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Mark Welinski bumped his head

Mark was cleaning his garage and knocked a steel deer cart off the wall.

"It conked me on the head," he says. "I didn't think anything of it. I played football way back and got knocked on the head then, and I was always fine."

About a month later, Mark was out deer hunting and lost his balance. "I was stumbling, and having a little trouble with speech," he recalls. "When I got home, I asked my wife Karen the same question eight times in five minutes. She was very alarmed. She grabbed me and took me right to the ED."

When the triage nurse heard Mark's symptoms and that he'd suffered a bang on the head recently, "they lost no time," Mark says. "They very quickly got me evaluated."

Trouble with balance and speech points to a brain injury, or stroke. The ED team did a CT scan, and used TeleStroke to consult with a stroke neurologist at a certified Comprehensive Stroke Center, through NH+C's partnership with Allina Health. TeleStroke lets a neurologist examine a patient remotely, using video technology at the bedside.

Mark's diagnosis: It wasn't a stroke.

Mark had a bleed inside his brain.

Within 30 minutes of his arrival, Mark was being transferred by helicopter to Hennepin Health in Minneapolis –

NH+C's partner for trauma care.

"Thank goodness for the nurses and doctors at Northfield Hospital," Mark says. "Thank goodness they had the correct equipment to assess me accurately, and move me on to the next level of care."

Mark needed surgery to remove the blood that had pooled at the injury site, putting pressure on his brain.

He's been on blood thinners for many years, so Mark's care team stopped that medication and waited 48 hours for Mark's blood to thicken before performing brain surgery.

"I had an aortic valve replacement at age 42," Mark recalls. "They told me back then to be careful if I hit my head, because I had started taking blood thinners. Looking back, I feel lucky that this was the first incident where I really bumped my head."

Mark's surgery was successful. Then, while recovering at Hennepin, during a physical therapy session, Mark's speech became garbled. He was having a stroke: a CT scan showed a small, second bleed near the speech center of his brain some distance from the original bleed. It was minor enough to resolve itself without surgery.

Mark came home a week later. He has fully recovered since then.

His care team at Hennepin Health told Mark he had "the best outcome possible" because of the fast action of Northfield Hospital's ED team.



"They acted quickly and efficiently, and that paid off in the long run," Mark says. "I'm very thankful Northfield Hospital was able to make the assessments and then move me on to the best place for care as quickly as possible."

Northfield Hospital is a certified Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, equipped to diagnose, stabilize, treat, and transfer stroke patients if needed. Because NH+C is an independent

hospital, it has partnerships with the region's top specialists in critical fields of care. That way, NH+C can get patients the best care in trauma, stroke, cardiology and other time-urgent specialties.

Mark's advice for tackling the workshop and the woods: "Be careful as you age. Take your time accomplishing tasks when you can. And move forward with confidence that you have a very solid medical facility available around the clock."

That's using your head.



Katie Matheson made up for lost time

Patients recognize Katie as a nurse in our Women's Health Center.

This time, it was Katie's turn to be the patient.

Katie was due for her first colonoscopy in 2018. A string of family challenges kept postponing it. Then the pandemic hit. "When you're in healthcare, you feel like you should be the last in line," Katie says. So she waited.

Fast-forward to 2023: Katie made a list of things to catch up on – from health screenings to a haircut. "It was a long, long list. Women, moms, nurses – we tend to put ourselves last. But it was time to take care of myself."

Colonoscopy was last on the list. April Fitzloff, PA-C gently encouraged Katie to get it done. Katie scheduled it with surgeon Ellie Cohen, MD. "The prep was intimidating, but it was worth it," Katie recalls.

"The procedure itself was easy, and the endoscopy team was so attentive and kind," she adds. **"The last thing I heard as they put me to sleep was, 'I'm right here for you.'"**

Katie checked it off her list. Then Dr. Cohen called with the results: The test found adenocarcinoma, a cancer that starts in the glands that line organs including the colon and rectum.

Katie's was an early-stage cancer, located on the corner of the rectum and colon. Dr. Cohen referred

Katie to Colon & Rectal Surgery Associates; colorectal surgeon Emily Midura, MD would remove the cancer and resect Katie's colon.

Katie's family had a long-awaited vacation planned. Her care team "told me to go, and we'd work hard when I got back," she says.

The surgeon was able to remove the cancer completely. The team tested 19 lymph nodes; the cancer had not spread to any of them. "That's miraculous," Katie says. She didn't need radiation or chemotherapy. Katie spent three days in the hospital, then took an anticoagulant for a month to prevent blood clots. She'll have annual colonoscopies and PET scans to monitor her health.

PREVENTING COLON CANCER

- Know your risks.
- Manage the risk factors you can control.
- Get screened starting at age 45.

Why screen at age 45?

- Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.
- Diagnosis at age 55 and younger has increased 1%-2% each year since the mid-1990s.
- Screening starting at age 45 is recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force; American Cancer Society; American College of Gastroenterology.

"I felt like I scooted under the wire with a very early diagnosis, and the surgery cured me," Katie says. "If I had waited any longer, who knows? I live in gratitude."

And with a touch of guilt: "Why did I get such an easy road when other people with cancer have such challenging situations? Feeling guilty was the biggest hurdle while I was recovering."

Katie's experience prompted family stories of past cases of cancer. "It all came out after I brought it up," Katie says. A group conversation now helps relatives track their family history – a key risk factor for colorectal cancer.

Starting to screen at age 45 "doesn't mean cancer will start growing when you're that age; it means it's time start paying attention," Katie says.

"This wasn't a cancer that had been growing for five years," she adds. "Even being five years late with the screening, we caught it early."

Katie's advice to procrastinators: "Even if you think you waited too long, start now anyway. **Even if it's late, it's not too late.**"

"For whatever reason you're avoiding a test that feels overwhelming, it's important to do it."

"Besides," Katie laughs, "it's not as bad as you think."

 **Schedule your colonoscopy:**
507-646-1201





Colleen Strese didn't plan on roughing it

Colleen's family was camping in northern Wisconsin. They were sitting at a picnic table when it suddenly collapsed. Colleen's leg was trapped underneath.

Colleen couldn't walk; it was hard to breathe. X-rays taken in the local Emergency Department in Wisconsin showed no broken bones. She had a minor scratch, but the skin on her leg had turned an alarming white – an indication of a deep tissue injury.

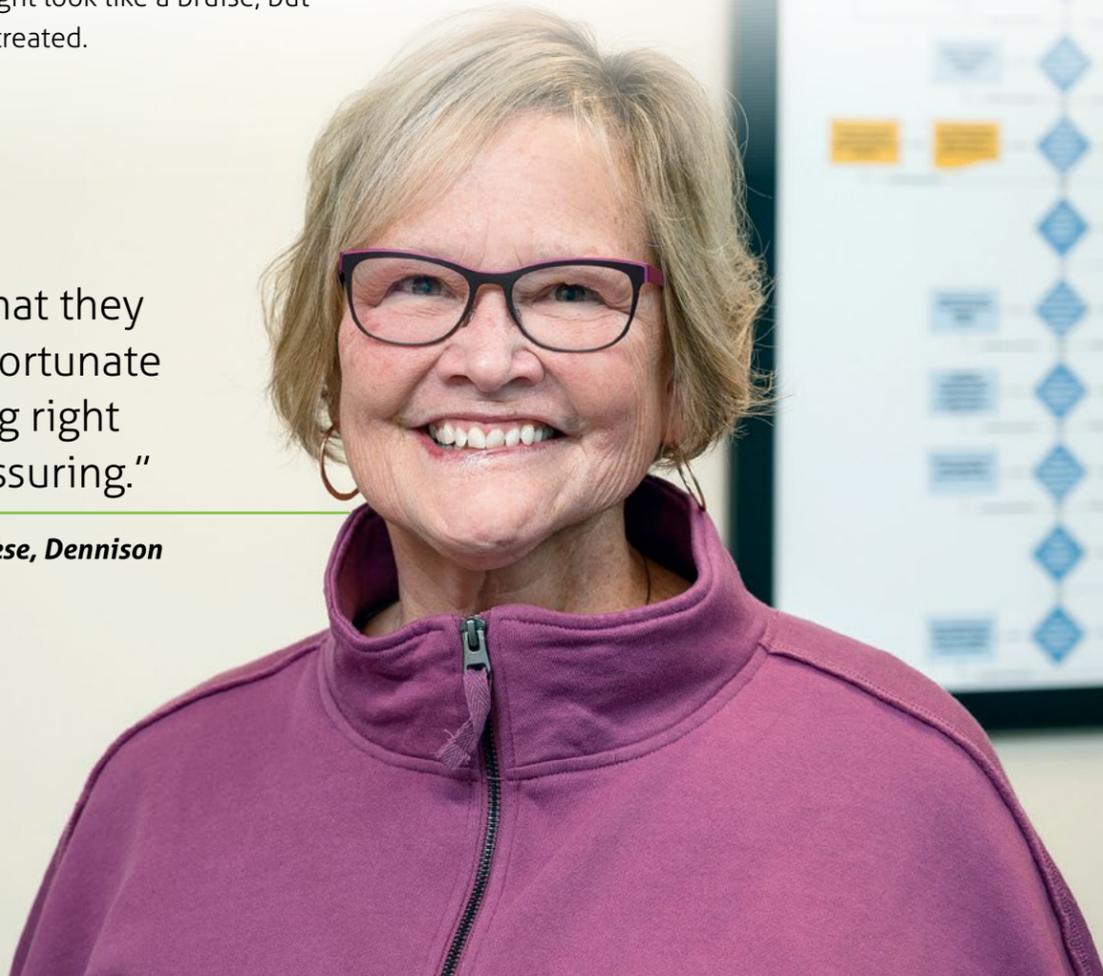
Deep tissue injury can cause severe tissue damage under the skin, including infection that spreads down into muscle and bone. It might look like a bruise, but can be dangerous if left untreated.

Back home, at NH+C's Wound Healing Center, Christina Richardson, FNP, CWON took charge. She and the care team debrided Colleen's wound weekly, and taught Colleen and her husband Mike how to clean and bandage the wound at home to prevent infection.

"It was very painful in the beginning," Colleen says.

"I'm amazed at what they can do. We're so fortunate to have everything right here. It's very reassuring."

Colleen Strese, Dennison



"Christine dove right in, and thoroughly explained what was going on. Becky [Busselman, RN, BSN] and the other nurses dug right in too. It was gross, but they were amazing."

Colleen needed extensive treatment. She had seven skin grafts over 13 weeks.

She had a string of complications, too: an infection, torn ligaments, a blood clot (deep-vein thrombosis) diagnosed via ultrasound that needed treatment right away. The ED and ultrasound team coordinated with Christina to get Colleen on a blood thinner immediately.

"All across NH+C, they help right away," Colleen says. "The departments work well with each other to get what you need."

The Wound Healing team also coordinated with Colleen's primary care provider Dr. Sara Hernberg and specialists including internist Randolph Reister, MD and orthopedic surgeon Hans Bengtson, MD – on standby to assess and mend any ligament damage once the wound healed.

"Everyone in the whole NH+C system works so well together," Colleen adds. "Diagnosis after diagnosis, everything was taken care of right away. I'm amazed at what they can do. We're so fortunate in Northfield to have everything right here. It's very reassuring."

The Wound Healing Center even coordinated with Colleen's insurance and ordered medical supplies to be shipped to her home: "They just handle

everything," she says.

"I feel lucky. It could have been a lot worse," Colleen says. "It was a unique injury. I'm so glad they were able to heal it. Otherwise, I might have lost a leg."

Her advice for others who have a weird accident: "Don't hesitate. Get to your primary care provider immediately or the Emergency Department, and get it checked out."

And also, "make sure you have very sturdy picnic tables."

WOUND HEALING CENTER WINS NATIONAL AWARDS...AGAIN

Our Wound Healing Center is two for two: The center won two awards as one of the best wound healing centers in the country...for the second year in a row.

The Center of Distinction Award honors NH+C's patient satisfaction (95%) and wound healing rate for 2023.

The Clinical Excellence Award recognizes high healing rates that put NH+C in the top 10 percent of 600 wound healing centers in the U.S. Both awards come from Healogics, the leading provider of advanced wound care in the U.S.

What can we heal for you?

> Appointments: 507-646-6900

No referral needed.



Mindful eating puts you in charge

It's easy to get caught up in the desire for instant gratification. It's the kind of world we live in.

Running errands and have a sudden craving for a delicious coffee drink? It's a quick stop, right on the way. And hey, you deserve a reward, right?

We usually don't have to work hard to satisfy a craving. The problem with instant gratification is, eating can become automatic if we let it . . . and often, what we eat isn't based on what our bodies need. That can lead to overeating, unhealthy choices, and negative feelings about food and ourselves.

Eating well can be challenging in a world full of readily available, inexpensive, calorically dense, hyper-palatable foods.

Mindful eating can help. Mindfulness is awareness: making intentional choices. Do you grab a handful from the office candy dish and eat it in seconds while walking back to your desk? Or do you choose to skip it, and opt for a nourishing snack that fuels your body for strength and energy?

You have the power to decide. You can choose what to eat, how much, when, and how quickly or slowly to eat. That is mindful eating.

Here's how to start:

- **When you're making a food choice**, ask yourself: "Am I hungry?"
- **If you're not hungry**, then ask: "Why am I eating?"
- **Remove distractions while eating.** (Yes, put away your phone.) Savor every bite.
- **Use all of your senses when eating.** How does your food smell? Are the colors bright or bland? Is there a satisfying sound – a crunch, or slurp? How does the food feel in your mouth?
- **Take your time.** Savor the experience while enjoying your food and nourishing your body.

The more you practice intentional choices, and shift your thinking and your options . . . the more likely healthy choices will become healthy habits.

And that is a reward that you deserve.

WANT HELP TO IMPROVE YOUR EATING HABITS?

Check out **ReShape U**, led by Registered Dietitian Nutritionists. Affordable education and support to help you change your eating habits; step out of a dieting mentality; and have a healthy relationship with food.

Classes, one-on-one coaching, support group.

NEW! Classes via on-demand video – watch on your schedule.

Class 1: "Awakening Awareness to Mindful Eating and Changing Habits"

Class 2: "Finding Balance with Carbohydrates, Protein, & Fat"

Register: 507-646-1410

Learn more by scanning the QR code:



Greek Salad with Couscous

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 cucumber, cut in bite-sized pieces
- 1 red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 4 oz. feta cheese crumbles
- ½ cup Kalamata olives
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup large-pearl whole wheat couscous

- 1) Cook the couscous according to package directions.
- 2) Mix the vegetables, olive oil, vinegar and feta cheese.
- 3) Drain the couscous and add to the veggies/dressing.
- 4) Refrigerate for 4-6 hours before serving. Yields 6 servings.

Nutrition Facts: 1 cup: 281 calories, 25 grams carbohydrate, 18 grams fat, 6 grams protein, 200 mg sodium, 2 grams fiber



Patients and families help shape NH+C services

Patients and their families have opinions about their healthcare.

The Patient & Family Advisory Council puts opinions into action.

The council taps patients' experiences to improve care in the hospital, in clinics, and even online. Council volunteers bring fresh eyes to details large and small, from dinner menus to discharge routines to digital scheduling.

Adding the voice of the patient is one important way to make sure we're providing people the best experience possible.

Recent projects:

- **Hospital discharge process:** The council helped hospital leaders craft a "target discharge time," setting a tentative discharge date and time early in a hospital stay to allow patients more time to arrange a ride, medications, and help at home.
- **Patient belongings after a trauma:** The council designed a sticker for the Belonging Bag of trauma patients, to warn family members that the clothing inside might be cut, soiled, or damaged in some way during emergency care. The idea came from a family member of a patient who had been in a motor vehicle accident: "The family member told us how traumatizing it was to open the bag and think about her loved one," says Patient Advocate Angelina Holder, BSN, RN, who spearheads the council.

Emergency Department and EMS teams use the sticker.

- **Online scheduling:** The council beta-tested the new system to schedule clinic appointments via NH+C's website. (Earlier, the council evaluated NH+C's website and patient portal for ease of access, clarity of information, and user experience.)

Meet the council members.

Emma Cin

I'm studying Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota, with the goal of becoming a physical therapist. I joined the council because I want to immerse myself in the medical field, especially behind the scenes. As a younger member, I'm able to bring a unique perspective to the council. I appreciate having a voice in the community I grew up in. It has been highly rewarding to see our ideas implemented.



Emma Cin

Julie Donaldson

I was a hospice volunteer for many years, and was asked if I'd be interested in joining the council. I said, "I'm just a regular person, not a medical person; I don't know if I have any valuable input." I hadn't been in the hospital since



Julie Donaldson

my children were born. But I believe in being involved in your community, and making positive changes. So when we take on a project, I ask friends and family, and I bring their perspective to the table, too. Too many people just complain, and aren't willing to step up and do something about it. Our job is to complain – with purpose. **This is your opportunity to bring your negatives and positives, and have some input to make things better.**

Julie Faulkner

The medical world has always been important to me, and I like that we look at ways to make it better. We're looking for positive things that can make a patient's stay better. What first brought me to NH+C was the care for my parents, and then I became a nurse here. So I approach this as a customer and as a nurse. It's nice to have a cross section of people, bringing different perspectives. It's a one-hour meeting quarterly – a very doable commitment. I look forward to it.



Julie Faulkner

Howard Puczko

I joined the council to help NH+C by offering suggestions on improving the already positive image NH+C has in the community. We're fortunate to have a healthcare facility like NH+C to provide the best healthcare in our community. I believe the council has made some positive suggestions, and trust that we'll continue to offer suggestions to make positive experiences for patients.



Howard Puczko

WANT TO ADD YOUR VOICE?

The Council is seeking new members. The goal: Incorporate diverse perspectives across demographics and across NH+C service lines.

PFAC members:

- Must be a NH+C patient (hospital or clinic), or family member of a patient
- Share information and insight from their experiences with NH+C
- Participate in at least four council meetings a year
- Are asked to commit to one year

Learn more, and apply:



¿QUIERE UD. AÑADIR SU VOZ?

El Consejo está buscando nuevos miembros. El objetivo: incorporar diversas perspectivas en todos los sectores demográficos y en todas las líneas de servicios de NH+C.

Los miembros del PFAC:

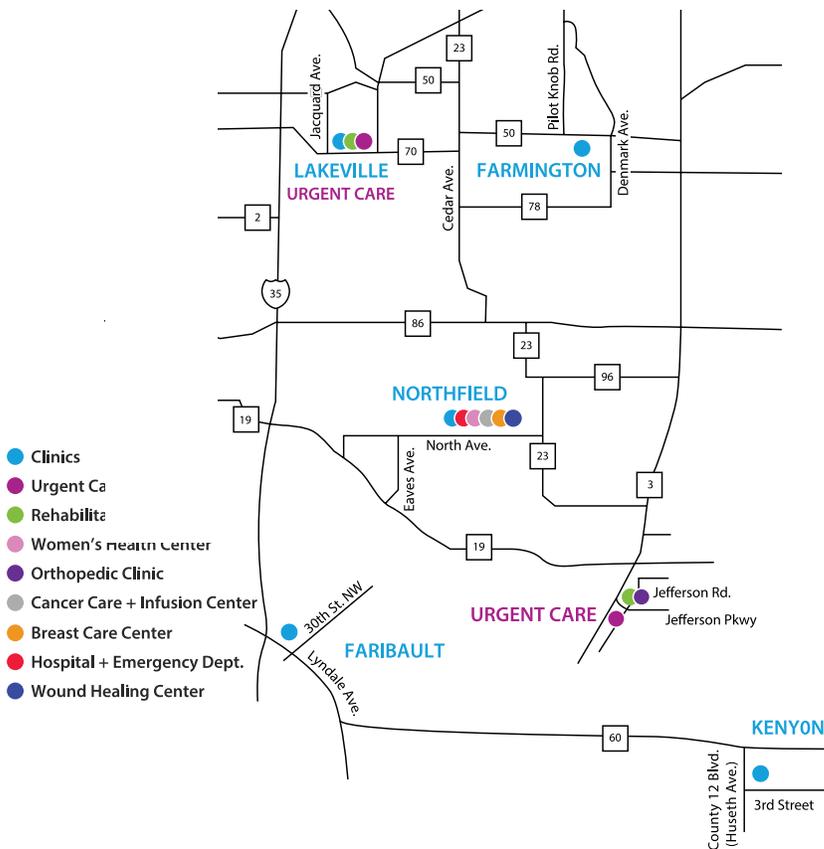
- Ser pacientes de NH+C (hospital o clínica) o miembros de la familia de un paciente
- Compartir información y conocimientos de sus experiencias con NH+C
- Participar en al menos cuatro reuniones del consejo al año
- Se les pide que se comprometan por un año

Obtenga más información y presente su solicitud:



2000 North Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057

Clinics, Hospital + Specialty Care close to you



Hospital + Emergency

Northfield Hospital + Emergency
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1000

Clinics + Urgent Care

Faribault Clinic
1980 30th St. NW (at Lyndale Ave.), Tel: 507-334-1601

Farmington Clinic
4645 Knutsen Drive, Tel: 651-460-2300

Kenyon Clinic
225 Huseth Street, Tel: 507-623-0123

Lakeville Clinic + URGENT CARE
9974 214th Street W., Tel: 952-469-0500

Northfield Clinic
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1494

URGENT CARE Northfield
2014 Jefferson Road (Hwy 3), Tel: 507-646-6700

Specialty care available at multiple clinic locations

Schedule appointments online!

Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics

- Start at northfieldhospital.org or scan this QR code:
- Choose a time that fits your schedule
- Receive instant confirmation and reminders
- Your information is secure and private



Specialty Care

Breast Care Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1143

Cancer Care & Infusion Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-6979

Endoscopy – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1201

Orthopedics Clinic – Northfield
1381 Jefferson Road, Tel: 507-646-8900

Rehabilitation Clinics
Northfield: 1381 Jefferson Road
Tel: 507-646-8800
Lakeville: 9913 – 214th Street West
Tel: 952-985-2020

Sleep Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1099

Women's Health Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1478

Wound Healing Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-6900



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