

A publication of Fulton County Health Center

Health *Centering*

**SPECIAL
ISSUE**

**PREPARING AND
RESPONDING TO**

COVID-19

Plus:

Message from the CEO
New Urgent Care Clinic
Wellness Center Reopens
News & Notes

Volume 36, No. 3 Summer, 2020

 **Fulton County
Health Center**
Completing the circle of care

PREPARING FOR COVI

This issue of *Health Centering* is devoted to looking back at the last several months of intensive planning and preparation by the FCHC staff in anticipation of a surge in COVID-19 cases. These preparations began in early March, and the plans put in place remain in effect today.

Patti Finn remembers the date quite well. March 2. It was the day Fulton County Health Center held its regular safety meeting to discuss issues facing the Health Center. This time, however, the topic focused on one subject: the growing concern over the COVID-19 virus. The days that followed became a dizzying blur of intense planning and preparation.

“Within a week after that early March safety meeting, we held our first COVID-19 Incident Command meeting,” says Finn, FCHC CEO. “A week later, a multi-disciplinary team met to discuss facility planning and preparations, and that meeting lasted until 9:00 p.m.”

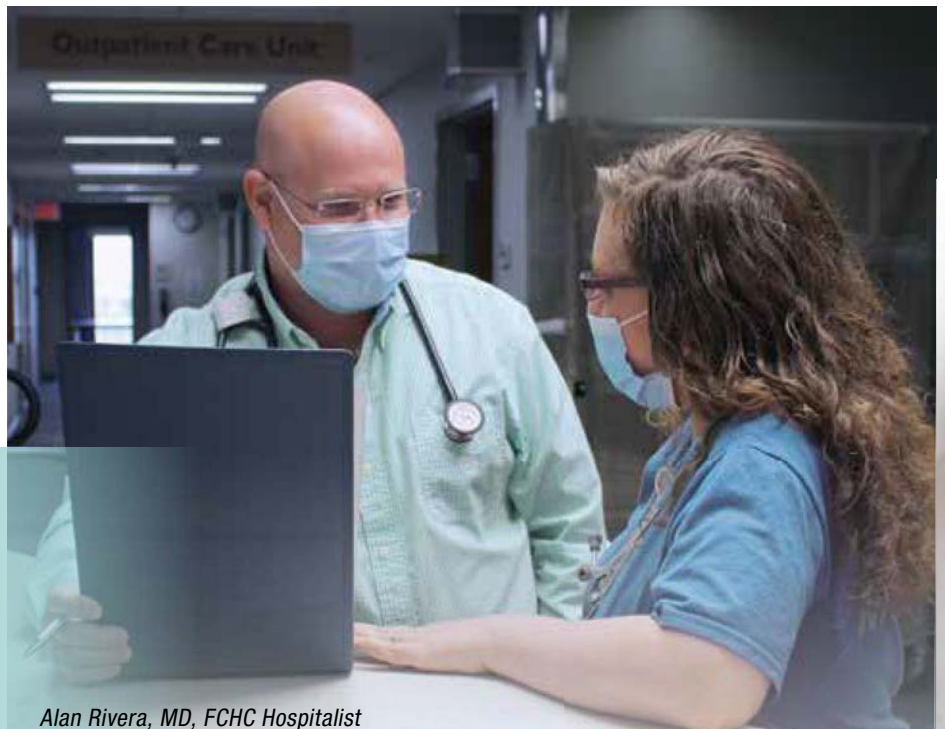
Finn says the Health Center routinely prepares for major community emergencies and even holds an annual mock disaster that involves multiple health care providers and facilities. But the coronavirus was a whole different ballgame.

A Daunting Scenario

“We were getting modeling reports from the Ohio Department of Health that projected we could have an influx of 133 COVID-19 patients into our facility at one time. We only have 25 inpatient beds, and none of them were designed to contain a virus like this. Plus, they were projecting 5-10% of those patients would need to be put on life-supporting ventilators. We don’t have that many ventilators in our facility, and no hospital in our area has that level of equipment. Not only did we not have enough beds or ventilators, we didn’t have the staff to care for that many patients at one time, nor the

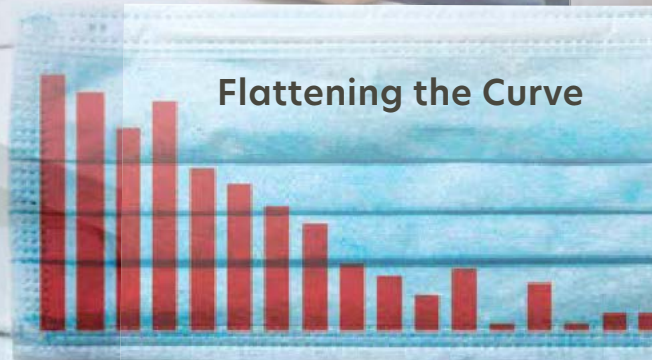
medical equipment and personal protective equipment. And we were being told that the virus could infect 30-50% of our staff members, rendering them unable to care for patients. We saw what was happening in New York City, and we were being advised to prepare for that situation here in Wauseon, although on a smaller scale. Quite honestly, it was a real gut check time for all of us.”

At the time FCHC planning was ramping up, Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton were issuing stay-at-home-orders and closing schools. As each week passed, more restrictions were being placed on Ohioans. Everyone was worried and frightened.



Alan Rivera, MD, FCHC Hospitalist discusses treatment protocols with Megan Rice, RN for a patient suspected of having COVID-19.

All of the procedures were designed to flatten (slow) the number of potential COVID-19 patients that would require hospitalization in order to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed.



Members of the FCHC Administration wearing masks donated by members of the community. (L-R): Tiffany Siegel, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Chief Nursing Officer; Rebecca Taylor, Chief Operating Officer; Jenee Seibert, Chief Financial Officer; Annette Kolbe, Administrative Assistant; and Patti Finn, Chief Executive Officer.



Intense Planning

For a number of years, FCHC has had a Hospital Incident Command System Organizational Structure in place. The structure was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for use by health care providers and other organizations to better plan and prepare for disasters. FCHC had already adopted a version of the plan and immediately began implementing it for COVID-19.

“The goal was to flatten the curve, a phrase I’m sure people got tired of hearing,” says Finn. “But the goal of hospitals across the country was to prepare for an overwhelming influx of COVID-19 patients while hoping that the plans put in place by the states would slow the spread of the virus and reduce the number of patients being hospitalized.”



Alan Rivera, MD, Hospitalist and Rebecca McClarren, MD, Family Practice talk about ventilator treatment options during a Sunday initial planning meeting when the pandemic was in its early stages. The meeting occurred before people were advised of the need for social distancing and face masks.

The Incident Command System is very comprehensive and detailed and is organized by divisions of staff members who handle specific duties for disaster preparedness. As examples, FCHC had assignments for:

- ▶ **Incident Commander** - in this case, Patti Finn, CEO, who was the overall commander-in-chief of the planning process
- ▶ **Public Information Officer** - to handle internal and external communications
- ▶ **Liaison Officer** - a staff member to work with outside entities such as the Fulton County Emergency Operations Center that provides resources and information to support on-scene health care providers
- ▶ **Safety Officer** - an individual responsible for the security of the building and grounds
- ▶ **Emergency Preparedness Officer** - a staff member to pose “what if” disaster scenarios that might affect FCHC and its preparedness
- ▶ **Logistics Section** - a group responsible for securing the necessary supplies, medications and personal protective equipment needed
- ▶ **Operations Section** - a group to oversee the functioning of the Health Center, Fulton Manor, and FCHC Medical Care’s nine Medical Offices
- ▶ **Planning Section** - the group that develops the Incident Action Plan to accomplish the goals and objectives developed for the incident
- ▶ **Finance Section** - a group to determine how to pay for necessary supplies and equipment
- ▶ **Medical Staff Section** - physicians and nurses who would be on the frontline of providing care

“We worked remotely and met here at the Health Center with proper social distancing in place,” says Finn. “We would hold daily Incident Command calls with 24 staff members. Many of us were working 12-14 hour days, 7 days a week to put this plan together.”

Following are additional articles that offer a partial look at the magnitude and comprehensiveness of FCHC’s COVID-19 planning and preparation.

OPERATIONS

As preparations began to handle a predicted surge of patients with COVID-19, it was imperative that frontline providers be properly prepared, particularly those working in the Emergency Department and Critical Care Units (CCU).

“We’ve drilled and planned for emergencies including a major influenza surge, but this was a new virus that everyone really didn’t completely understand, which presented a challenge,” says Tiffany Siegel, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Chief Nursing Officer. “One of our strategies was making sure all of our staff was educated and had a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms to look for in a patient suspected of having COVID-19. They also had to be educated on how to care for these unique patients, including the proper use of ventilators and specific care routines. Our physicians and providers also worked together to educate and prepare for a potential surge of COVID-19 patients.”

Siegel says that early in the planning process the Health Center followed the advice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health. Online and in-person training sessions were held that included demonstrations, scenarios, and how to properly put on and remove personal protective equipment such as gowns, gloves, face masks, and face shields. The Health Center was able to modify rooms and open space to expand its negative pressure rooms from four to 30. These rooms would be used to isolate and treat patients with the disease so no air from the room would circulate back into the Health Center.

“Another key part of our preparation was to develop the proper tools for universally screening staff members, patients and visitors at the entrances of all our facilities,” says Rebecca Taylor, Chief Operating Officer. “Those tools included a temperature check of everyone entering the building as well as screening questions about their current health, recent travels, and more information to help us determine if the person was safe to enter.” Taylor says the screening tools were



All staff, patients and visitors are screened for COVID-19 by having their temperature checked and answering health questions upon entering FCHC or one of the outpatient clinics.

implemented at the Health Center, its Medical Office Buildings, physician offices, and Fulton Manor.

That screening was vitally important for the FCHC Emergency Department, where patients suspected of having COVID-19 would arrive. A triage tent was erected outside the Emergency Department entrance in anticipation of a surge in patients. A separate waiting area and new traffic routes in the Emergency Department were established, along with COVID-19 designated Emergency Department rooms that isolated patients to prevent crossover of the disease. A special air scrubber with a HEPA filter was installed in the Emergency Department to filter the air in the rooms of COVID-19 patients and exhaust it to the outside air.

“The training involved more than our doctors and nurses,” says Taylor. “X-ray, lab and dietary

services also had to learn where to enter the building, what to wear, and where and how to deliver food to patients who would be confined to one of our negative pressure rooms. It was all about minimizing the number of staff members who would have to enter a patient’s room.”

The nurse to patient ratio was adjusted to have dedicated staff members trained to work with patients who were suspected or confirmed with the illness. “FCHC nurses are used to caring for patients in isolation, so this concept was not completely foreign to them,” says Siegel. “We just had to reinforce the importance of PPE and these steps as well as taking the extra precautions and steps to protect everyone.”

The internal communication network was significantly enhanced by the IT Department. Those changes included improvements to phone conferencing and the establishment of a dedicated phone line for staff members to call with questions. Their work was a major enhancement to communication for hospital leadership and Incident Command teams when they could not meet in person.

“The planning and preparation is complete and in place, and we have drilled these new set-ups and care routines and adjusted where we have needed,” says Siegel. With the threat of a patient surge decreasing, she notes “We are actively demobilizing our patient surge plan. If a surge occurs we will be able to remobilize all of the things we have put in place in a matter of hours



to handle an influx of patients. We will continue with many of our new protocols, and we will keep our isolation and negative pressure rooms available. We continue to assure that our operations are as safe as they can be. We have created protocols and care routines with our physicians and leadership teams to assure that we are doing everything we can do to safely provide exceptional care to the patients we serve.”

Taylor says she wants the general public to feel comfortable going to the Emergency Department, the Health Center or their physician’s office. “If you need care, you should by all means get it,” says Taylor. “We have safety practices in place to protect everyone. I can honestly say that seeing all that we’ve done to prepare, I feel very safe having any of my family members go to our Health Center.”



Maintenance staff sealed off a portion of the Emergency Department for use only with patients suspected of having COVID-19.

Emergency Preparedness



A triage tent was initially set up outside the Emergency Department to prepare for a possible surge of COVID-19 patients. It was taken down in early May.

Carrie Sigg, BSN, RN, Clinical Education Manager, served as the Emergency Preparedness team member and acted as a resource for the Health Center, Fulton Manor and the medical offices.

“When we first implemented the Incident Command System, my job was to maintain communications with our emergency preparedness partners at the local, regional, and state levels,” says Sigg. “Those partners included the Fulton County Emergency Management Agency, the Fulton County Emergency Operations Center, the Fulton County Health Department, the Northwest Ohio Healthcare Emergency Management Coalition, Fulton County long-term care facilities, local EMS and fire departments, and local law enforcement.”

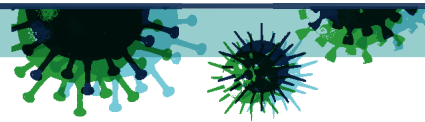
Some of Sigg’s primary tasks were to:

- ▶ Assist logistics with the process of procuring local, regional, and state assets such as ventilators and personal protective respirators; and securing equipment from the Strategic National Stockpile supply.
- ▶ Enter daily COVID-19 data into state and federal databases.
- ▶ Disperse information from local, regional and state partners to FCHC staff members.
- ▶ Determine the best practices for identifying and treating patients with COVID-19.
- ▶ Maintain inventories of FCHC’s resources.

“We are fortunate to have had a great working relationship with our county and regional partners, and we have routinely met and worked together,” says Sigg. “Prior to my current position as FCHC’s Clinical Education Manager, I was the Health Center’s Emergency Preparedness planner for five years. I was also the evaluator of our preparedness exercises for many years prior to that. Over the years, we’ve practiced emergency preparedness drills for weather related incidents, active shooter/mass casualty incidents, hazardous material incidents, evacuations, cyber attacks, and even pandemics.”

Sigg says the Health Center’s previous pandemic exercises have helped them plan for the real one. “We used some of the previous practices to develop additional bed capacity for COVID-19 to accommodate a potential surge of patients in our Emergency Department and ICU. The COVID-19 pandemic has given us the opportunity to make the actual requests for supplies and witness their deployment from the Strategic National Stockpile.” But the work is not done.

“We want our patients to know that we continue to monitor the latest recommendations and guidelines for screening, wearing face masks, social distancing, and disinfecting to ensure the safety of our staff, patients, and visitors,” says Sigg. “We’re here to provide our patients the quality care they expect from our facility.”



Infection Prevention



Dawn DeHollander, an FCHC Environmental Services Technician, adjusts the Tru-D ultraviolet sterilizing unit, which provides added infection prevention.

Barb Crow works as FCHC's Infection Prevention and Employee Health Director. So, at the beginning of this year she was keeping a close eye on the events unfolding in Wuhan, China. **"This coronavirus was projecting to create a health crisis with its ease of transmission and number of fatalities," says Crow.**

As a member of the Incident Command System team, Crow had several responsibilities that included: maintaining communications with the local health department to oversee reporting of suspect and confirmed cases; assisting with contact tracing, and reviewing the frequent CDC updates to guide implementation of precautionary steps. She also reviewed local, regional and state data to evaluate the risk to the facility and the community. It began with staff members being screened at the entrance for temperature checks. Any staff member who was found to have a fever was sent home for isolation and would have to be cleared to return to work. Staff members were also asked a series of questions on their health status, if they had traveled out of state, and if they had been exposed to anyone with the virus.

Patients and visitors to the Health Center also had their temperatures checked and were asked the same questions as staff members. Social distancing within the facility was required and there was an increased cleaning of surfaces everywhere. Patients who were non-infectious were isolated from those who had infections. Patients were limited to having one visitor accompany them to the Health Center, and they were encouraged to come alone if possible to minimize the number of people entering the facility.

In addition to the health checks at the entrance, staff members focused on enhanced and frequent cleaning of the facility. "We followed the guidelines from the CDC on disinfecting

for this virus," says Crow. "Our Tru-D ultraviolet machine that's used to disinfect patient rooms provided an added layer of protection in addition to our enhanced cleaning. We also have UV cabinets that disinfect high-touch items such as goggles and cell phones." When caring for a patient suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, a higher level of protection is recommended that includes the use of a respirator, eye protection, gown, and gloves.

Crow says the Ohio Department of Health had established criteria for people to be tested, which included health care workers, those most likely to have complications from the virus due to pre-existing health conditions, and those congregated in a confined area. Those meeting the criteria would have their nose swabbed, and collected samples were sent out for analysis. "If a person tested positive, the lab would report that information to the county health department in which the patient resides, and I would follow up with them to assist with their investigation," says Crow. "The Health Department would then do contact tracing." Contact tracing is used to identify those individuals considered to have had close contact exposure with an infected person and who could potentially become infected. The health department would ask those close contacts to self-quarantine. "We also looked to see if there were any employees that may have had unprotected exposure, and we would then restrict them from work," says Crow.

"It's difficult to know for sure how this pandemic will affect our way of doing business in the future," says Crow. "In the meantime, I want to emphasize to patients and visitors that it is safe to come to the Health Center for tests or surgeries. The procedures we've taken over the last few months are still in place, and they have made our facility very safe from COVID-19. You don't have to worry about catching the virus if you come here. I ask that if you come to any of our facilities, please wear a face mask as part of the CDC's recommended universal source control. And please be patient. The procedures for screening everyone at the entrance are being done for everyone's protection. We want everyone to be safe."



Sabrina Lind, RN, MSN checks on a patient in the FCHC Heart and Vascular Center that had been converted by the Maintenance Department into a special COVID-19 Unit with negative pressure.

PHYSICAL PLANT

A group of behind-the-scenes employees at FCHC were at the center of pandemic preparations. These hospital support staff were members of the Maintenance Department, led by Bill Simpkins, Facilities Director, and Darren Campos, CHFM, Safety Director and Assistant Facilities Director.

“At the outset of the pandemic we didn’t know if the virus was airborne or not,” says Campos. “So one of the major things we had to figure out right away was how to create space in the Health Center to isolate patients with COVID-19. We decided the best option was to adapt the space above the Emergency Department and modify it to create negative pressure rooms.” Campos says the FCHC Maintenance staff was able to create negative pressure rooms and a negative pressure department, and the air from those areas was exhausted to the outside rather than reusing it. All of the incoming air was HEPA filtered.

Six rooms in the Endoscopy Unit and four rooms in the FCHC Heart & Vascular Center, all situated above the Emergency Department, were converted into negative pressure rooms. But more negative pressure space was needed because of the anticipated surge in patients. So plastic barriers and temporary doors were installed to convert 20 bays in the open wing on the floor into negative pressure spaces, complete with a positive pressure space for staff to safely use when donning personal protective equipment.

A tent that was loaned to the Health Center by Fulton County Fire and Emergency Services was erected outside the FCHC Emergency Department entrance. “Once again, we were anticipating a surge in patients who would most likely be entering the hospital through the Emergency Department,” says Simpkins. “So we outfitted the tent with all the necessary equipment to triage an influx of patients as they would come in.”

Simpkins says each year his staff practices disaster preparation and drills with many other departments in the Health Center, and the training helped a great deal in preparing for this pandemic. “I can’t say enough about our maintenance crew and our subcontractors,” says Simpkins. “Sure we were all a little frightened of the unknown, but there was absolutely no hesitation from anyone in our department to do their jobs. Our subcontractors were fantastic as well. The longstanding relationships we had with them really paid off, and they stepped up to offer any assistance we needed. They really helped us get by, and I can’t thank them enough.”

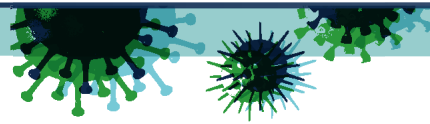
Security was a major issue, so the Maintenance Department focused on reducing access into the hospital to create one entrance for employees and one entrance for patients. Instructional signage and temporary barriers were installed to direct people in the proper direction. “In addition, we had to change the traffic patterns so people entering the Emergency Department would be isolated from the diagnostics and laboratory areas,” says Simpkins.

The maintenance staff also had to figure out how to create screening areas at the two entrances so an FCHC staff member could take the temperature of all those who entered. That staff member would ask a series of health-related questions about the person’s health and travel patterns. Plexiglas shields were also installed in the facilities where patients would have first contact with an FCHC employee. “We had to address these security and screening issues at our medical office buildings, physician practices, and at Fulton Manor,” says Simpkins.



Maintenance staff installed a special HEPA filtered air scrubber to exhaust room air to the outside and create additional negative pressure space.

“Our workers and subcontractors followed specific guidelines and safety protocols issued by the CDC and Ohio Department of Health to help us determine how to set up our facilities for a surge and how to best protect employees,” says Campos. “Bill and I really appreciated the efforts by our staff and subcontractors,” says Campos. “When we called on the subcontractors to help us with anything we needed, it was never a question about them making money on the job. They just wanted to help. You really find out what the community is made of when you go through something like this.”



Medical Staff

“What will the physicians need? “What do they think about our plans?” Those were

two of the many important questions that needed to be answered as pandemic planning proceeded. It was imperative to get input from the medical staff, but it would have been too cumbersome to involve every FCHC physician in the planning process. So the Incident Command team turned to Alan Rivera, MD, FCHC Hospitalist, for his input as well as input from other physicians.

“I’ve been seeing patients at the hospital for eight years now, so I understand their internal systems and staff and doctors quite well,” says Dr. Rivera. “It was quite an honor to be asked for my medical input.”

One of the earliest questions to be asked was which physicians would be involved in the actual care of patients with COVID-19. Dr. Rivera says all of the FCHC physicians were willing to do so, but he volunteered the hospitalist service to do it. “We couldn’t put all of these doctors at risk for fear of many of them becoming ill. It made sense to limit the number of physicians caring for patients with COVID-19. What was really special was that all of our doctors agreed to cancel any personal travel plans and to remain in the area in case they were needed. Plus, none of us wanted to travel and bring the virus back to Fulton County.”

There were many other questions to be answered and issues to be addressed in the pandemic planning. Dr. Rivera was part

of that larger team, which had to come up with the answers. These included answers to the type and amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed; the location of additional negative pressure rooms; the traffic flow for patients with and without COVID-19; the amount of ventilators needed; when to stop elective procedures to preserve PPEs; and which patients with COVID-19 symptoms should be admitted based on their condition.

“The planning process was very much a collaborative effort of many staff members who had been trained well in emergency preparedness but who had to constantly adapt as COVID-19 findings and reports changed,” says Dr. Rivera.

“As for me, the planning team had a lot of good ideas, and I basically served as a sounding board to give my input and physician perspective,” says Dr. Rivera. “The command structure did a phenomenal job of preparing and setting in motion all that they did. There were a lot of people involved, events were fluid, but the planning went very well given the circumstances.”

He says the Health Center is slowly demobilizing its COVID-19 efforts somewhat, such as repurposing the negative pressure areas so that rooms could be returned for their original purpose of performing endoscopies and patient preparation

and recovery for vascular procedures. “I am told that if they had to convert those areas back into negative pressure rooms, it could be done in four hours,” says Dr. Rivera. “That’s impressive and incredible and testifies to the abilities of their staff.” Dr. Rivera is quick to point out that screening and preventative measures will remain in place for quite some time. “I am very pleased with the citizens of Fulton County for following our recommendations and those of the CDC for hand washing, wearing face masks, and social distancing. You can tell they were doing it because the number of cases in our area has been quite low compared to other areas.”



Dr. Rivera discusses ventilator usage with members of the Medical Staff.

Research has shown that COVID-19 affects the elderly population more than any other age groups. So it is no surprise that long-term care facilities, like Fulton Manor, present a challenge with its elderly population living in close quarters. Mary Jo Smallman, LNHA, Administrator of Fulton Manor/Suites, was responsible for leading the charge to plan for the pandemic.

“Long-term care facilities are uniquely different from hospitals, and we had several resources to rely on for guidance,” says Smallman. “One of those was the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA), which we used for daily updates. We also kept in frequent contact with the Fulton County Health Department. “We have an Infection Preventionist on staff, so that helped us prepare for the pandemic.” Smallman says one of the first steps was to dedicate several private rooms as COVID-19 care rooms in the event they had to isolate a resident. Cleaning of the facility was ramped up to occur more frequently. “That meant wiping down desks, counters and other surfaces more often,” says Smallman. “Our Environmental Services staff also increased the cleaning of frequently touched items like doorknobs and handrails, and all of that cleaning continues today.”

All staff members were required to wear personal protective equipment upon entering a resident’s room, which



Kayla Damman, LSW, MSW, QCP QAPI Specialist and Tammy Miller, Activities Director entertain Fulton Manor residents with hallway car races.

FULTON MANOR

included masks, face shields and gowns. Residents were not confined to their rooms, but social distancing was required and residents who ventured into the hallways or common areas were asked to wear a mask. Communal dining was ceased, and many residents chose to eat in their rooms. Activities for residents were still offered, such as hallway bingo and hallway noodle where residents stood in their doorways and used swim “noodles” to pass a rubber ball down the hall from door to door. The staff even had remote control car races in the hallways to keep residents active and engaged.

“We made consistent efforts to communicate with our residents and their families about the pandemic and the steps we were taking to keep them safe,” says Smallman. “Our residents understood what was going on. Since we had to close our doors to visitors two months ago based on orders from the state, our families have understandably become anxious to visit their family member here.”

In an effort to keep family members up-to-date with their loved one, staff members posted photos of residents on Facebook. Beach Days were also introduced, where

family members could make an appointment to sit outside the dining room doors and visit with their loved ones on the inside. A beach mural was used as a backdrop behind the resident inside the facility as a way to make the visit more fun and enjoyable.

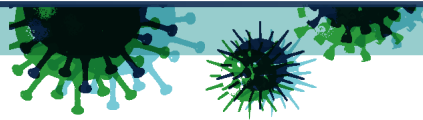


Staff created a “beach scene” inside for family member visits outside through patio doors.

“This has been a trying time for all concerned – residents, families and staff,” says Smallman. “We had to get creative with our resident activities and be diligent in our facility cleaning and protection. Our clinical team has been extremely helpful to us as a result of their constant training. We’ll get through this. Our residents represent a generation of people that are quite resilient.”



Messages of encouragement to workers popped up everywhere.



Medical Offices

Fulton County Health Center's pandemic planning extended beyond the main hospital building. Staff members also had to consider nine different medical offices on campus as well as locations in Delta and Fayette. That became the responsibility of Chad Peter, Chief Operating Officer of Practice Management, FCHC Medical Care, LLC.

"Given the crisis models we were facing, we were prepared to completely shut down our medical offices and transfer staff to the main Health Center for support services," says Peter. "Fortunately, that did not need to happen. But we had nine different medical offices for which to make plans." The nine medical offices, which comprise FCHC Medical Care LLC, are housed in the main hospital, the North or South Medical Office Building, or in freestanding physician offices on or off campus. They include:

- ▶ West Ohio Family Physicians
- ▶ West Ohio Pediatrics
- ▶ West Ohio Orthopedics
- ▶ West Ohio Surgeons
- ▶ Fulton County OB/GYN
- ▶ Delta Medical Center
- ▶ Fayette Medical Center
- ▶ Rainbow Hematology/Oncology Treatment Center
- ▶ FulCare Behavioral Health

"The first thing we did was to split our staff at each location, so 50% of the medical office worked one week then took a week off while the second 50% worked. We did that on alternating weeks from the middle of March until May 11 when the governor began opening things up a bit." Peter says the goal was to limit the exposure of staff members to COVID-19 in the event one of them became ill with the virus. It also eliminated the need to completely furlough employees the entire time.

Patients were able to continue to visit their FCHC health care provider and were asked to remain in their cars in the parking lot outside of the building until they were called to enter the building. They were also required to wear masks. In addition, telephonic medical visits were offered to patients if it was deemed appropriate by the medical provider.

"Now that we're back to full staff, we've found that patients want to come in to see their provider, and they're not staying away," says Peter. "And we now have added telehealth, which allows our providers to use both audio and video to consult with a patient over the Internet. Many of our patients like having that access to their physician when it is appropriate to do so. For now, this is the new normal."

Public Inf

One of the most critical elements in emergency planning is communication - keeping everyone informed of what is happening, what is being planned, and how to stay safe. That was the responsibility of Steve McCoy, FCHC Director of Marketing and Planning and its Public Information Officer.

"We not only had to develop clear written communications, but we had to update those messages on a regular basis as events unfolded," says McCoy.

"Then we had to continually get the word out to our staff and to the public. So in the initial planning stages, we created a communications team that consisted of myself, Stacia Radabaugh and Britney Ward." Stacia Radabaugh BSN, RN, is the FCHC Director of Medical Staff Services and Quality. Britney Ward, MPH, is the Health Center's Director of Corporate and Community Health Promotion and the Assistant Public Information Officer.

"As a team our two main goals were to inform the community and communicate with our staff everything we could about COVID-19," says McCoy. "Stacia has a clinical background and worked with a clinical team who were tasked with developing the specific messages with guidance from the CDC and Ohio Department



"We redesigned our website, fultoncountyhealthcenter.org, which contains the latest COVID-19 and visitor information."—Steve McCoy, Director of Marketing & Planning

ormation



Signs were added at entrances to address what to do if a visitor was presenting to FCHC with respiratory symptoms.

of Health. Those messages targeted the general public but were meant to help staff members as well. Britney worked with developing public service messaging with radio announcements.”

“We posted messages to our Facebook and Twitter accounts, developed radio spots that aired locally, and created and ran print ads in the local newspapers,” says McCoy. “Social media allowed us to quickly make updates throughout the day as more information became known.” The communications team also used social media to request personal protective equipment from the general public.

Informational signs were created and posted throughout the hospital, medical offices and at Fulton Manor. The signs reminded everyone about personal protection through social distancing, hand washing, wearing a face mask, cleaning surfaces, and more.

McCoy says a second critical aspect of the communication plan was to use the Health Center’s Intranet page for communications but to also create an external employee portal to educate employees about what was being done, why it was being done, and how



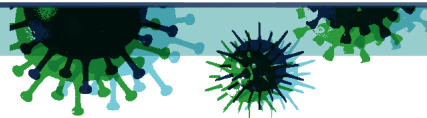
AT FULTON COUNTY HEALTH CENTER WE WANT YOU TO FEEL SAFE SEEKING HEALTHCARE. To assure your safety, we have taken extensive safety precautions at all of our facilities including our main hospital, Fulton Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation, our medical office buildings, physician offices, off site lab stations, and more.

As we move forward into the new normal, you can be assured that we are ready to care for you in the smartest, safest way possible. We thank you for your trust in our care and look forward in continuing to provide advanced medical care close to home.

The Public Information team produced many informational pieces about COVID-19 for use on multiple social media, web and print platforms.

to stay safe. The goal was to provide a way they could readily access the information both at FCHC and outside of their workplace. “Our staff needed to know not only what we were telling the community, but they also needed to know the many steps and procedures we were taking to keep them safe by limiting the number of people entering our facilities and the screening process we implemented to control the spread. We’re all in the health care field to help people, but we want to stay safe and we want to keep our families safe.”

“I think it’s a real credit to our communities that people here really took to heart the messages we were putting out about how to protect themselves. Fortunately, our number of COVID-19 cases for Fulton County has been quite low compared to other areas of the state.” McCoy says the community really came together to support the Health Center staff. “Many local businesses stepped up and donated food and numerous individuals donated personal protective equipment for us,” says McCoy. “They recognized the efforts we were taking to protect them and respond if we needed to. We don’t know what the future holds, but the priority we’ve placed on communicating to the public and to our staff will remain.”



CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

IF SYMPTOMS APPEAR,
SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION



Virus spread from
close person to
other person



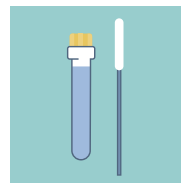
Human contact



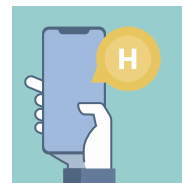
Contaminated
objects



Symptoms may
show up 2-14
days later



Test for diagnosis
are available

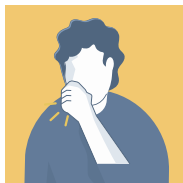


If you feel sick
stay at home
and call doctor

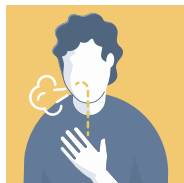
Symptoms



Fever



Cough

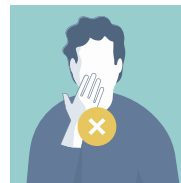


Shortness of
breath

Prevention



Wear a mask



Do not touch face,
eyes, nose or mouth



Wash your hands

COVID-19 FACTS

What We Know

- ▶ COVID-19 is a disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Viruses and diseases often have different names, such as HIV (the virus), which causes AIDS (the disease).
- ▶ Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that have been around for a long time in animals, but different strains can be new to humans.
- ▶ Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and a number of others circulate among animals, including camels, cats, and pigs. In rare cases, animal coronavirus can evolve and infect people, and similar events have occurred with the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). All types are spread through coughing, sneezing, or close contact.
- ▶ COVID-19 is sometimes referred to as a novel coronavirus because it is new to humans.
- ▶ It has similar characteristics to the flu, but it is much easier to spread and is deadlier.
- ▶ It was first identified in early December 2019 in Wuhan, China (thus the name COVID-19, for coronavirus 2019).
- ▶ International travel helped spread the virus and cause a worldwide pandemic.
- ▶ It is most often spread from the small droplets produced by sneezing, coughing or talking.
- ▶ People can be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- ▶ Adults over the age of 60, and those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, or those with diabetes, seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications.

What We Don't Know

- ▶ What is the actual number of people that have been infected? There are more than 4 million cases worldwide, but testing has been limited. So, there may be many more cases worldwide than what has been reported.
- ▶ Do people develop an immunity to COVID-19 once they've had it? If so, for how long?
- ▶ What forms of social distancing work best? Bans on large groups? Air travel restrictions? Working remotely rather than in an office? Can children spread the coronavirus? Why have there been hotspots for the virus in the U.S. (Seattle, New York, Detroit) and across the globe (Italy, Spain)? Will warm weather slow the virus? If so, will it return in the fall when cold weather hits?

FCHC Medical Care to Open New Urgent Care Clinic



COVID-19 FACTS

Testing

- ▶ You cannot request a COVID-19 test at this time. A medical professional must order a test for you if you meet the criteria.
- ▶ If a medical professional orders a test for you, you will receive test site location information.
- ▶ Testing for COVID-19 is done through a swab in your nose.

Common Medical Phrases

- ▶ *Pandemic* - an epidemic that has spread over a large area, such as an entire country or continent. In this case, it is a worldwide pandemic. An epidemic occurs in a community or region.
- ▶ *Flattening the curve* - the curve represents the number of cases over time. Flattening the curve means preventing a surge of new cases in a short period of time. The goal with this is to prevent hospitals and health care providers from being overwhelmed by an onslaught of cases.
- ▶ *Herd immunity* - refers to the human population developing immunity to COVID-19 over time due to large numbers of people being infected and either fully recovering or not showing any symptoms. It can also be achieved with the development of a vaccine. The more people that are infected and recover, the less these people can transmit the disease.
- ▶ *Asymptomatic* - showing no evidence of the disease.
- ▶ *Respirator* - A type of mask that health care workers wear. It forms a tight seal around the nose and mouth.
- ▶ *Ventilator* - A machine that helps a person breath by moving air in and out of the lungs.

Sometime in mid to late July, FCHC Medical Care will open a new Urgent Care Clinic. It will be located in the West Ohio Building adjacent to the FCHC campus at 735 South Shoop Avenue.

“This will be a walk-in clinic for non-emergency room patients,” says Chad Peter, Chief Operating Officer of Practice Management, FCHC Medical Care. “It’s designed for those patients who cannot get an urgent appointment with their provider or for those who do not have a provider.” Peter says the Urgent Care Clinic is not designed to replace a visit to the emergency room, rather it is for those medical visits that are urgent but not life threatening. Common X-ray procedures and lab work may be performed at the clinic. However, more advanced radiology procedures would be completed at the main hospital. “If they need an MRI or CT scan, for example, they will have to go to the Health Center,” says Peter.

“We encourage patients to call ahead for an appointment, but if that is not possible they can just walk in. Remember, Urgent Care is not a replacement for the emergency room. So if the patient has chest pain, shortness of breath, or anything serious like that, they should go directly to the ER.”

THE NEW URGENT CARE CLINIC WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING HOURS:

9:00 am - 9:00 pm, M-F

9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Sat.

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm, Sun.

Several advanced practice health care providers will rotate shifts at the Urgent Care Clinic. Steven Hammersmith, PA-C and Annette Heil, MSN, APRN, CNP will provide the primary coverage for the Urgent Care along with Jacob Grime, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, on occasion. All three will perform under the collaboration of the physicians at the West Ohio Family Physicians office.

Message from the CEO

Over the last 20 years, the staff at Fulton County Health Center has regularly planned and rehearsed for major health care emergencies in the region. That planning included preparation for natural disasters, major vehicle accidents on the turnpike, and yes, highly transmissible viruses. Those preparations have included actual emergency preparedness drills with the involvement of many



local and regional health care partners and law enforcement.

To be certain, when COVID-19 came to America we were all concerned like everyone else. But, we also believed our years of planning had prepared us and would carry us through.

This issue of Health Centering is devoted to sharing a behind the scenes look at our COVID-19 preparations to keep you safe while continuing to provide care. Our staff has been amazing and has done what it takes to get the job done.

Our goal is to keep you and your loved ones safe, but we also want to keep staff members and their families safe. So we continue to require temperature checks of everyone entering our facilities. It also means asking everyone to answer a series of questions to make sure they are healthy and safe.

Once you've read this newsletter, I am confident you will come away feeling that Fulton County Health Center did what was necessary to protect everyone. We're here to serve you. We encourage you to keep your health checkups and to seek care when you are sick or injured.

Stay Well!

Patti Finn

Patti Finn
Fulton County Health Center
Chief Executive Officer

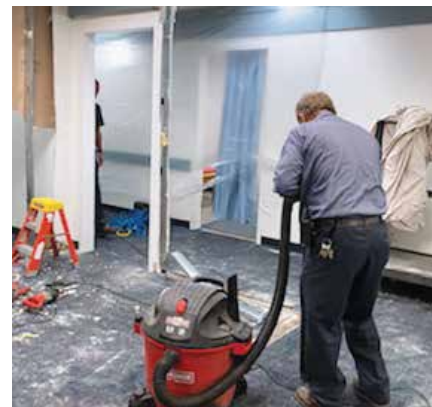


FCHC Maintenance staff worked hard to renovate the interior of the FCHC Wellness Center on Elm Street. The before and after photos show how the facility now has a much larger gym area.

Wellness Center Reopens

On June 3, the FCHC Wellness Center reopened and began offering fitness classes once again. The center, located at 138 E. Elm Street in Wauseon, had been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. While it was closed, construction was done to allow for social distancing with the equipment. A second fitness studio was added, and most of the facility was painted. There were many other updates that were made. New fitness class equipment has also been purchased. The staff is eager to have members and fitness class participants check it out!

"We have restructured the fitness class programs as well as the gym memberships," says Britney Ward, MPH, Director of Corporate and Community Health Promotion



"Moving forward, there will only be monthly UNLIMITED classes, and you will have many options from which to choose."

At the end of June, fitness memberships will include in-person live classes, virtual live classes, and recorded classes that you can take at your convenience.

Payment can be made as follows:

- ▶ In person at the Fulton County Wellness Center
- ▶ By mail (check only)
- ▶ By phone (credit card only)
- ▶ NEW! Automatic monthly payments charged at the beginning of the month
- ▶ COMING SOON! Online registration and payment

Wellness Center Memberships

Some additional information:

- ▶ No month-to-month memberships - all will sign a contract electronically
- ▶ A "Join Now" button can be found at fultoncountyhealthcenter.org

Questions can be directed to the FCHC Wellness Center Team at 419-330-2724.

Urology Practice Changes



On June 15, **Charles Lash, MD** and the Advance Urology & Continence Center joined FCHC Medical Care. The practice has also been renamed as West Ohio Urology. It has moved from the

FCHC North Medical Office Building to the second floor of the FCHC South Medical Office Building, on the same floor as West Ohio Surgeons and Fulton County OB/GYN. Appointments with West Ohio Urology can be made by calling 419-335-2500.

Nurse Practitioner Joins West Ohio Family Physicians

Jacob Grime, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, a board certified Family Practice Nurse Practitioner, has joined the staff at West Ohio Family Physicians. Grime is a highly skilled registered nurse with clinical experience in critical care, neurology, stroke care, endoscopy, pain management, medical-surgical, and emergency nursing. He has been an FCHC staff nurse since 2013 and is a former firefighter/EMT at the Archbold Fire Department. Grime holds a Master of Science in Nursing from Walden University in Minneapolis and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from The Ohio State University. He is a lifelong resident of Fulton County and lives in Archbold with his wife and three children. Grime will see patients of all ages and will also help staff the new FCHC Urgent Care Clinic. To make an appointment, contact West Ohio Family Physicians at 419-335-3242.



New Urgent Care Clinic Staff

Two new advanced practice health care providers will rotate shifts at the upcoming Urgent Care Clinic opening in July. They are **Steven Hammersmith, PA-C**, a Physician Assistant and **Annette Heil, MSN, APRN-CNP**, Nurse Practitioner. They will perform under the collaboration with physicians at the West Ohio Family Physicians' office. Jacob Grime, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, will provide limited coverage seeing patients at the Urgent Care Clinic. Grime will also see non-Urgent Care patients at the West Ohio Family Physicians' office (see left).



Steven Hammersmith



Annette Heil

Hammersmith most recently worked as a Physician Assistant on the hospital floors at the University of Toledo Medical Center. Prior to that, he worked in Internal Medicine at UTM's outpatient setting and surrounding skilled nursing facilities. He holds a Master of Science in Biomedical Science with a concentration in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Toledo and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Toledo.

Since 2011, Heil worked as a full-time Registered Nurse in Emergency Care Services at Henry County Hospital in Napoleon. In addition, she has worked as a Registered Nurse in Cardiology and Urgent Care at Mercy Defiance Clinic, and as a Registered Nurse at Community Memorial Hospital in Hicksville, Ohio. For seven years Heil worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse at Filling Memorial Home of Mercy in Napoleon. She has also worked as a Nursing Assistant at Defiance Regional Medical Center.

Golf Outing Rescheduled

The 21st Annual FCHC Auxiliary Golf Tournament was postponed due to the pandemic. The golf outing, which was scheduled for June 4, has been rescheduled for September 10, 2020. It will be held at Ironwood Golf Course in Wauseon. The 4-person best-ball scramble will begin with registration at 11:00 a.m. followed by a noon shotgun start. Plans call for a silent auction and dinner at FCHC after the outing dependent upon any COVID-19 guidelines in place at that time. Participants will enjoy 18 holes of golf with a cart, a sack lunch, gift pack, beverage tickets, and BBQ chicken dinner. Sponsorships are available. Entry deadline is August 24, 2020 and is limited to the first 36 paid foursomes. The total revenue from 20 years of golf tournaments has exceeded \$500,000! Please join us! For more information about costs or sponsorships, contact Annette Kolbe in the FCHC administrative office at 419-330-2603. To make a silent auction donation, contact Mary Gautz at 419-330-2695.



(News & Notes Continued on page 16.)



THANK YOU!

FCHC staff members would like to thank everyone in the community for their overwhelming support and notes of encouragement, donations of signs, PPE equipment, face masks, food, and more. Here, FCHC staff members look over a selection of face masks donated by community members.



FCHC News & Notes

(News & Notes Continued from page 15.)

FCHC Rehab Center Update

Construction continues on the state-of-the-art Rehab facility for physical, occupational and speech rehabilitation. Exterior masonry work has begun, the concrete floor has been poured, electrical wiring is being installed, and installation of the rubber roof has begun. The building is located at 719 South Shoop Avenue on the FCHC campus.



Fulton Manor Passes State Inspection!

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have challenged States to complete Focused Infection Control Nursing Home Surveys by July 31, 2020. Fulton Manor was recently inspected in an unannounced survey by the Ohio Department of Health and received a deficiency free focused infection control survey result. Congratulations to the Fulton Manor staff!

Health Centering is published four times a year by Fulton County Health Center for area residents.

Patti Finn, Chief Executive Officer | **Carl Hill**, President, Board of Directors | **Steve McCoy**, Director of Marketing and Planning

For address changes or information about articles or programs in this issue, contact the FCHC Marketing and Planning Department at 419-330-2717.