health Services has not been sheltered from that experience. I find myself looking back over the time period and reflecting on how grateful I am for our staff, providers, and most importantly the community support we have received during this time.

The people here at TCHS have worked daily providing exceptional care, but these are not events that make headlines. Extra shifts by our nurses, our environmental services team cleaning on nights and weekends, and emergency shifts by our physicians are a regular occurrence. These commitments have not gone unnoticed by the community and our team.

I hope that as you look into the future, you find the things that are truly important in all our lives; family, friends & community. Most notably, I hope that you continue displaying the remarkable support for Thayer County Health Services that you have over the past 18 months.

We are truly thankful for the opportunity to serve you and your family and we look forward to brighter days ahead.

TCHS Welcome New Doctor

We are very excited to announce the addition of Dr. Rick Blatny to the team at Thayer County Health Services. Dr. Blatny completed his undergraduate work at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE majoring in Biology followed by obtaining his medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE. He then completed his residency at Utah Valley Hospital Residency in Provo, UT before returning to Nebraska. The relationships, trust, and strong bonds Dr. Blatny develops with his patients are very important to him, as well as the opportunity to provide care for families members of all ages. Dr. Blatny enjoys the new challenges that the medical profession brings each day and looks forward to providing all of us exceptional healthcare, close to home.



New Pain Management Specialist

Dr. Birthi is joining our team of Specialty Providers here at Thayer County Health Services and will be providing a wide variety of Pain Management services and treatments. Dr. Birthi completed his internship and residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and fellowship in



Pain Medicine at the University of Kentucky Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Birthi was chief resident during his Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency, he is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain Medicine and is a member of many professional societies and associations.

To continue the great care we provide you, please contact our Specialty Clinic office at (402)-768-4696.

We will be more than happy to assist you with making appointments with Dr. Birthi once he begins seeing patients in March 2022.

FIRST BABY OF 2022



The 2022 New Year's baby for Thayer County Health Services is Blakeleigh Jay Renée Fraussen born on January 21, 2022. She arrived at 5:20 pm and weighed in at 8 pounds, 4.4 ounces, and was 18.5 inches long.

A basket for the New Year's baby was presented to Blakeleigh's parents by hospital nurses; Angie Ireland, RN, and Kim Ruhnke, RN. The basket was overflowing with items from the following businesses: Amanda's Cottage, The Bottle Shop, Bruning Bank, Thayer County Bank, Western National Bank, Central Market, Deshler Chamber of Commerce, Hebron Chamber of Commerce, Hebron Sports Shack, The Majestic Theatre, Blue Bison, TCHS Hospital Guild, Foundation for TCHS and Thayer County Pharmacy. The basket included a Snowman Quilt pieced together by hospital employees and quilted by Barb Blicow from Hebron.

Thayer County Health Services would like to congratulate the family of Blakeleigh and thank everyone that contributed items to the 2022 New Year's baby basket.

In January 2022 TCHS completed the renovation of two hospital rooms that were converted to negative pressure rooms, also called isolation rooms.

These types of rooms are called negative pressure rooms because the air pressure inside the rooms is lower than the air pressure outside the room. This is done so when the door is opened, potentially contaminated air or particulates from inside the room will not go outside the room into the hallway or other areas.

Negative air pressure rooms are a common method of infection control in hospitals and are used with patients diagnosed with contagious, airborne diseases such as measles, tuberculosis, SARS, MERS, and COVID-19.

HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



PATIENT FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is a partnership of community members and hospital staff that work together to improve the patient experience at TCHS. They share valuable insight to improve the environment, communications, and experience for patients and their families. PFAC also provides insight to TCHS staff members by sharing their own experiences and feedback from their family and friends. TCHS Staff shares planned changes and improvements with the council to receive their feedback and perspectives. The Patient Family Council started in October 2020 and meets every other month.

Current members are Crystal Fangmeier, Jerry Catlett, Pastor Jeff Friesen, Connie O'Hanlon, PFAC Co-Chair, Shari Fischer, Connie Lichty- board representative, Deb Miller. TCHS staff include Stephanie Moody, RN, TCHS Quality Coordinator, PFAC Chair, Jamie Koch, RN, and Chief Nursing Officer. Over the past year, the council has worked closely with the hospital staff to learn more about Covid-19 and how TCHS is responding to the needs of the community.

Thayer County Health Services is looking for additional members to help us improve the patient and family experience. If you are interested in becoming a member of the council stop by and pick up a brochure at the hospital or clinics. You can visit our website at www.thayercountyhealth.com/patient-family-advisory-council or reach out to Stephanie Moody at 402-768-4629 or email her at smoody@tchsne.org for more information.



(L to R) Shari Fischer, Connie Lichty, Deb Miller, Jerry Catlett, Jeff Friesen, Connie O'Hanlon & Crystal Fangmeier (not pictured)

TECHNOLOGY & TRAINING AT TCHS

In November 2021, SIMS-NE came to Thayer County Health Services to provide their 400th training in Nebraska. Nebraska (SIM-NE) is a partnership of educational groups and charities dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Nebraskans. Using four 44-foot trucks stationed in different Nebraska regions, SIMS-NE provides realistic training to medical personnel, EMTs, and Firefighting personnel around the state.

SIMS-NE trucks are staffed with experienced personnel and each truck has two simulation spaces: an emergency room and an ambulance module. SIMS trucks are packed with advanced electronics and wireless sensors all integrated into lifelike mannequins. These lifelike mannequins; a child, a male, and a pregnant female can each bleed, get better, or even simulate giving birth all depending on the simulation and the “treatment” selected by the medical staff.

This realistic training allows TCHS staff to train in multiple stressful situations in a short period of time. This provides the medical personnel an opportunity for work on improving communications, teamwork, and the best medical treatments in a controlled environment. These opportunities are possible thanks to the innovative training classes from SIMS-NE



(L-R) Jayde Carstens, RN; Shawna Horkey, LPN-C; Angie Ireland, RN; Kari Rundus, RN



SIMS-NE Truck during the training at Thayer County Health Services in Nov. 2021

FEBUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH

According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. On the CDC's website, Thayer County, Nebraska had a yearly cardiovascular disease death rate of 454.3 per 100,000. This rate is higher than both the National Average of 419.2 and the Nebraska State average of 379.7 per 100K

To help prevent heart disease:

Eat healthy- Add eggplant, green beans, tomatoes, apples, fish, cucumbers, almonds, avocados, and other heart-healthy foods to your diet.

Salt- Limit the amount of sodium you consume. Check labels on foods for sodium and add only small amounts to the food you are preparing.

Get active- Walk more, set attainable goals, make working out a routine, get a workout buddy, and join a gym ([Korff Fitness & Wellness Center](#)). Plan group activities, take the stairs, walk the dog, stand instead of sitting or even try a new hobby. These are just some ideas to change things up and get you moving more.

Stay at a healthy weight- Limit meal portions to control calorie intake and add healthy snacks during the day. Be as physically active as you can. Talk to your doctor about your weight if you feel that you weigh too much or too little.

Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke- Make a plan, make a list of reasons to quit, get support from friends or family, get more exercise. These can help you to stay motivated and increase your chances of avoiding nicotine and the cravings for it.

Drink alcohol only in moderation- Keep track of and set limits, avoid places or situations where people drink a lot. Find peer support with friends, family, and support groups.

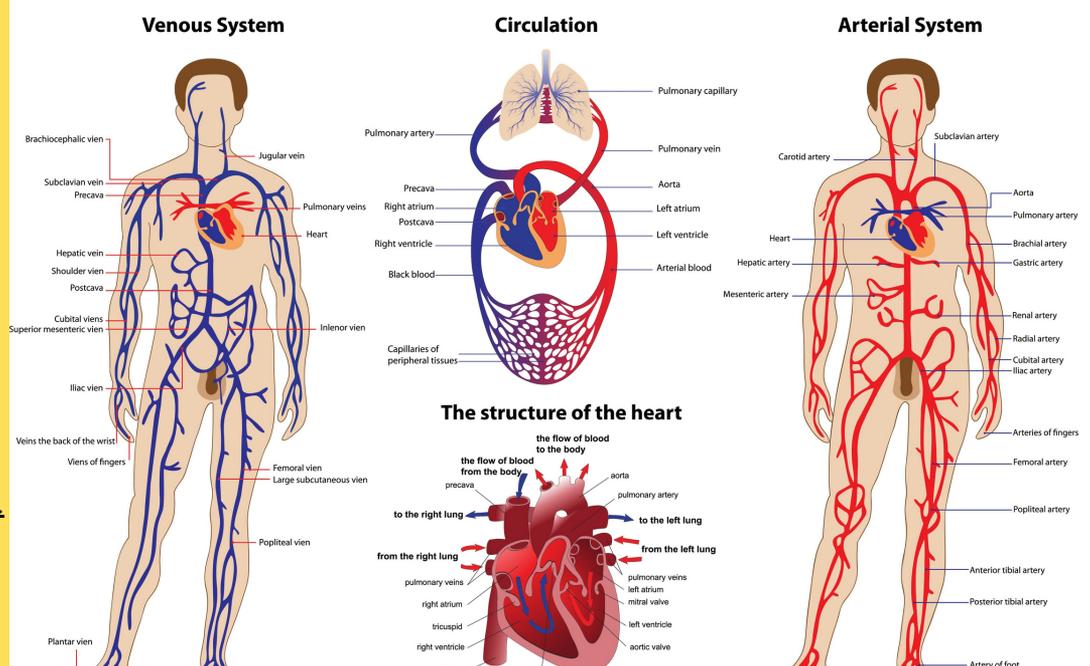
Manage stress- Get enough sleep, set time aside for yourself, recognize your triggers, and when you need help you can talk to behavioral health professionals.

It is recommended that you speak to your medical provider before beginning a new exercise program.

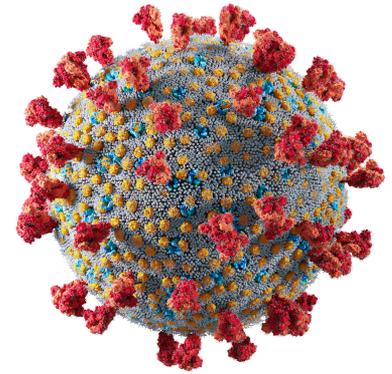
Thayer County Health Services has some of Nebraska's best cardiologists, arrhythmia, and vascular surgeon personnel seeing patients right here in Hebron, NE. Professionals from Nebraska Heart Institute and Bryan Heart travel to TCHS to see patients.

To learn more, contact our specialty group at [\(402\) 768-4150](tel:4027684150).

Thayer County Health Services, providing you- **Exceptional Healthcare, Close to Home**



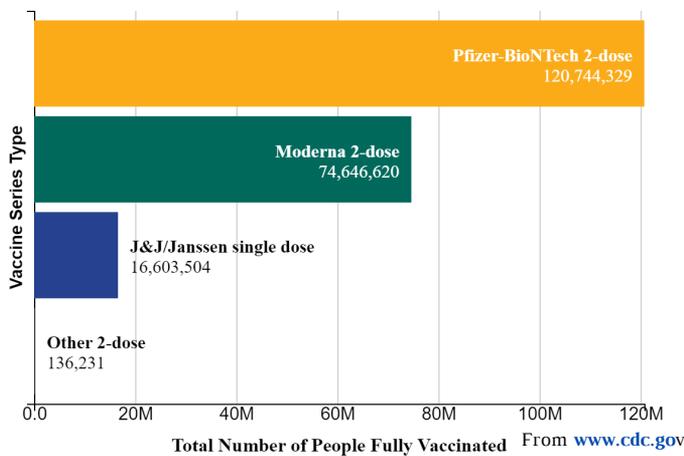
COVID-19 UPDATES



Thayer County Health Services has been actively monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic as new variants such as Delta and Omicron have developed. We work closely with our local and state health departments, as well as follow the most recent CDC guidelines to stay well informed. These assist us in making decisions for our facility that serve to protect our patients and staff. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with ongoing screening, masking, and visitor limitations. TCHS recently finished renovations of two of our inpatient rooms making them negative pressure to accommodate patients admitted with COVID-19 who need to be in isolation.

Also, we continue to host COVID-19 vaccination clinics at which we provide Pfizer and Moderna vaccines as well as boosters. To schedule a vaccination appointment please call 402-353-2181. Vaccines remain the best measure to protect people from COVID-19 and slow the spread. We encourage you to continue masking in public settings, practice good hand hygiene, and get tested if you have been exposed to or develop symptoms of COVID-19. The CDC has recently released updated quarantine guidelines for those who have been exposed or tested positive for COVID-19. Please familiarize yourself with these new guidelines by visiting <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Number of People Fully Vaccinated in the U.S. by COVID-19 Vaccine Series Type



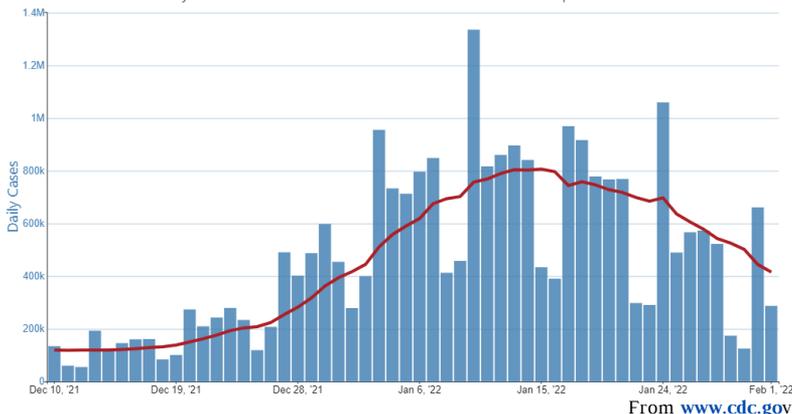
Watch for Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

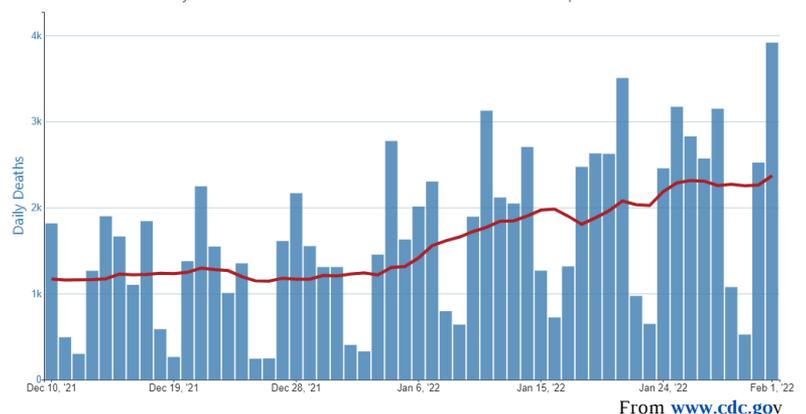
- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. From www.cdc.gov

Daily Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases in The United States Reported to CDC



Daily Trends in Number of COVID-19 Deaths in The United States Reported to CDC



YOU AND YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

It is winter and this is the time of the year we are faced with catching one of the many respiratory illnesses floating around our communities. Although we are not able to completely prevent an illness, a healthy immune system is one way to give yourself extra protection. It is important to help yourself and your family stay a step ahead with nutrient-rich foods and healthy lifestyle behaviors.



Kathy Retzlaff, registered Dietitian

To help keep our immune system healthy this winter and all year long, we should focus on a balanced dietary plan, getting adequate sleep, being active, and managing our stress. The American Dietary Guidelines help us meet our nutritional needs primarily from foods and beverages—specifically from nutrient-dense foods and beverages. Nutrient-dense foods provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Fruits and vegetables especially are important to provide the vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants necessary to support immune health. Recommendations for a healthy dietary plan are found in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025, Make Every Bite Count, ([DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)).

We should also remember to use good hygiene and handwashing to prevent the spread of germs. It is important to wash fresh produce before eating or using it in recipes. Using clean glasses, eating utensils and other kitchen items used in food preparation will help reduce the spread and growth of harmful bacteria.

Lack of sleep contributes to a variety of health concerns, such as weakening your immune system. Seven to nine hours of sleep is recommended for adults a night. Children need eight to 14 hours, depending on their age. Along with nutrition and exercise, an adequate amount of sleep for one's age is one of the pillars of health.

Meditation, listening to music and physical activity are great ways to manage stress. Reducing stress may help reduce your risk of chronic diseases that could weaken your immune system.

The benefits of **regular physical exercise** can improve one's immune system and overall well-being. Exercise improves our quality of sleep and helps us feel better sooner.

The following immune-boosting nutrients are found in the foods listed below:

- Vitamin A (Beta Carotene) includes plant foods such as sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mangos, broccoli, and tomatoes. We also get Vitamin A from meat, fish, and dairy foods.
- Vitamin C-rich foods include citrus fruits, berries, melons, tomatoes, bell peppers, and broccoli.
- Vitamin D foods include fatty fish and eggs, dairy foods. Time in the sun is important.
- Zinc is better absorbed from animal sources such as beef and seafood. For vegetarians, sources are wheat germ, beans, nuts, and tofu.
- Probiotics are good bacteria that promote health. Probiotics are in cultured dairy products such as yogurt with live cultures yogurt-like drink, kefir. Naturally fermented foods such as sauerkraut and homemade pickles. These active cultures help change or repopulate intestinal bacteria to balance gut flora. This helps boost immunity and overall health, especially gut health.
- Protein comes from animal and plant-based sources, such as milk, yogurt, eggs, beef, chicken, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils.

Foods and food components continue to be extensively studied for their effects on health and well-being, along with chronic disease risk reduction and management. Growing scientific evidence indicates certain food components (i.e. functional foods) that have biological activity in the human body can exert specific health benefits.

FREE HOME RADON TESTING

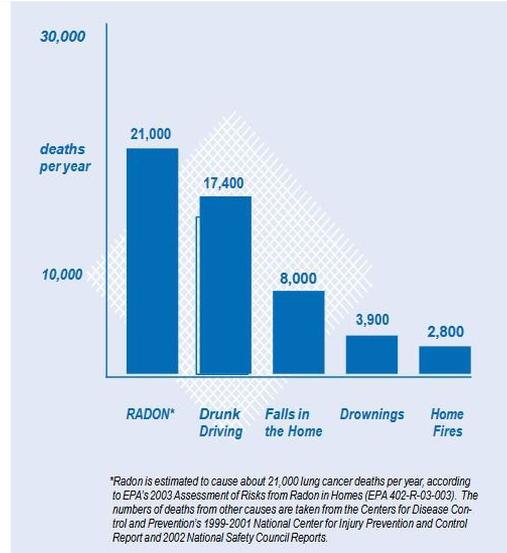
Radon is an invisible, odorless gas that occurs naturally in the soil and can enter homes through cracks and holes in the foundation, walls, and water pipes. In Nebraska, there are dangerously high levels of Radon and nearly one in two homes have levels well above the safe zone. Radon is a serious issue and is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., second only to smoking. You can help protect yourself and your family. The Public Health Solutions Health Department provides free Radon test kits throughout the year. They also provide information on outside mitigation services that will work with the homeowner to lower Radon levels in existing homes and offer Radon resistant methods for new home construction.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advises that homes with radon levels of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air or more be mitigated (fixed). Knowing the Radon level in your home is important as the problem can be fixed by installing a Radon mitigation system. Also, it is important for people building new homes to learn about Radon resistant construction techniques.

PHS has FREE Radon test kits available at our office locations. Testing is simple and easy. To request your free test kit, contact **402-826-3880** or visit <https://www.phsneb.org>

For further information please visit the EPA’s website to view the “Consumer’s Guide to Radon Reduction” at www.epa.gov.



Foundation for TCHS and Hospital Guild Updates



Foundation Annual Meeting

March 20, 2022

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Acreage Steakhouse in Hubbell

FREE meal will be provided to all 2022 members. Join us to meet the new TCHS leadership and learn more about how you can have an impact on local healthcare.



The winner of the Hospital Guild's 2021 Quilt Raffle was Ryann Pulliam from Hebron. Thank you to everyone that purchased a ticket. Proceeds are used to purchase new items for the Chemo Comfort bags for patients receiving their treatment at TCHS



The 2022 Membership Drives for these two organizations is underway. Your continued support enables them to purchase new medical equipment and provide funding in support of local healthcare. Having quality healthcare is vital to the future of Thayer County. Thayer County Health Services does not just provide essential healthcare to the local communities; it also has a tremendous impact on the the local economy of the region. For more information on how you can join these organizations, contact the Foundation office at 402-768-4636 or email foundation@tchsne.org.

PROTECTING YOURSELF & YOUR INFORMATION

Common Fraud Schemes

Romance scam: Criminals pose as interested romantic partners on social media or dating websites to capitalize on their victims' desire to find companions.

Tech support scam: Criminals pose as technical support representatives and offer to fix non-existent computer issues. The scammers gain remote access to victims' devices and sensitive information.

Grandparent scam: Criminals pose as a relative—usually a child or grandchild—claiming to be in immediate financial need.

Government impersonation scam: Criminals pose as government employees and threaten to arrest or prosecute victims unless they agree to provide funds or other payments.

Sweepstakes/charity/lottery scam: Criminals claim to work for legitimate charitable organizations to gain victims' trust. Or they claim their targets have won a foreign lottery or sweepstake, which they can collect for a "fee."

Home repair scam: Criminals appear in person and charge homeowners in advance for home improvement services that they never provide.

TV/radio scam: Criminals target potential victims using illegitimate advertisements about legitimate services, such as reverse mortgages or credit repair.

Family/caregiver scam: Relatives or acquaintances of the victims take advantage of them or otherwise get their money.

Ways To Protect Yourself

- Recognize scam attempts and end all communication with the perpetrator.
- Search online for the contact information (name, email, phone number, addresses) and the proposed offer. Other people have likely posted information online about individuals and businesses trying to run scams.
- Resist the pressure to act quickly. Scammers create a sense of urgency to produce fear and lure victims into immediate action. Call the police immediately if you feel there is a danger to yourself or a loved one.
- Be cautious of unsolicited phone calls, mailings, and door-to-door services offers.
- Never give or send any personally identifiable information, money, jewelry, gift cards, checks, or wire information to unverified people or businesses.
- Make sure all computer anti-virus and security software and malware protections are up to date. Use reputable anti-virus software and firewalls.
- Disconnect from the internet and shut down your device if you see a pop-up message or locked screen. Pop-ups are regularly used by perpetrators to spread malicious software. Enable pop-up blockers to avoid accidentally clicking on a pop-up.
- Be careful what you download. Never open an email attachment from someone you don't know, and be wary of email attachments forwarded to you.
- Take precautions to protect your identity if a criminal gains access to your device or account. Immediately contact your financial institutions to place protections on your accounts, and monitor your accounts and personal information for suspicious activity.

For more information visit- <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety>

TCHS Board of Directors

Karen Dahlkoetter- Board Chair
Loren Wiedel- Board Vice Chair
Laura Tuma- Board Treasurer
Connie Lichty- Board Secretary
Mike Long- Board Member At Large

An Abbreviated History of TCHS

- First Patient Admitted on Oct 17, 1948
- The original site of the Hospital was Thedora Hall, a vacant girl's dormitory
- Financing to purchase the original building and remodel it cost \$35,000 and was done by residents of Thayer County.
- TCHS was formed as a NON-PROFIT hospital and has continued as such since 1948 thanks to the residents of Thayer County and surrounding areas.

Thank you & we look forward to serving you for many decades to come



TCHS Values: Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Excellence

We're HIRING!

Come join our TEAM and make a difference in the community

HOW TO APPLY:

**Call Human Resources at 402-768-4641
or visit our website at
www.ThayerCountyHealth.com and
select the "Careers" tab.**

Competitive health benefits, company paid life insurance and LTD, retirement with company match, tuition reimbursement, EAP, Wellness Center discounts and much more!
EEO EMPLOYER/VET/DISABLED

Our National Bird & Symbol Since 1782**Missing Their Colors**

Young bald eagles are mostly dark and do not develop the distinctive white plumage until they are about 4-5 years old.

Do I Hear An Eagle

Many TV shows and movies actually dub over the real sound of bald eagles with the scream red-tailed hawks. Bald eagles actually make a high-pitched whistling or piping sound.

Eagles Commonly "Borrow" Food

Although they are great at catching fish, bald eagles will steal fish from other birds and scavenge carrion. They will also grab a gull, duck, rabbit, crab, and amphibian when they are hungry.

Very Romantic Birds

Bald Eagles normally mate for life, share the duties of raising offspring including incubating the eggs and feeding the little ones.

And Maintain Long relationships

Wild eagles have been known to live for up to 38 years and begin mating at age 4 or 5. Making for some long relationships