

COME FULL CIRCLE

*The Pathway to
Wellness*

THE BARE CRIB

*The ABCs of
Safe Sleep*

A SAFE PLACE

*The Conversations
That Can Save a Life*

HealthBeat

The HEART of CARE
Smith County Memorial Hospital
The Pathway to Wellness Edition



**TO SUNPORCH
AND BACK**

**What Can
Change
When We
Stop Trying
To Do It
Alone**

THE CONVERSATION STARTS ON THE PLATE
Food Is Medicine at the Hometown Café

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Welcome to SCMH

Our Mission is to Improve the Health of Our Communities

This issue of *HealthBeat* highlights some of the many ways Smith County Memorial Hospital and Smith County Family Practice are committed to improving the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

We are especially proud of the completion of the Pathway to Wellness Walking Path, a free and accessible space designed to promote physical activity, mental well-being, and healthy lifestyles for individuals and families of all ages. This project demonstrates our belief that health care extends beyond clinical settings.

At Smith County Memorial Hospital and Smith County Family Practice, we have the privilege of caring for individuals and families through every stage of life. From welcoming a new baby and supporting growing children to helping adults manage their health and older adults maintain their independence and quality of life, we are honored to be part of the journey.

Throughout this issue, you will also see the value of open and honest conversations with your health care providers. Asking questions, sharing concerns and discussing changes in your physical or emotional well-being can help your care team better understand your needs. These conversations can lead to earlier intervention, stronger relationships and care that is more personal and effective.

We want our patients to feel comfortable speaking openly with us, whether the concern feels large or small. You know yourself and your family best, and your voice is an important part of every health care decision. By working together, we can help individuals and families make informed choices and build healthier lives.

The work highlighted in this issue is possible because of the trust, support and partnership of our patients, staff and communities. As we continue to grow and invest in the future of health care in our region, we remain dedicated to providing compassionate, high-quality care close to home.

Thank you for choosing us for your health care needs. It is a privilege to serve you and your family, and a responsibility we do not take for granted.

With best wishes,

Sarah Ragsdale, CEO



Sarah with Her Daughters



Cover Photo by Alexis Holling

Come Full Circle

The Pathway to Wellness Welcomes Everyone

On the SCMH campus, a three-quarter-mile loop is rewriting what it means to stay well, one step, one song, one seven-minute workout at a time.

Come to the Pathway to Wellness just after sunrise, when the North Central Kansas sky is trading bruise-purple for gold in the time it takes to finish a cup of coffee. A Red-winged Blackbird is showing off somewhere in the tallgrass. And on a smooth, looping ribbon of trail at the edge of Smith Center, people are already moving: a retiree with a measured, easy stride; a mom pushing a stroller; a high schooler chasing a personal best; someone recovering from surgery who is simply, gloriously, walking again.

They are all doing the same three things: putting one foot in front of the other, breathing a little deeper, and coming full circle back to where they started, just a little stronger than before.

This is the Pathway to Wellness, and it may be the most hopeful three-quarters of a mile in the county.

SO WHY BUILD A TRAIL HERE AT ALL?

Because the community asked for it, not in so many words, but in the numbers. When Smith County Memorial Hospital conducted its 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, two answers rose to the top of the list: obesity and chronic disease. These weren't abstractions. They were neighbors, family members, ourselves.

A hospital could have responded with another brochure. SCMH chose to respond with a place: a free, welcoming, open-air invitation to move. **The Pathway to Wellness is that answer made real, built through the generous grant support of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, the Srader Foundation, the Smith County Community Foundation, and the Sunflower Foundation.** What began as a line on a health survey became a loop you can lace up your shoes and walk today.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY OUT THERE?

A three-quarter-mile looping trail, fully ADA accessible, so that no one, regardless of age, mobility, or fitness level, is left standing at the trailhead. Along the way you'll find benches for catching your breath, trash cans to keep the prairie tidy, and a picnic table for the after-walk visit that is half the reason small towns thrive. It's a work in progress, too: more improvements are planned

over time, so the Pathway you walk this year will keep getting better.

Watch for the sign near the Fitness Court each month. It features the Interval Exercise of the Month, a simple recipe that pairs your walk with one easy Fitness Court movement, so you're not just logging miles, you're building strength as you go. Mix, match, repeat. That's how healthy habits are made: not in a single heroic effort, but in the small, steady loop you're willing to take again tomorrow.

And parking? Free, right in the SCMH parking lot, for the trail and the Fitness Court alike.

THAT COLORFUL STRUCTURE AT THE CENTER?

That's the National Fitness Campaign Fitness Court and Studio, an outdoor gym unlike anything else in the region, made possible through the generosity of SCMH staff, the National Fitness Campaign, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, the Smith County Drug and Alcohol Council, Kansas Health Foundation, and Smith County Memorial Hospital.

The first thing you'll notice is the art wall, one-of-a-kind, designed as a custom celebration of hope and health in North Central Kansas. It's not decoration borrowed from a catalog; it's ours, a piece of prairie identity you can stand beside while you work up a sweat.

The second thing you'll notice is that it's free and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Whether you're a sunrise walker or an after-shift night owl, the door is always open.

Not sure where to begin? Scan the QR code on the Fitness Court. It unlocks a library of free, full-body workouts designed for every fitness level, starting at just seven minutes. Yes, seven minutes. That's shorter than the drive home, and it's enough to begin.

Prefer company and a good beat? The Fitness Court Studio side hosts group classes, including Tabata and Drumstick workouts set to music that makes the time disappear. And you're never on your own out there: SCMH Fitness Court Ambassadors offer free classes and a free, hands-on introduction to every piece of equipment. Come once, meet an Ambassador, and the Court stops being intimidating and starts being yours.



Hayley and Dr. Stephen Moll



WHO IS ALL OF THIS FOR?

Everyone. That was the whole point.

The Fitness Court and Studio sits on the SCMH campus itself, which was no accident. Placing it there puts it within easy reach of rehab patients, giving those rebuilding strength after illness, injury, or surgery a place to keep doing the work, close to the care team that knows them best. From that same campus, the Fitness Court reaches outward, tucked near SunPorch of Smith County Senior Assisted Living and USD 237 Smith Center Jr/Sr High School. In other words, it stands between the ninth decade and the ninth grade, and between the patient regaining a stride and the neighbor keeping theirs. It was built to be a free health resource for the entire lifespan, because staying well isn't a season of life. It's all of them.

Nearby, the youngest members of the community are planting their own kind of hope: the third, fourth, and fifth graders of Smith Center Elementary School are starting a milkweed pollinator garden beside the Fitness Court. Monarch butterflies depend on milkweed to survive their long migration, and there's a life lesson in that for all of us. Growth takes tending. Change take rest stops. And the smallest hands can plant something that outlives the planting.

Word is getting around, too. The Fitness Court and Studio is now listed in the Kansas Sampler Foundation online guidebook as a destination worth visiting. It's a reminder that the healthiest thing our community built is also becoming one of the things that puts us on the map.

SO HOW DO I BEGIN?

Park for free in the SCMH lot. Step onto the loop. Scan the Fitness Court QR code or simply start walking. Seven minutes. One lap. One Interval Exercise of the Month. That's a beginning, and beginnings are the whole battle.

Even SCMH's own staff have permission to answer the invitation: the hospital's 15-Minute Pathway to Wellness

Reset is a policy that lets employees step away for a fifteen-minute health-reset walk on the Pathway. It's proof that we don't just prescribe movement, we practice it.

There's a simple truth this place keeps proving. Strength isn't something you're handed once and keep forever. It's something you come back for, lap after lap, morning after morning, until one day you notice the hill feels a little shorter and the breath comes a little easier. The Pathway to Wellness can't do the walking for you. But it can give you a beautiful place, and a whole community, to do it in.

So come. Just after sunrise, if you can. The birds will be waiting, the loop will be open, and the first step is always the most meaningful.

PATHWAY TO WELLNESS QUICK FACTS

Everything you need to know to get started.

Where: On the SCMH campus, 921 E. Highway 36, Smith Center. Free parking in the SCMH south lot.

Hours: Fitness Court open 24/7, 365 days a year.

Cost: Free. Always. For everyone.

The Trail: ¾-mile loop. Fully ADA accessible. Benches, trash cans & picnic table on site. Improvements ongoing.

The Fitness Court: Scan the on-site QR code for free, full-body workouts. Start at just 7 minutes, every fitness level welcome.

Free Help: SCMH Fitness Court Ambassadors offer free classes and a free intro to every piece of equipment. Call Rehab Services to schedule your FREE 15-minute intro at (785) 686-3120.

The Bare Crib

The ABCs of Safe Sleep

Two SCMH nurses are on a mission to make the safest night's sleep something every family can reach.

At 2 a.m., a house holds its breath. And down the hall, a new mother stands over a crib, swaying on her feet, watching the small, steady rise and fall of a chest no bigger than her hand.

Every parent has stood in that hour. It is equal parts wonder and terror. The moment you understand that this tiny life is now, somehow, entirely your responsibility. And these little blessings, as Whitney Winder is fond of saying, "don't come with owner's manuals."

Winder would know. As SCMH's OB Nurse Manager, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and a Certified Passenger Safety Technician, she has spent years standing beside families in exactly those overwhelmed, sleep-starved moments, helping a baby latch, cinching a car seat to a precise angle, answering the questions parents are almost too tired to ask. So when the chance came to add safe sleep to her work, it didn't feel like a departure. It felt like the missing piece.

"It just made sense," she says. Her vision is a single, trusted place, an "all-in-one stop," where the parents and caregivers can find every resource they need to help these precious new additions not just thrive, but stay safe.

That vision found its match in Laura Kingsbury.

A STATISTIC THAT WOULDN'T LET GO

Smith County Memorial Hospital is a Level IV trauma center, and keeping that designation means keeping a steady eye on injury prevention. So when the Kansas Department of Health and Environment released its 2026 report on unintentional injury, Kingsbury, RN, Trauma Coordinator and Community Educator, did what she always does. She read it closely. The report named the top six causes of unintentional injury in the state. Suffocation was on the list.

She couldn't set it down. A little research led her to a safe sleep instructor course; a little more led her to funding through the regional trauma council. Then she walked down the hall and asked Whitney Winder and the OB department to partner with her.

What drives their urgency is a number that has changed everything experts thought they knew. According to data



Whitney Winder, RN, in an SCMH OB Room

spanning 2020 through 2024, sleep-related deaths have become the leading cause of death for infants under one year of age in Kansas. Of the 221 sleep-related deaths in that data, **96 percent involved one or more elements of unsafe sleep.**

Read that percentage again, because inside it lives the whole reason this program exists. Ninety-six percent means these are not, for the most part, mysteries. They are, overwhelmingly, circumstances that can be changed by a parent, a grandparent, a daycare provider, or a teenage babysitter who simply knows what a safe crib looks like.

"They aren't alone in this," Winder says of the families she meets. "It can be so intimidating. We're here to find resources, offer education, lend a hand, or even just a listening ear."

THE ABCs, IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

Strip away the pamphlets and the acronyms, and safe sleep comes down to three letters.

- **A is for Alone.** No one and nothing shares the sleep surface with the baby. No people, pillows, or extras.
- **B is for Back.** Every sleep, every time, flat on the back.
- **C is for a Clutter-free Crib.** A firm mattress, a fitted sheet, and the baby. That's the whole list. No loose blankets, bumpers, stuffed animals, hats, wedges, clip-on pacifiers.



Safe Sleep Demonstration Baby

Kingsbury has a way of translating those letters for a family that hasn't slept in three days. "You can do this," she tells them. "Peace of mind comes from knowing you've done the best you can, that your baby is alone, on their back, in their own clutter-free bed. So while you're sleeping, you have peace of mind that your baby is safe." And at 2 a.m., she adds, running on fumes and nerves? That's exactly when practicing safe sleep matters most.

THE PART THAT SURPRISES EVEN SEASONED PARENTS

Ask Winder what catches experienced parents off guard, and she doesn't hesitate: how bare a safe crib really is. "A true safe sleep surface has nothing but the baby, the mattress, and a pacifier, with no additions," she says. And the list of well-meaning additions that quietly become hazards is longer than most families expect: loose blankets, muslin blankets used as swaddles, stuffed animals, burp rags, hats, extra diapers and wipes, crib bumpers, pacifiers with clips or toys attached, pillows, positioning wedges. Each one, however soft or sentimental, is a strangulation or suffocation risk. The cozy nursery of magazine spreads and baby-shower gifts is, it turns out, not the safe one. The safe one looks almost startlingly empty.

Then there's the myth that refuses to die, the belief that a baby who spits up should sleep on their stomach or on an incline so they don't choke.

"Back really is best," Winder says. "Even for babies who spit up a lot." And she can explain exactly why, using nothing more than anatomy. The windpipe, which leads to the lungs, sits toward the front of the neck. The food pipe, which leads to the stomach, sits toward the back. When a baby on their back spits up, gravity carries it down toward the stomach, not the lungs. Kingsbury backs the point with hard evidence: infant deaths have occurred precisely when babies were placed on their stomachs or on inclined surfaces to sleep.

GRACE FOR EVERY GENERATION

Perhaps the most important thing these two want readers to hear isn't a rule at all. It's a reassurance.

Safety recommendations have evolved, and they will keep evolving. What previous generations were lovingly taught may no longer be today's best practice, and that, Winder is careful to say, "doesn't mean they did anything wrong. It's just what we knew at the time."

Which is why this education is not aimed only at first-time parents. It's for grandparents and aunts, daycare providers, church nursery volunteers, and the young babysitter down the street. Everyone who might ever lay a child down to sleep. The goal isn't guilt. It's awareness, and the simple power to remove the external factors that make a crib unsafe.

Kingsbury sums up the whole mission in the same three letters she teaches: Alone, on their Back, in a Clutter-free crib. Learning, she says, happens every single day, for the new baby and the new parent alike. Ask questions. And more than anything, ask for help.

Which brings us back to that dim room at 2 a.m., and the mother swaying on her feet. She can't control everything about the years ahead. But she can control this one thing tonight. She can lay her baby down alone, on that small back, in a crib with nothing in it but a fitted sheet and room to breathe. And then she can do the bravest thing a bone-tired parent ever does. She can close her own eyes, and rest, knowing she has given her child the safest night she has to give.

That is what Winder and Kingsbury are really handing out, one bare crib at a time. Not just a set of rules. Peace of mind for the whole household, and a fighting chance for every baby to see the morning.

GIVE THE GIFT OF A SAFE NIGHT

We have a dream to supply every family who births a baby at SCMH with a safe sleep crib. Each fully certified portable crib gives a newborn's family everything the ABCs require: a firm, flat, Clutter-free crib where their baby can sleep Alone, on their Back, every single time. One gift. One safe night, multiplied across the months a baby grows. Sponsor a Sleep-Safe Certified Pack 'n Play with a \$100 donation.

Donate today using the form on page 22 or online at www.scmhks.org/ways-to-give.

Give one and give a family the thing they crave most: peace of mind.



Laura Kingsbury, RN

A Safe Place

The Conversations That Can Save a Life

by Leah Wiehl, MD

I work as a family doctor at Smith County Family Practice, but before that, I'm a mom to four young girls. My days are full of ponytails, bruised knees, bedtime prayers, and cereal bowls left on the counter. I also spend time in exam rooms, looking at medical charts, and having tough talks with families who never thought they'd be asking me, "How did this happen?"

Today, I'm writing not only as a doctor, but as a parent who loves her children deeply and wants them to grow up strong, healthy, and hopeful.

In North Central Kansas and all over the country, we're seeing something heartbreaking. Substance use and thoughts of suicide are appearing in younger and younger kids. These are children who still play with toys, still need help tying their shoes, and should be dreaming about their future, not questioning if life is worth living.

As a doctor, I see the numbers. As a mom, I feel how heavy they are. And as a person of faith, I believe God wants us to face this moment with strength, wisdom, and love.

Many of us grew up in homes where things like drugs, depression, and suicide were hardly ever talked about. Our parents thought avoiding these topics would keep us safe. But now we know that staying silent doesn't protect our kids. Talking with them does.

Kids are already hearing about these things on social media, at school, from friends, and on their phones. If we're not talking to them, someone else will, and not everyone cares about their well-being.

Difficult conversations don't have to be harsh. You can start them simply by asking, "Have you ever heard kids talking about vaping or drugs?" or "If you ever feel really sad or overwhelmed, you can always tell me," or "Some people use substances when they're hurting. Let's talk about healthier ways to handle big feelings."

You don't need to say everything perfectly. What matters is having a receptive heart and being ready to listen. Start early, be gentle, stay present, and keep showing up for your child.

One of the most harmful things our kids can believe is, "If I'm struggling, something is wrong with me." That's not

true. Feeling sad isn't a weakness. Feeling anxious isn't failure. Asking for help isn't something to be ashamed of.

When we talk openly about mental health, we show our kids that it's safe to feel, it's okay to struggle, and they are never alone.

Kids speak up when they feel safe. A safe home tells them: you won't get in trouble for telling the truth, I love you no matter what, and we'll face hard things together. When kids believe this, they talk and talking can save lives.

At Smith County Family Practice, and in collaboration with the Smith County Drug and Alcohol Council, we work every day to support families. But we can't do it alone. Healthcare, education, and programs all help, but nothing is more important than a parent who truly knows their child.



Dr. Leah Wiehl with Her Daughters

Every night, I remind myself: my job isn't to raise perfect kids, but to make sure they know they're deeply loved and can talk to me about anything, even the hardest topics. Start the conversation, ask the questions, and open the door. It could save your child's life. There is no greater calling than this.

START HERE

Hard conversations rarely begin with perfect words. They begin when a child senses that an adult is willing to notice, ask and stay. You don't need the perfect words, just a willing heart and an open door.

- "Have you ever heard kids at school talking about vaping or drugs?"
- "If you ever feel really sad or overwhelmed, you can always come to me no matter what."
- "Sometimes people use substances when they're hurting inside. Let's talk about healthier ways to handle big feelings."
- "Is there anything you've been worried about that you haven't told me?"
- "You can tell me the hard stuff. I'd rather know than not know."

WHEN YOU NOTICE A CHANGE, NAME IT

Be specific, calm and curious. Your child may not answer immediately. The first conversation can still show them that you see them, and that the invitation remains open.

- "I've noticed you haven't wanted to spend time with your friends lately, and you seem exhausted. How have you really been feeling?"
- "You haven't seemed like yourself, and I care about you. Is something happening that you're afraid to tell me?"
- "I'm not here to get you in trouble. I want to understand what you're going through."

ASK THE HARD QUESTION

When you are worried about suicide or self-harm, it is OK to ask directly. Asking about suicide does not place the idea in someone's mind or increase suicidal thoughts. A clear, caring question can help identify someone who needs support.

- "Have you been thinking about hurting yourself?"
- "Have you wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?"
- "Have you been thinking about suicide?"

WHEN THEY TELL YOU SOMETHING HARD

Your first reaction may determine how much they are willing to share. Stay steady. A calm response tells them you can handle the truth. Thank them. Say, "I'm so glad you told me."

Listen before fixing. Try, "Tell me more," or "What has that been like for you?" Take them seriously. Do not dismiss their feelings as drama, attention-seeking or a phase. Avoid the lecture. This is the moment for connection, not consequences.

Do not promise secrecy. Explain that you may need to involve another trusted adult or professional to help keep them safe.

Circle back. One honest conversation should lead to another. Ask again tomorrow, next week and during calmer moments.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline recommends being direct, listening without judgment, avoiding shocked reactions and never agreeing to keep a plan for self-harm secret.

Call or text 988 for guidance and crisis support. In an immediate life-threatening situation, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.



Alexis Holling, Nex-Generation Intern

Take the Wheel

Your Health, Your Hands

The handoff nobody teaches: the moment your health stops being someone else's job and becomes yours to steward. It happens at eighteen for some of us and at fifty for others. Here's how to take it on with confidence, wherever you are on the pathway.

There's a small, revealing moment that happens in every clinic waiting room. Someone settles into a chair with a clipboard, works down the form, and stops cold at a single line. Family history. For years, someone else knew the answer. A parent who filled out these forms. A spouse who kept the calendar of appointments and always knew which pharmacy, which dose. And now the pen just hovers over the blank.

We tend to picture that moment belonging to an eighteen-year-old at a first solo visit. Often it does. But it belongs just as easily to a widow booking her own checkup for the first time in forty years of marriage, or to a man whose family handled everything after his surgery and who is only now taking the wheel back. Owning your health is not a rite reserved for the young. It's a skill any of us can pick up, set down, or need to learn all over again.

For most of human history, your health was never really yours alone. It lived in the collective memory of the people around you: the mother who remembered every fever, the grandmother who knew what the family was prone to, the neighbor who'd seen it before. Modern life quietly dissolved that web. Records scattered across clinics. Families spread across states. And somewhere in the shuffle, the job of remembering your own body landed squarely on you, usually without anyone mentioning it had.

Here's the strange part: for something this universal, almost no one is taught how to do it. We teach teenagers to drive a car and balance a checkbook. We rarely teach anyone how to be the steward of their own body, how to hold their own history, ask their own questions, and keep the record that used to live in someone else's head. On the road to wellness, this is the stretch of trail most of us cross without a map. The handoff.

So what actually transfers? Less than you'd fear, and more than you'd guess. Ownership isn't about becoming your own doctor. It's about picking up a handful of ordinary jobs that, added together, mean you're the one holding the wheel.

TAKE THE WHEEL: THE HANDOFF

Know your own story. Learn your medical and family history, the answers that used to live in someone else's memory. Write down what runs in your family and what you've been through.

Meet your provider before you're sick. The best time to build a relationship with a primary care provider is when nothing's wrong. A "get established" visit means someone already knows you when something does come up.

Take the calendar. Own your appointments, your screenings, your prescription refills. Put them somewhere you'll actually see them.

Get the keys to your records. Your patient portal is where ownership gets easy. Set it up before you need it.

Know your coverage. Understand your insurance, and if you're young, how long you can stay on a parent's plan and what comes after.

KNOW YOUR NORMAL

You can't notice a change if you never learned your baseline. Ownership starts with knowing what "normal" looks like for you.

Learn your numbers. At your next visit, get your baseline: blood pressure, weight, and a few key labs. Ask what they mean, and write them down.

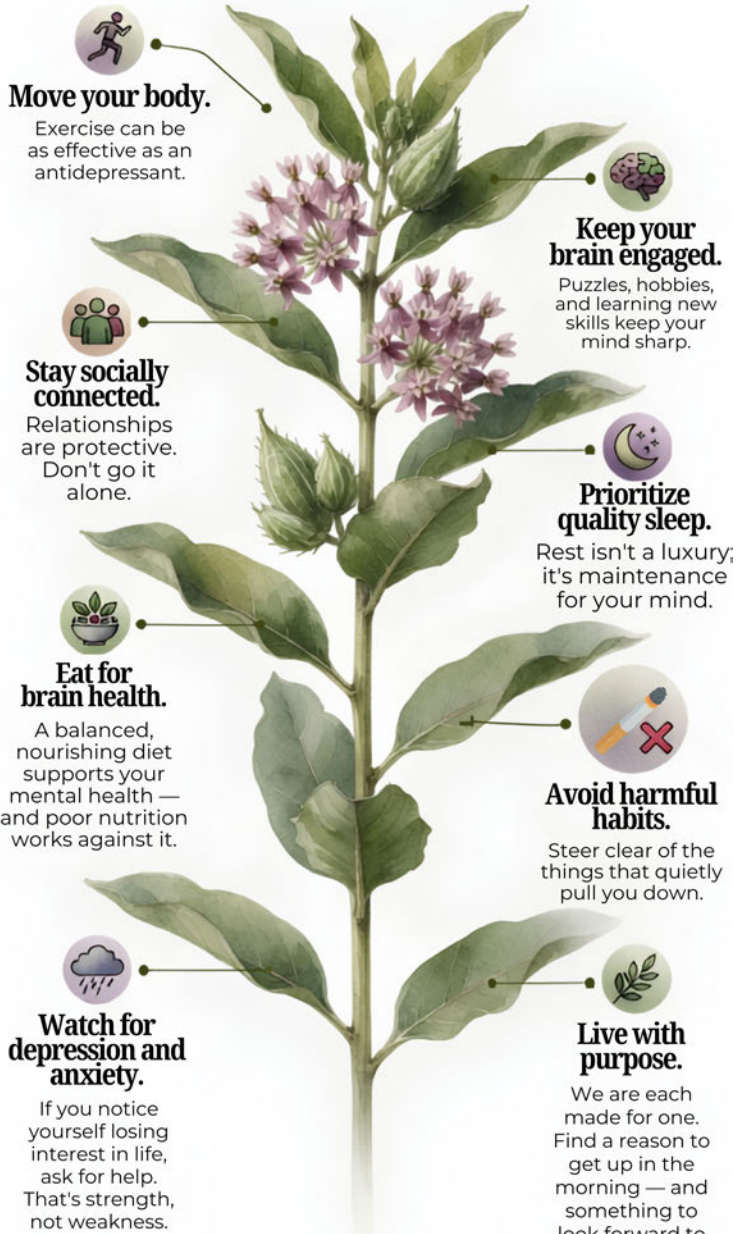
Learn your normal. Your usual energy, sleep, mood, and appetite. Normal isn't a number in a textbook. It's your own steady baseline.

Notice what changes and lasts. A bad week is a bad week. A change that holds for two or three weeks is worth writing down.

The patient portal is worth lingering on, because it's where taking the wheel stops feeling like a burden and starts feeling like freedom. The SCMH patient portal puts your test results, your visit history, your medication list, and a direct line to your care team on the phone already in your pocket. Need a refill? Request it. Wondering what a lab number meant? Message and ask. Can't remember when your last visit was? It's right there. For the first time in most of human history, the record that used to live in other people's memories can live with you, wherever you go.

Talk with one of our friendly Patient Access Representatives to get set up for the patient portal.

But the truest sign that you've taken ownership isn't a login or a tidy folder. It's this: you have someone you trust to bring the hard things to. A provider who knows your normal, who you can sit across from and say the sentence you'd rather not say out loud. Building that relationship is the first real thing you steward, and it's the one that makes everything else matter. It's exactly what the next pages are about: one woman, one provider, and the conversation that changed her health.



DR. OVERMILLER'S WAYS TO GUARD YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



Ferrill Conant, MD



Hannah Haack, MD



Stephen Moll, MD



Justin Overmiller, MD



Leah Wiehl, MD



Jill Kuhlmann, APRN



Hallie Theobald, PA-C



Hallie Theobald, PA-C, with Brooke Goos

To SunPorch and Back

What Can Change When We Stop Trying to Do It Alone

One woman’s journey toward better health and the small, sustainable steps that made a lasting difference.

Most mornings, Brooke Goos is at her desk by 7:30. The phone starts. The computer wakes up. Between then and five o'clock there is a thirty-minute lunch break and not much else that doesn't involve a chair.

If that sounds familiar, it should. It is the shape of a great many working lives. Bodies engineered over a few hundred thousand years to walk long distances across open country, parked instead in front of a monitor, doing necessary work that asks almost nothing of the legs. For a long time, it was also the shape of a problem Brooke didn't know how to say out loud.

"I have struggled with my weight for as long as I can remember," she says. She had tried workouts. She had tried lifestyle changes. Some of it moved the needle. None of it moved it far enough.

And then, eventually, she decided to say what felt like the longest short sentence in medicine. "Can we talk about my weight?"

Six words. Hallie Theobald, PA-C, has heard them often enough to know how much is packed behind them.

"By the time a patient says, 'Can we talk about my weight?' they've usually been thinking about it for months or even years," Theobald says. Many arrive with a long private history of attempts, diets, programs, medications, plans made in January and abandoned by March. Others arrive with no history at all, because they never knew where to begin, or how to begin safely. Nearly all of them arrive braced for a lecture.

Brooke was no exception. Before she ever brought it up, she had already gone looking on her own, reading about medications, weighing options. And still, walking in, she carried a specific worry: "In the back of my mind, I worried Hallie might think I was looking for the easy way out."

That fear — she'll think I'm cheating — may be one of the most effective barriers to care in modern medicine. It is also, Theobald says, almost entirely misplaced.

"I wish more people knew that asking for help isn't a sign that they've 'failed.'"

WHY THE ARITHMETIC DOESN'T WORK

There is a version of weight loss that fits on a napkin: eat less, move more. It is simple, it is memorable, and it leaves out most of the story.

"Weight is influenced by many factors," Theobald says, "genetics, hormones, medications, sleep, stress, mental health, life circumstances, and access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity."

That list isn't an excuse. It's a map. Each item on it is a lever, and knowing which levers a particular body actually responds to is the difference between a plan that holds, and a plan that collapses.

Which is why the appointment doesn't open with a scolding. It opens with questions:

What prompted you to bring it up today? What have you already tried? What challenges are you facing? What is your goal weight?

And that last one, Theobald notes, is often the least interesting answer in the room. "Sometimes the patient's goal isn't even about the number on the scale. They may want less knee pain, better blood sugar control, more energy to play with their children or grandchildren."

Obesity is now recognized as a chronic medical condition. Like other chronic conditions, it tends to respond to sustained medical partnership rather than to repeated solo attempts. "A good conversation," Theobald says, "is one where the patient feels heard and the plan is something they believe they can realistically follow long-term."

THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT DRUGS IN AMERICA

Somewhere in the middle of this story sits a class of medications that has generated more noise than almost anything else in health care right now. GLP-1s are hailed as a revolution on one side and dismissed as a shortcut on the other, sometimes in the same news cycle.

Theobald's framing is considerably less dramatic, and considerably more useful. "GLP-1 medications are effective

tools, but they're not magic, and they're not a substitute for taking care of your health."

The medical math is more modest than the headlines suggest, and more encouraging. A reduction of just five to ten percent of body weight can produce meaningful improvement in overall health. Not a transformation. An improvement, measurable in labs and blood pressure cuffs and knees. Every prescription is a risk-versus-benefit calculation. Side effects are real, and some patients can't tolerate the medication at all. Response varies from person to person. Brooke found this out firsthand. It took trying a few options before she landed on the one that fit. And the medication, she learned, does not do the work alone.

"When starting a GLP-1 medication, you have to work with the medication to make it effective," she says. "This journey has required real change. I had to adjust what I ate, what I drank, and how active I was each day." Not a shortcut. A partner.

THE PARTS NOBODY WEIGHS

Here is where Brooke's story turns, and where the scale stops being the point.

She had lived with chronic migraines for years. As the weight came off, they came less often and hit less hard. That single change rippled outward in ways she hadn't anticipated. "I feel sharper at work and less groggy throughout the day," she says. She sleeps better. She has energy left over when she walks out the clinic doors at five. "I can go out and work on the farm without feeling like I need a nap beforehand." And then the change that doesn't show up in any chart: "I have also noticed that my patience has improved, and I am less likely to experience mood shifts."



CONT... ➡

From the clinical side, the picture matches. Her A1c improved. Her thyroid began functioning better. The weekly migraines stopped being weekly. Her mental clarity sharpened.

"She has been a great role model," Theobald says, "for the positive effects one can achieve when pairing a GLP-1 with adequate diet and physical activity." Because that pairing is the whole design. "GLP-1 medications can help reduce hunger and support weight loss," Theobald says, "but physical activity is what helps turn that weight loss into better overall health. Together, they complement each other."

A STRIP OF SIDEWALK, AND WHAT IT'S FOR

Which brings us, finally, outdoors.

Not to a gym. Not to a program with a name and a membership fee. To a path.

The Pathway to Wellness runs outside Smith County Memorial Hospital, and it is free, and it is there. So is the Fitness Court. So is the Hometown Café. For a rural community of this size, that constellation of resources is not an accident and not a given. "We are lucky to have such readily available resources in our community," Theobald says. "Between our Hometown Café, Fitness Court, and Pathway we can better support our patients with their goals."

What that means in practice is that when a provider says movement, she can point out a window.

This year, Brooke participated in K-State Extension's Walk Kansas challenge for the first time and discovered something that surprises almost everyone who starts counting: she was already covering real ground during an ordinary workday. Adding a deliberate walk on top of that turned out to matter more than she expected.

Then SCMH introduced the Wellness Reset, fifteen minutes, on the clock, to step outside and come back to yourself. Brooke took it. "Sometimes I walk to SunPorch and back. Other times, I simply take a lap around the building. No matter what I choose, I come back inside feeling refreshed



and ready to tackle the rest of the day." SunPorch and back. It sounds like nothing. It is, in fact, the entire thesis.

"At first, the Pathway can seem intimidating," Brooke says. "But I have learned that progress happens at your own pace. If all you can do is walk to SunPorch and back, that is enough. The next day, you may go a little farther, and before long, you may find yourself walking the entire path."

Theobald says essentially the same thing from the clinical chair, in different words: exercise does not have to be intense to be effective. "The best activity is one they'll continue doing." Walking. Swimming. Cycling. Dancing. Chair-based exercises. Whatever a person's body and conditions actually allow. And there is a mercy built into the mechanism because as weight comes down and joint pain and shortness of breath ease, movement gets easier, which makes more movement possible, which makes it easier still.

The path widens as you walk it.

THE VISIT YOU MAKE WHEN NOTHING IS WRONG

There is one more conversation Theobald would like to have with people she hasn't met yet. The ones who haven't scheduled a wellness visit because nothing hurts.

"Not all medical conditions are visible," she says. High blood pressure and diabetes are patient adversaries. They develop quietly, without symptoms, doing damage on a timeline that gives no warning.

An annual exam is where they get caught. It is also where age- and risk-appropriate screenings get recommended, such as blood work, pap smears, mammograms, colonoscopies. Where chronic conditions get monitored and treatment plans adjusted. And where the most underrated diagnostic tool in medicine gets built: a year-over-year record. Weight, blood pressure, labs, screenings, lined up over time. Trends are invisible in a single snapshot. They are obvious in a series. You don't come in because something is wrong. You come in so that you'll know if it starts to be.

THE MESSAGE

Ask Brooke what she'd say to the person still sitting on the question, and she doesn't hesitate. "Please do not ever be afraid to advocate for yourself. You know yourself better than anyone else. You do not have to start this journey at full speed. Work up to what feels comfortable for you." If the conversation with a provider still feels like too much, she says, start smaller. Start with the walk. Start with whatever moves you an inch toward the life you want.

She keeps a line from Nelson Mandela close: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

"This journey does not have to happen overnight," Brooke says. "If you continue working toward your goals, you will get there. Not making it the whole way does not mean you failed. If you show up and try, you have already succeeded. Whether your goal is to lose 5 pounds or 100 pounds, believe in yourself every day. We are here to support you wherever life takes you."

The path is out there. It doesn't care how fast you go.



Smith County Memorial Hospital has what you need to start your journey to better health:

- **The Pathway to Wellness** — Walk as much of it as you've got in you. SunPorch and back counts.
- **The Fitness Court** — Outdoor, free, open.
- **Hometown Café** — Food that works with your goals instead of against them.

Ready to talk to someone? Call Smith County Family Practice at (785) 282-6834 to schedule a conversation.

9 STEPS TOWARD A HEALTHIER WEIGHT

- 1. Name the real goal.** It's rarely the number. Less knee pain. Steadier blood sugar. Enough energy to get down on the floor with a grandchild. Write down what you actually want. That's the goal your plan should be built around.
- 2. Make the appointment before something is wrong.** Blood pressure and diabetes develop without symptoms. An annual wellness exam is where they get found early, and where you start building the year-over-year record that reveals trends a single visit can't show.
- 3. Walk in with four answers ready.** Your provider is likely to ask: What prompted you to bring this up today? What have you already tried? What challenges are you facing? What is your goal weight? Thinking these through beforehand turns a nervous conversation into a productive one.
- 4. Let go of the fear of being judged.** Obesity is a recognized chronic medical condition. Asking for medical help with a medical condition isn't taking the easy way out. It's using the tools.
- 5. Feed your body instead of fighting it.** Skip the restriction spiral. Focus on getting enough protein, fiber, fluids, vitamins, and minerals. Nutrition that supports your health is more sustainable than nutrition that punishes you.
- 6. Pick the movement you'll actually repeat.** Walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, chair-based exercise. The best activity is the one you'll still be doing in six months. Intensity is optional. Consistency isn't.
- 7. Add strength.** Resistance work preserves muscle mass, protects mobility, supports heart health, and helps weight stay off. It matters more, not less, as the weight comes down.
- 8. Guard your sleep and your stress.** Poor sleep and chronic stress make weight management significantly harder. They aren't side issues. They're part of the plan.
- 9. Keep coming back.** Follow-up is where side effects get caught, nutrition gets checked, progress gets measured, and the plan gets adjusted while it's still working. Nobody does this well alone, and nobody has to.



The Conversation Starts on the Plate

by Executive Chef Steve Smith, RD

I am both a chef and a dietitian. One of the things I've learned as a chef is that everyone loves well-crafted food. Well-crafted food inspires a conversation. Folks love the story of a food; they love to be introduced to new and exciting products, and most people are even willing to have their boundaries pushed by a chef who has established credibility with them and respects them as a valued member of their culinary audience.

One of the things I've learned as a dietitian is that nobody wants to be told what to eat! Diving straight into the minutiae of nutrition is not going to gain you anything but yawns. As a chef, I also know that healthy food has to taste good or people – especially me – just won't eat it!

So here at the *Hometown Café*, we simply start with a conversation about food. Well-crafted food sets the tone for meaningful connections between people. It draws people together and lowers defenses. It connects people who would not otherwise engage each other. "Have you tried the soup today?" "Don't miss that Asian green bean salad!" "Try those burnt ends, they are amazing!" A beautifully composed menu item invites curiosity about the ingredients, its origins, and flavor profiles, transforming a simple meal into an engaging, shared experience. This conversation about food inspires trust and cooperation. It encourages cultural exchange and helps build community. The English word "companion" actually comes from the Latin roots "con" (with) and "panis" (bread), literally meaning someone you break bread with. The psychological benefits are obvious. **The most noticeable effect of walking into the *Hometown Café* is a smile! This conversation is one of the things I love about being a chef.** Walking out of the kitchen to say hello to guests in the dining room is simply a matter of continuing the conversation I'd started on the plate.

We are all there to share the experience of well-crafted food! Here at the *Hometown Café*, embedded in the conversation we establish about food is also a subtle conversation about health and the healing properties of food. For most of us, health is not a complicated issue. It is about food and lifestyle choices, as well as some basic concepts I refer to as "pillars of health." The menus I write here provide choices. The problem with healthy food choices is that they almost always taste that way. One of my goals is to offer food that fits into various diets on what I call the "healthy diet spectrum," that taste great and are things you want to eat, no matter how healthy they are! Respecting your choices is a feature of the way we do Food Is Medicine at Smith County Memorial Hospital — because a choice you actually want to make is the only one that changes anything.

Serendipity has played a significant role in what we have developed here. It might seem that there was a grand plan, but there was not. Everything we have done has been created organically, directly based on the needs of the community. The reason we have a 12-foot salad bar in the center of our rather small dining room is that in 2018, when I did a survey of all the close-by restaurants, I couldn't find a robust salad bar. During that same survey, I could not find any fish options that were not deep-fat-fried. That is why we offer steamed salmon on Fridays.

The salmon we serve continues the conversation about well-crafted food and health and exemplifies how we **feature choice as a Food Is Medicine signature**. Fish is a cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet. The Mediterranean diet recommends two to three servings of seafood per week, prioritizing oily, low-mercury options such as salmon. Steaming as a cooking method does not add extra fat. Regular consumption of fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, promotes heart and cognitive health while reducing systemic inflammation. Reducing inflammation is one of the pillars of health I emphasize, and the Mediterranean diet is one of the diets on the healthy diet spectrum. We offer an excellent tartar sauce as a choice. Having the salmon without the tartar sauce reduces fat,

saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Using moderation may also be a choice with the tartar sauce.

Asparagus, the featured vegetable on fish-Fridays, is low in calories and nutrient-dense, packed with vitamins A, C, E, K, and folate. Vitamin K is crucial for bone health and blood clotting. High folate levels make asparagus an excellent choice during pregnancy. The high potassium and folate content also helps regulate blood pressure and lower homocysteine levels, an amino acid linked to heart disease. Asparagus also serves as a natural diuretic, reducing bloating, and also supports gut health with prebiotic fibers like inulin that feed the critters in your gut. Asparagus is rich in antioxidants like glutathione, which help protect your cells from oxidative stress and inflammation.

Gold potatoes, the featured starch on fish-Fridays, are highly nutritious, providing an excellent source of vitamin C, potassium, and vitamin B6. Their yellow flesh is rich in powerful antioxidants called carotenoids. They are also naturally fat-free, cholesterol-free, and gluten-free. Contrary to popular belief, they are perfect for weight loss because they provide a very high level of satiety with relatively few calories. Just leave off the heavy, high-calorie toppings.

Wow, that was exhausting! I'd much prefer to have a conversation about well-crafted food rather than the details of its nutrition!

And that is exactly the point. Nobody sits down on a Friday thinking about homocysteine levels. They sit down because the salmon is good and because somebody they know is already at the next table. The nutrition comes along for the ride. A hospital can hand you a pamphlet about heart health. At the *Hometown Café* we hand you a fork. That is the way we do Food Is Medicine!

So strap on the feed bucket and pull up a chair. The salad bar is twelve feet long, the asparagus is in, and the tartar sauce is entirely up to you.

Let the conversation continue, and the healing begin!

THE FINISHING TOUCH
A squeeze, not a shake
A wheel of fresh lemon brightens the fish so it never needs heavy salt — acid does the work sodium usually would.

SALMON · STEAMED
Omega-3s, intact
Rich in the omega-3 fats EPA and DHA that calm inflammation, steady the heartbeat, and feed the brain. Steaming uses no oil and protects those fragile fats that frying would damage.

ASPARAGUS · STEAMED
Folate & vitamin K
A folate powerhouse for healthy cells, plus vitamin K for bone, antioxidants, and gut-feeding fiber. Steaming keeps the water-soluble vitamins in the spear, not down the drain.

GOLD POTATOES · STEAMED
More than a banana
The most misunderstood food on the plate. Steamed, it delivers more potassium than a banana — counterbalancing sodium and supporting healthy blood pressure, with no fryer oil.

STEAMED FOR HEALTH
Steaming preserves nutrients, locks in flavor, and keeps the plate light—supporting your heart, brain, and whole body.

A Grocery Cart, a Dinner Plate, a Daily Habit

What Food Is Medicine Looks Like In Every Day Life

A Conversation with Emily Campbell



What does Food Is Medicine mean in everyday life, not as a slogan but as a daily habit?

To me, Food Is Medicine begins with nutritious food that people can realistically find, afford, prepare, and enjoy. It does not require a perfect diet or a grocery cart filled with expensive specialty products. It can be as simple as choosing more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, and quality proteins, then learning how to turn those ingredients into meals that taste good and make you feel good.

It also means becoming curious about food, cooking, and your health. Cooking should not feel like a punishment or another chore we are failing to complete. It can be fun, creative, and something we genuinely look forward to. Nutritious food and a healthy lifestyle should be a priority, not something we only focus on when we have extra time.

Life gets busy, but it is worth pausing to consider what is filling our days and whether those choices are supporting our health and well-being. Do we understand what is in our food, where it comes from, and how it affects our bodies? When we become more informed and more confident in the kitchen, we are more likely to cook, try new ingredients, and build habits that help us become healthier, stronger versions of ourselves.

How can simple changes support a healthier life? Simple changes become powerful when we repeat them. Drinking more water, adding a vegetable to dinner, cooking at home one more night each week, eating more whole foods, or taking a walk after a meal may not seem dramatic, but these habits can add up over time.

We also spend a lot of money trying to improve our health, energy, appearance, or weight through supplements, powders, bars, beauty products, and other packaged solutions. Some of those products may be useful or recommended for a specific reason, but it is also important to step back and look at the food we are eating every day. Before assuming we need another product, we can ask whether our meals are actually giving our bodies the

protein, fiber, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and energy they need.

For example, someone may be trying to lose weight but feels hungry throughout the day and keeps reaching for energy bars or other packaged snacks. The problem may not be a lack of willpower. Their meals may simply not be satisfying enough. Instead of continuing to add more snacks, they could look at whether lunch includes a quality protein, vegetables, a fiber rich carbohydrate, and a healthy fat. A balanced meal does not have to be high in calories or complicated. It could be something as simple as chicken, roasted vegetables, brown rice, and a flavorful sauce, or a bean and vegetable soup with whole grain toast. That kind of meal may help them feel fuller, support their goals, and cost less than repeatedly buying specialty products.

When I talk with people about healthier eating or lifestyle habits, I often ask two questions: “What is one habit you would like to change?” and “What is one realistic choice you could make in its place more often?” The answer does not have to be dramatic. It may be preparing a more balanced lunch, taking a short walk after dinner, going to bed thirty minutes earlier, or keeping fruit and nuts available instead of waiting until hunger becomes overwhelming.

Lifestyle medicine is not about changing everything overnight. It is about making one small, realistic change at a time that supports the way we eat, move, sleep, manage stress, and connect with others. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to better understand what our bodies need, keep learning, and build habits that support the life we want to live.

Why does preparation matter as much as the food itself?

Most people already know that vegetables are good for them. The harder part is figuring out how to get them washed, chopped, cooked, and onto the table before the

whole process feels so exhausting that takeout starts sounding better.

Preparation matters because a few practical skills can make healthy cooking much less frustrating. It might mean learning how to chop vegetables without spending thirty minutes on them, how to season them so they actually taste good, how to cook a simple protein without drying it out, or how to turn tonight’s leftovers into tomorrow’s lunch. When cooking feels easier and more manageable, nutritious food is much more likely to be eaten instead of forgotten in the back of the refrigerator.

Preparation also helps healthy food become something people look forward to. Vegetables do not have to be plain, soggy, or boring. With the right cooking method, a little seasoning, and a simple sauce or fresh finish, they can become one of the best parts of the meal. When food is flavorful, satisfying, and enjoyable to share, healthy eating feels less like a rule and more like a habit worth keeping.

Why does Food Is Medicine matter? Food Is Medicine matters because food is one of the few things that affects our health every single day. What we eat can influence our energy, blood sugar, heart health, strength, healing, and overall quality of life. We do not have to wait until something is wrong to start taking better care of ourselves. Every grocery trip, meal, and snack gives us another chance to make a choice that supports our health.

It also gives people a practical way to take part in their own care. Doctors, nurses, dietitians, and other healthcare professionals provide essential treatment, guidance, and support, but what happens at home matters too. Learning how to cook a few nutritious meals, planning ahead, moving more, sleeping better, and managing stress are tools people can use every day to support the care they receive.

To me, though, Food Is Medicine should never make food feel clinical, joyless, or like a list of rules. Food is how we care for people. It is how families gather, how traditions are passed down, and how communities connect. Nutritious food can still be comforting, flavorful, fun, and something we are genuinely excited to sit down and eat. That is when healthy eating becomes more than a recommendation. It becomes a way of life.

Emily Campbell is Founder & Food Systems Strategist for Cultivate Impact, LLC

What is SCMHS doing in Food Is Medicine?

Smith County Memorial Hospital is demonstrating that food can be a meaningful part of healthcare, healing, hospitality, and community life. SCMHS is not simply serving meals. It is creating an environment where food is treated with care, where patients and community members are welcomed, and where nutritious food can still be beautiful, flavorful, and enjoyable.

Chef Steve and the SCMHS team are also showing what is possible in a rural hospital. They are helping people experience Food Is Medicine rather than only hearing about it. Through their meals, education, outreach, and commitment to hospitality, they are making the idea feel practical, personal, and achievable.

SCMHS is proving that a hospital food program can nourish patients, support employees, serve the community, and inspire a much larger conversation about health.

A FOOD IS MEDICINE STARTER LIST:

- **Build a real meal, not more snacks. Aim for quality protein, vegetables, a fiber-rich carbohydrate, and a healthy fat. If you're hungry all afternoon, the fix is a more satisfying lunch.**
- **Add 1 vegetable to dinner.**
- **Cook at home more.**
- **Learn 2 or 3 simple meals well.**
- **Season your vegetables.**
- **Super tip: meal prep to cook once and eat all week.**

The goal is one small, realistic change at a time.



Stronger Communities, Healthier Futures

How Connection and Community Pride Shape Rural Wellbeing

by Colleen Eberle, Co-Founder + Account Executive, Eberle Studios

WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY HEALTHY?

In rural areas, access to healthcare is essential, but access alone is not enough. The long-term future of rural healthcare depends on something deeper—it depends on people. Do families choose to stay? Are new residents moving in, or coming back home? Is there a workforce to support local clinics, hospitals, and long-term care? Across North Central Kansas, communities are recognizing that health is shaped not only inside hospital walls, but by the stability and growth of the places they serve. Communities with engaged residents, expanding businesses, and a shared sense of pride help ensure that quality care remains close to home. That kind of foundation is built intentionally through relationships, collaboration, and the way communities tell their stories.

WHY PERCEPTION MATTERS

In rural communities, perception plays a larger role than many realize. When people understand what's possible—career opportunities, quality schools, or a safe place to raise a family—they're more likely to put down roots. When

communities retain and attract residents, it supports everything from local economies to the long-term future of healthcare systems. Storytelling has become a powerful way to shape that perception. Not through overly polished messaging, but through real experiences—families raising children, business owners creating opportunities, and people choosing to build a life close to home. These stories reflect what already exists and remind people why it's worth investing in.

A LOCAL EXAMPLE

In Smith County, a grassroots effort formed around a simple goal: tell the story of home in a way that connects with current residents, past residents, and those considering a future in the region. That effort became Choose Smith County. What started as a workforce recruitment initiative has grown into a community-driven platform highlighting the people, businesses, and opportunities that define rural life. Through video, photography, blogs, and digital content, the campaign focuses on authentic stories that reflect everyday experiences.

FROM VISIBILITY TO ACTION

That approach is gaining traction. Content featuring local voices continues to drive strong engagement, with people watching, reading, and sharing. Since its launch, the campaign has generated more than 100,000 video views and reached audiences in 35 states. More importantly, it's prompting action. Visitors are exploring the website, reading stories, and taking steps to learn more about what life in the region could look like. When people see themselves reflected, they begin to picture a future there.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR HEALTHCARE

The impact of this work extends far beyond visibility. In rural communities, population stability is directly tied to the future of healthcare. When communities grow, or even maintain their population, it helps ensure hospitals, clinics, and care providers can continue serving the region. Without that stability, access becomes more limited over time. Workforce recruitment is closely connected as well. Healthcare systems rely on communities that can attract and retain not only patients, but also professionals who choose to live and work locally. Communities where people feel invested and involved often experience stronger social ties and better mental wellbeing, both of which contribute to overall health outcomes. Efforts that build community identity and local pride support these systems in ways that aren't always visible but are deeply impactful.

“The long-term strength of rural healthcare depends on more than facilities and services. It depends on strong, connected communities. When people choose to live, work, and build their lives here, it helps ensure that quality care remains available for everyone.”

Sarah Ragsdale, SCMH CEO

A RIPPLE EFFECT ACROSS THE REGION

While Choose Smith County is rooted in one county, its influence reaches further. For regional healthcare providers, the strength of each community matters. Population trends, workforce availability, and access to services are all interconnected across county lines. When one community invests in its future, it contributes to the stability of the broader region. Growth, connection, and opportunity in one place help strengthen systems that serve many.

**Feeling valued at work colors
your whole outlook on life.**

**Loving where you work protects
far more than your career.**



**LOVE WHERE YOU WORK
EXPLORE THE JOB BOARD**
ChooseSmithCounty.com



No Place Like Here

Care for Every Stage of Life

You've walked the whole Pathway to Wellness this issue, from the newest life in the nursery to the fullest tables in the café. Here's the truth waiting at the end of the trail: at every stage you passed, there was already care standing by. Right here, close to home, and among the best our region has to offer.

Look back down the trail for a moment.

You started where every life starts, small and new and wrapped in a swaddling blanket. You moved through the hard, holy work of raising children and teaching them to speak the truth. You watched a young adult take the wheel of their own health, and a woman find her footing again beside a provider she trusted. You sat down to food that heals. Stage by stage, mile by mile, that's the Pathway to Wellness. It's not a program. It's a life.

And here's what's easy to miss when you're the one walking it: you were never walking alone. At every waypoint on that road, Smith County Memorial Hospital was already there, staffed and ready, for whatever that stretch of life required.

In much of rural America, care means a long drive. A cardiology appointment two hours north. A neurology consult four counties away. A tank of gas and a day off work just to be seen. That's the story in a lot of small towns. It is not the story here. Across the local region this magazine calls home, Smith County Memorial Hospital has become a regional leader in healthcare excellence, proof that world-class care and a hometown address were never at odds. Twenty-two specialists drive to Smith Center through our visiting Specialty Clinic, seeing patients right down the hall from the family practice team who has known them for years. As a rural critical access hospital with an attached family health clinic, we were built for exactly this: bringing the region's best care close, so the people you love can heal near the people who love them. There's no place like here. We mean it.



Hilary and Lydia Peterson

HERE'S THE CARE THAT'S WELCOMING YOU

Where the road begins — for new life and growing families

Prenatal, Obstetrics & Women's Health · Child Birth Education · Primary & Family Care · Mental & Behavioral Health · Physical & Occupational Therapy · 24-Hour Emergency · Speech Therapy · Cardiac Rehab

The specialists who come to you — our visiting Specialty Clinic

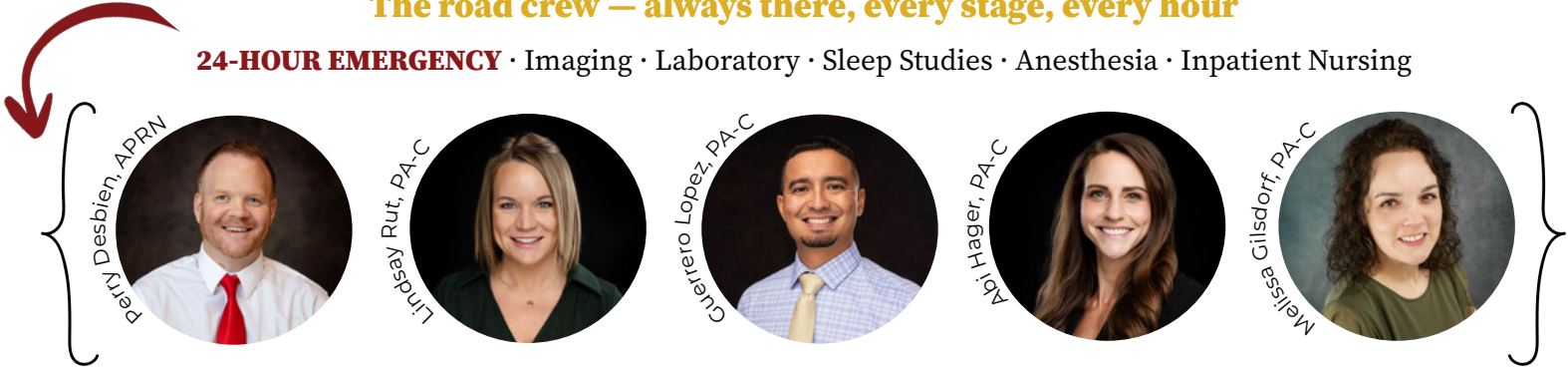
Cardiology · Neurology · Orthopedics · Dermatology · General Surgery · Vascular Surgery · Urology · Nephrology · Pulmonology · Endocrinology · Rheumatology · Podiatry · Holistic Pain Management · Wound Clinic · Orthotics · Surgical Services

The long view — steady care for the miles ahead

Chronic Care Management · Chemotherapy & Immunotherapy · Respiratory Therapy · Nutrition Consulting · Meals on Wheels · Advance Care Planning (Five Wishes) · Patient Advocate

The road crew — always there, every stage, every hour

24-HOUR EMERGENCY · Imaging · Laboratory · Sleep Studies · Anesthesia · Inpatient Nursing



One place that has kind help ready for every season of a life, no matter which county you call home.

Your gift to Smith County Memorial Hospital helps keep the region's best care close to home.

Choose where you'd like your gift to go:

- ☐ Safe Cribs — Help make sure every baby born at SCMH sleeps safe, so a life can start the way it should. \$100 purchases 1 safe crib.
- ☐ Equipment — Help keep the tools of healing current, so care close to home stays care you can count on.
- ☐ Staff Education — Help our nurses, providers, and specialists keep growing, so your family is always in the best hands.
- ☐ Wherever it's needed most — Let us direct your gift to today's greatest need.

My gift: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other \$_____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

☐ Check enclosed (payable to Smith County Memorial Hospital) ☐ Please contact me about giving

Return this form to Smith County Memorial Hospital, Attention: Development Office, PO Box 349, Smith Center, KS, 66967 or give anytime at scmhks.org/ways-to-give.

Thank you for helping us keep the region's best care close to home for every life stage, and everyone who comes next.



SMITH COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 349
Smith Center, KS 66967

SCMHKS.ORG



LOCATION

921 E. Highway 36
Smith Center, KS 66967



MAIL

P.O. Box 349
Smith Center, KS 66967



HOSPITAL 785.282.6845
CLINIC 785.282.6834



FACEBOOK/SCMHKS