

GUNDERSEN

YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

EYE ON YOUR HEALTH

Eye exams are important to maintaining your overall health – p. 1

MOTORCYCLE MISHAP

Local emergency helps rider avoid disaster – p. 2

MOTHER. VETERAN. STAGE 4 CANCER SURVIVOR.

Robin Henderson: 'It's never just you.' – p. 5

GUNDERSEN
HEALTH SYSTEM®

Gundersen Health System has the following locations in your area. For a complete listing visit gundersenhealth.org.

Black River Falls
• 601 West Adams Street
Gundersen Eye Clinic (715) 284-9451

Blair
• 420 South Peterson Avenue
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics Blair (608) 989-2505

Independence
• 35791 Osseo Road
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics Independence (715) 985-2351

Whitehall
• 18606 Ervin Street
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics Whitehall Medical Clinic: (715) 538-4355 or (888) 775-0516
Gundersen Eye Clinic (715) 538-4330
Gundersen Behavioral Health (608) 775-2287 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 52287

• 18601 Lincoln Street
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics Hospital: (715) 538-4361

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EEO/AA/Veterans/Disabilities

Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics

Top-notch resources, technology, specialty care right here at home



Ashley Finch, OD, Gundersen Eye Clinic Whitehall

We are blessed to live in a beautiful area. Gundersen Eye Clinics in Whitehall, Black River Falls and Winona, Minn., can help you bring this beauty into focus.

“Yearly eye exams are an important part of health maintenance for everyone, regardless of age or physical health,” says Ashley Finch, OD. “A comprehensive eye exam will not only determine your prescription for glasses or contact lenses, but will also assess your overall health.”

Gundersen optometrists monitor your sight for diseases that can have no symptoms such as glaucoma and macular degeneration. In addition, Gundersen ophthalmologists are available to see you at every Gundersen vision center.

Systemic diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes can also be detected through an eye exam. Early detection and treatment of these diseases can help reduce your risk for permanent vision loss.

“As you age, you are more likely to develop age-related eye conditions such as cataracts. We are able to monitor for these changes and make surgical referrals when necessary,” says Dr. Finch, who sees patients in Whitehall.

Proper and regular eye examinations are very important for children: Your Gundersen optometrist helps ensure the proper development and visual skills necessary for success at school and in other activities.

“Kids don’t always know what ‘normal’ vision looks like and therefore may not complain of blurry vision, so it is important to have their eyes examined,” notes Dr. Finch.

Regardless of age, all people are susceptible to other eye problems including red eyes, dry eyes, itchy eyes, foreign bodies and eye infections.

If you experience any of these problems, make an appointment right away at a Gundersen Eye Clinic near you.

‘Cowboy’ grateful for life-saving trauma care at Gundersen Tri-County



Lucas Hammell, DO, Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics

Rob Steagall is a man’s man, a self-described “tough cowboy,” who’s quick to his feet after being knocked down.

The Mondovi resident used to ride bulls for fun, and still breaks wild horses for a local veterinarian. When Rob needs to escape, he hits the open road on his motorcycle.

“I’ve been on a motorcycle since I was 16-years-old,” Rob says. “There’s nothing like the freedom I get on my bike.”

Rob was celebrating this freedom during a recent motorcycle ride with dozens of other riders to honor military veterans when he was knocked down once more.

“My front wheel slid on some gravel in the road, and I had to put the bike down in a ditch,” Rob says.

Several riders took Rob from the accident scene to Blair, Wis., where an ambulance was called, despite tough guy Rob’s objections.

“He had minor road rash, no pain...very little sign of anything wrong,” says Jon Paulson, a Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics paramedic who was first on the scene. “After some pressure from his buddies, Rob finally agreed to ride with us to the Hospital in Whitehall to get checked out.”

Lucas Hammell, DO, Gundersen Health System Family Medicine and Gundersen Tri-County Emergency Services, was ready to care for Rob.

“We did a complete exam, and Rob did not appear to be badly injured,” Dr. Hammell says. “When he stood up to give a urine sample, however, Rob’s blood pressure crashed.”

After quickly stabilizing Rob, Dr. Hammell immediately called for a CT scan. It showed significant damage to the spleen, which could cause internal bleeding and death.



Jon Paulson (left) and Mike Foster, CCEMTP, care for patients each day as paramedics for Tri-County Ambulance and Arcadia Ambulance.

Gundersen MedLink AIR flew to Gundersen Tri-County to transport Rob back to La Crosse for more intensive care. Thanks to the initial treatment by Dr. Hammell and others, Rob’s care and recovery was seamless.

“Many injuries, like Rob’s, can deteriorate quickly,” Dr. Hammell says. “Hospitals like Gundersen Tri-County are a lifeline for many people.”

“Some patients in the Whitehall area are a half-hour or more away from emergency care,” Jon says. “We care for patients and help them reach that higher level of care.”

“To be alive to tell the story...shoot, I’m grateful. If it hadn’t been for Dr. Hammell and others, I wouldn’t be here today,” Rob admits. “I’m tearing up just telling the story.”

An honest admission from a tough, yet thankful cowboy.

When you have an emergency, Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics is ready. With two ambulance services – Tri-County Ambulance and Arcadia Ambulance – and highly-trained providers, our team has the skills to respond to any injury or situation, and seamless access to specialized care at Gundersen La Crosse. Rest easy during a crisis; We’ll take care of you. Visit gundersenhealth.org/tri-county for more.

Scoping out colon cancer



Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States behind lung cancer. Fortunately, it is also one of the most preventable and curable cancers.

Ann Cooke, LPN, Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics

"A colonoscopy is an exam that could save your life. It offers the best opportunity for doctors to detect colon cancer or polyps (precancerous growths) in its early, more treatable stage," explains Ann Cooke, licensed practical nurse at Gundersen Tri-County Hospital and Clinics.

According to Cooke, people at the greatest risk of developing colon cancer include those:

- With family history of polyps or colon cancer
- Who are 50 years old or older
- With a history of polyps
- With a history of Crohn's disease or Lynch syndrome

Cooke and her colleagues at Gundersen Tri-County suggest that patients receive their first colonoscopy at age 50, and follow the specialist's recommendations on follow up care after the colonoscopy. Patients can receive their colonoscopy close to home at Gundersen Tri-County in Whitehall by a Gundersen specialist.

"Nobody looks forward to a colonoscopy, but it can prevent much worse things down the road," Cooke says. "If you ask someone who's had a colonoscopy, they'll probably tell you 'it's not so bad.'"

Lower your risk

While you can't control your family history, there are steps you can take to decrease your chance of developing colon cancer. "Besides regular screenings, it is important to eat a healthy diet consisting of plenty of fiber," recommends Cooke. "You should also get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, and discuss with your primary care provider when you should be screened, especially if family members have had polyps removed."



Knowing the signs

It is also important to know the symptoms of colon cancer. Cooke encourages you to contact your primary care provider if you or a family member experience:

- Rectal bleeding.
- Change in bowel habits – prolonged diarrhea or constipation.
- Abdominal pain.
- Any new gastrointestinal-related issues.

Also if you have a history of polyps and develop abdominal pain or changes in your daily routine of bowel habits, see your primary care provider as soon as possible to determine what care is needed.

For more information, contact your primary care provider or the Gundersen clinic nearest you.

Specialty care close to home

In addition to offering colonoscopies, gastroenterologists (digestive health specialists) from Gundersen Health System are available at Gundersen Tri-County Whitehall Clinic. These providers care for patients suffering from conditions related to the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, colon, pancreas and liver.

For more information visit gundersenhealth.org/digestivehealth.

Don't wait for a heart attack to think about heart health



Piraon Sutthiwan, MD, Gundersen Heart Institute

"I never really thought about heart disease; I worried more about cancer," recalls Hope Unverzagt of Sparta, Wis. "I have no risk factors—my blood pressure and cholesterol are good, I don't smoke, I'm not overweight and my grandparents lived into their 90s. So I was very surprised when I had a heart attack at the age of 47."

Hope is living proof heart disease is something everyone needs to be aware of. This includes knowing the symptoms of a heart attack, heeding the signs and getting help right away.

On April 25, 2013—a date emblazoned in Hope's memory—she was at home visiting with a friend. Suddenly Hope had what she thought was severe heartburn, then pain in her back and left arm. "I got up and felt weird, like I was going to pass out," recalls Hope. "I was not feeling very well. I was nauseated, sweat was pouring off me, and I went downhill quickly."

"While Hope had many classic heart attack symptoms, women often have less specific symptoms," says Hope's cardiologist Piraon Sutthiwan, MD, "This includes fatigue, dizziness, trouble sleeping, shortness of breath, indigestion and anxiety. Women may experience these symptoms weeks or months before a heart attack, but often attribute the signs to stress or something else, so they don't take it seriously."

Luckily for Hope those around her recognized the need to get help. Hope continues, "My mother-in-law happened

to walk in about this time. She and my friend quickly decided it was time to call 9-1-1, and I agreed. I had an overwhelming sense that something was wrong."

At Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, Hope had a procedure to open one of her heart arteries that was 90 percent blocked. Today, Hope is doing very well. She continues to see Dr. Sutthiwan annually, but no longer needs most of her heart medications.



Hope Unverzagt with her daughter, Bronwyn. The busy mother of 11 continues to live an active lifestyle following a heart attack at 47

"Hope is proof of the importance of seeking medical attention right away if you have symptoms. Because she lives such a healthy lifestyle and she got help quickly, her long-term prognosis is very good," Dr. Sutthiwan is happy to report. "Hope has done everything right, including cardiac rehab, eating healthy, maintaining a healthy weight and keeping a good attitude."

Hope's last name—Unverzagt—is German for "undaunted," which is appropriate for her. This busy mother of 11 children continues to lead a healthy, active lifestyle and encourages others to

do the same.

Now 50 years old, Hope shares, "There's a formula that's used to help determine a person's 'heart age.' My heart age comes up as 35." Undaunted, indeed.

To learn more about the signs of a heart attack or assess your "heart age," visit gundersenhealth.org/heart.

Robin Henderson: Pain and purpose from cancer

She lay in her bed, covers drawn to her chin, blinds pulled to block the sunlight. Wiping tears, Robin Henderson whispered: "This can't be happening."

A strong, independent mother of two and Air Force veteran, Robin had stage 4 colorectal cancer. She was just 30 years old.

Robin's story begins and ends, though, with the importance of early screening and the compassionate care she received from her team of providers at Gundersen Health System.

"Gundersen and my doctors saved my life," Robin says. "I wouldn't have made it without them."

Diagnosis

Robin found blood in her stool in the fall of 2014 and assumed it was stress-related. She was healthy, and the thought of cancer never crossed her mind.

Fast forward five months to her first colonoscopy – a procedure Robin never thought she'd have so young – after a co-worker urged her to see her doctor. "I was really negative about the colonoscopy and figured it would be a waste of my time. I didn't feel sick," she says.

The colonoscopy revealed the cancer, and further tests showed it had spread to her liver, a discovery that would be fatal without action.

With a 50-50 shot at surviving, Robin wanted to exhaust all options, but she quickly decided Gundersen's care couldn't be matched.

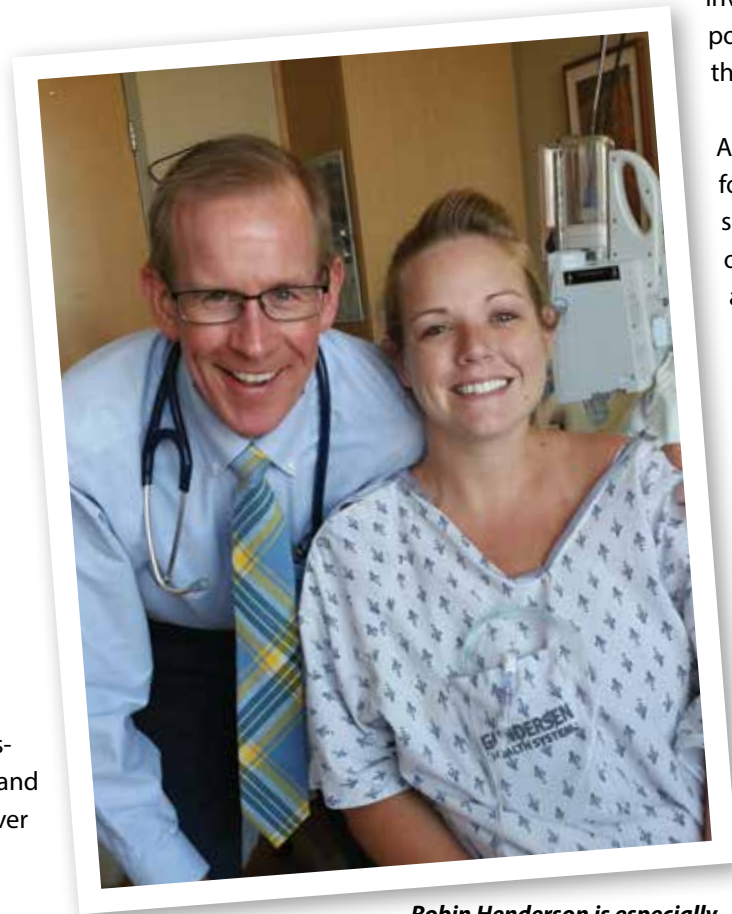
"The options and outlook I was given by another healthcare provider were entirely different from Gundersen's," Robin says. "Their compassion and investment in taking every possible course to help me beat this cancer brought me back."

After Robin chose Gundersen for her care, a team of specialists, including oncologist Kurt Oettel, MD, and surgeons Stephen Shapiro, MD, FACS, and Travis Smith, MD, quickly formed a plan.

"The process – from scheduling treatment and follow up appointments, to interactions I had with doctors and staff – was seamless," Robin says. "They were all very knowledgeable and able to provide options for my pain and overall treatment I didn't think were even possible."

Before surgery to remove the liver tumor, Robin would need to endure her first and second rounds of chemotherapy in the spring of 2015. In July 2015 Robin had approximately 60 percent of her liver removed.

After tests in August 2015 showed Robin's liver had responded well to surgery, a separate, more difficult surgery was scheduled to remove a rectal tumor.



Robin Henderson is especially grateful for the compassion and encouragement provided by Drs. Kurt Oettel (pictured) and Stephen Shapiro during her battle with cancer.

In the fall of 2015, Robin received good news: no more tumors. "Gundersen doesn't make you wait weeks for your test results," Robin says. "Results come back the same day. At a time when I was nervous, this really put me at ease."

A setback...and a doctor's compassion

Following three surgeries Robin returned to Gundersen in December 2015 for the results of a CT scan, the day before her oldest daughter's birthday.

The results were not good. "Dr. Oettel said the scan showed a mass in my liver," Robin says. "In a matter of four months, the tumor had grown back. My kids asked me if I was going to die. I said 'Not if I have anything to do with it.'"

Following a liver biopsy and an MRI to examine the mass in the liver, Dr. Oettel promised Robin he would follow up on her results right away.

"It was a Friday, and Dr. Oettel told me he was leaving town," Robin says. "But at 10 p.m. that night, he sent me a text and told me my MRI was clear and that the biopsy results were negative for cancer. Dr. Oettel cared enough about me and my treatment to drop everything he was doing to make sure I knew the results as soon as possible."

The week of Christmas 2015 Robin started her third round of chemotherapy. And finally, after four colonoscopies, several major surgeries and what she calls the "scariest roller coaster ride of my life," Robin finished chemotherapy in March 2016.

Sharing her story

There is still a 30 percent chance Robin's cancer will return, and she will need regular check-ups and colonoscopies to ensure her health.

Whatever the future holds, Robin says her doctors and her experience with cancer have given her purpose and a desire to help others. "I lived a lot of the past year-and-a-half in denial about my diagnosis," Robin says. "I didn't want to get out of bed. I didn't want to go to appointments. But my doctors, especially Dr. Oettel and Dr. Shapiro, cared



Robin Henderson is a cancer survivor using her story to encourage young people to see a doctor if they have concerns.

enough to call me at home to check on me, to make sure my blinds were open, make sure I was eating, and make sure I was using my support network. They took time out of their busy schedules for me. For that, I'm grateful."

"Their compassion, and my experience with cancer, has opened my eyes to so much more. My life is now about helping people and sharing my story."

The Hope Lives Foundation, an organization that supports young adults with cancer and those who have beaten cancer, remains an important part of Robin's life and mission.

"If my story can get people to think about the uncomfortable questions and uncomfortable moments in life, I'll be satisfied. People need to speak up. Talk to your doctor and lean on your support system."

"It's never just you."

Early detection and communication were key to Robin's successful battle with cancer. If you have concerns or have experienced recent changes in your health, talk to your primary care provider.

Total knee replacement helps outdoorsman get back to nature

Dan Borgwardt, of rural Fountain City, Wis., retired in May 2016 but he's certainly not slowing down.

"You've got to keep going. That's the name of the game," says the 66-year-old.

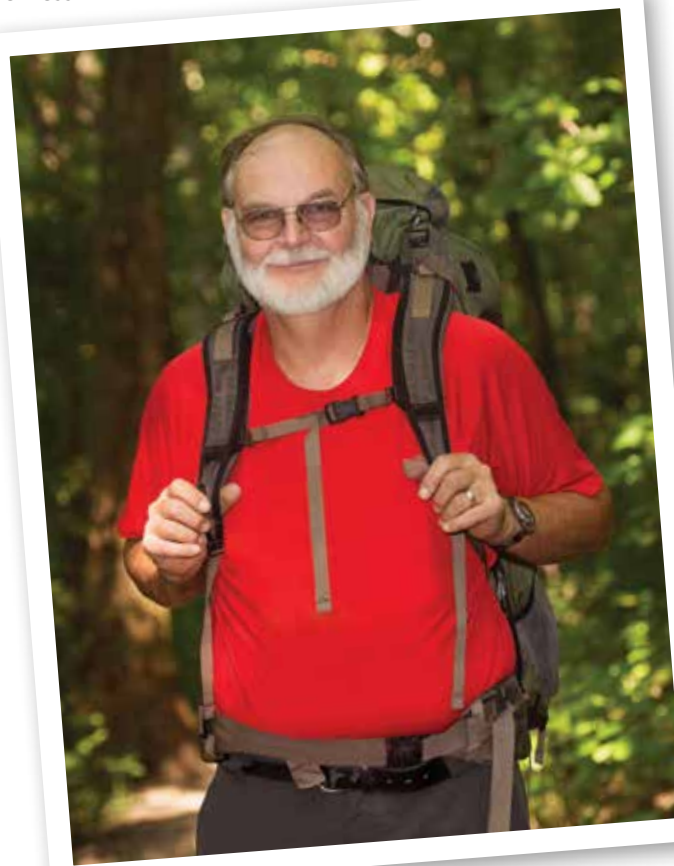
A Boy Scout leader for decades, Dan thrives on taking his troop on excursions in the wilderness and staying busy with his challenge/ropes course business. But these interests were put on hold for a time when knee pain took over.

In 2008, Dan suffered a meniscus tear and had arthroscopic surgery to repair the injury. When the pain returned a few years later, he tried joint injections to ease the pain and inflammation. At his worst, Dan wore a knee brace at all times and required a regular regimen of over-the-counter medications to dull the pain.

"If I wanted to continue being active, I knew had to do something," says Dan who began investigating total knee replacement, also known as total knee arthroplasty. "A friend of mine saw Dr. [Jeffrey] Lawrence [a Gundersen Health System orthopaedic surgeon] for both of his knees. He sang nothing but praises."

After much research, Dan made an appointment to discuss surgery in 2014. "The entire Orthopaedic surgery team was so accommodating and attentive to my needs. They prepared my wife and I for exactly what was going to happen before and after surgery," he says.

Dan's surgery was on a Tuesday morning and he was on his feet Tuesday afternoon starting physical therapy. He continued physical therapy at Gundersen Sports Medicine in Winona for the next six weeks. "Winona is fairly close to home, so it was convenient to go there for regular appointments," says Dan.



Dan Borgwardt is back to hiking with no limitations following total knee replacement and physical therapy.

"My therapists [Ryan Swetkovich, PT, and his team] pushed me but they knew how to push without being overbearing. They made me want to come, and we had a lot of fun together," he says. After physical therapy was finished, Dan continued exercising his knee to assist with his recovery.

Since the operation, Dan has been to the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area, a backpacking trip in the mountains of New Mexico, continues his work with the Boy Scouts and is back to his challenge course business.

"I have no limitations," says Dan. "I'd recommend Gundersen to anyone. All

of my treatment was just A1, fantastic!"

Gundersen orthopaedic specialists can help you get back to an active lifestyle—whether you have an injury or chronic joint pain. Visit gundersenhealth.org/orthopedics to schedule an appointment close to home.

Suffering with back or neck pain?

If you have back and/or neck pain, you are certainly not alone. Back pain is the number one reason people see a doctor. About 80 percent of all adults will experience back and neck pain severe enough to keep them from doing routine activities for at least one week.

There is help. Gundersen Health System offers a full spectrum of care. You might start with our innovative Back and Neck Self Care Plan. This free online tool has simple steps you can take on your own to improve back and/or neck pain. It includes a customized six-week plan with daily videos and exercises for spine strength and flexibility, written descriptions and tracking tools.

In some cases, talking to your doctor may be the next step. But most people can significantly improve or completely control symptoms by following the six-week plan. You can get started today at gundersenhealth.org/self-care.

At the other end of the spectrum, surgery may be your best option when:

- Your pain gets so bad that work, sleep, daily activities and your quality of life suffers.
- There's a clear cause for the pain.
- Your back and/or neck pain has not improved after three months or more of conservative, non-surgical treatments.
- You have neck and/or back pain along with numbness, tingling or weakness in your arm, leg or foot.
- You've been diagnosed with a herniated disc, cyst, stenosis or injury in your neck or back, and other treatments have not resolved your pain.

Gundersen board-certified neurosurgeons have the expertise to perform life-changing surgery. You might also consider a surgery consultation at Gundersen if you've been told you need back or neck surgery elsewhere, but you want a second opinion or you want to learn more about your options.

Gundersen offers other treatment options for back and neck pain as well, such as physical therapy, chiropractic



care, pain medication or injections. With the right treatment plan and the team of back pain specialists at Gundersen, we can help you improve function, reduce suffering and enhance your quality of life.

To schedule an appointment for a consultation about your back and neck pain, call Gundersen Neurosciences at (608) 775-9000.

Creating smiles to last a lifetime



Michael Barba, DDS, MS, Gundersen Orthodontics

Let's face it. Most of us have teeth that came in a little crooked or are crowded. Thankfully, you can turn to Gundersen orthodontic specialists Michael Barba, DDS, MS, and Mark Endrizzi, DDS, MS, to help you achieve a more confident smile. They are specially trained to correct teeth, bite and jaw problems using the most up-to-date techniques and technologies. Below they answer some of their patients' frequently asked questions.



Mark Endrizzi, DDS, MS, Gundersen Orthodontics

When should my child see an orthodontist?

"The American Association of Orthodontists recommends children are seen for an orthodontic evaluation by age 7, or earlier if you or your dentist notices a problem. Early diagnosis and treatment frequently guide facial development and tooth

eruption, and prevent more serious problems from developing," according to Dr. Barba, who not only practices orthodontics but is a specialist in pediatric dentistry. This allows him to more thoroughly diagnose and treat problems in facial growth and development.

Is it too late to have braces if I'm an adult?

"There is no age limit for braces!" says Dr. Endrizzi. "Today, we're treating more adults than ever before. There are many treatment options that make it more comfortable for adults to pursue treatment. With improved bonding and manufacturing techniques, braces are smaller and less noticeable than ever before."

Do you offer any options to speed treatment along?

Many patients are surprised to learn about orthodontic devices that can shorten their treatment time. "I use the new progressive Damon system for aligning teeth and balancing bites. Damon braces are self-ligating, meaning they don't need to be manually tightened as often as



traditional braces. They work more efficiently and require fewer office visits. Our patients finish six months earlier than in most practices, with our typical treatment times being 18-20 months," states Dr. Barba.

Why should I choose Gundersen for my orthodontic care?

Choosing an orthodontist is an important decision. Dr. Barba and Dr. Endrizzi have completed two to three years of training beyond dental school, and are uniquely qualified to treat complex orthodontic and orthopedic cases.

"One thing that makes Gundersen unique is that we have a complete Dental Specialties team which allows us to work directly with oral surgeons, a pedodontist (pediatric dentist), a periodontist, prosthodontists and endodontists, as needed. This allows us to provide the greatest quality of care possible to each of our patients," notes Dr. Endrizzi.

To schedule a free consultation, call Gundersen Orthodontics: La Crosse at (608) 775-2202 or Onalaska at (608) 775-8152. Orthodontic outreach is also provided in Prairie du Chien, Tomah, Winona and Decorah. Learn more at gundersenhealth.org/orthodontics.

Winona girl meets adversity head on

It was Halloween 2013 and 9-year-old Willa Kruse of Winona, Minn., was looking forward to trick-or-treating as a mummy. But the day turned out far more frightening for Willa and her family.

"For weeks Willa had been cranky, exhausted and extremely hungry and thirsty. We thought she was having a growth spurt and early teenager attitude," recall her parents, Jill and Ethan Kruse. "Eventually we knew something was wrong and took Willa to our pediatrician."

The news they got was life changing. With blood sugar levels more than twice the normal level, Willa was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

They were sent directly to Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, where Willa remained hospitalized for four days.

With type 1 diabetes, the body doesn't produce insulin. Insulin helps move glucose (sugar) into the body's tissues. Without insulin, glucose builds up in the blood leading to dehydration, weight loss, life-threatening diabetic ketoacidosis and potential damage to nerves and blood vessels in the eyes, kidneys, feet and heart.

"After that first insulin shot, Willa thought she was cured. At first, she didn't understand she'd need insulin injections the rest of her life," Jill remembers. But Gundersen diabetes educators worked with Willa and her family to help them understand all aspects of living with diabetes.

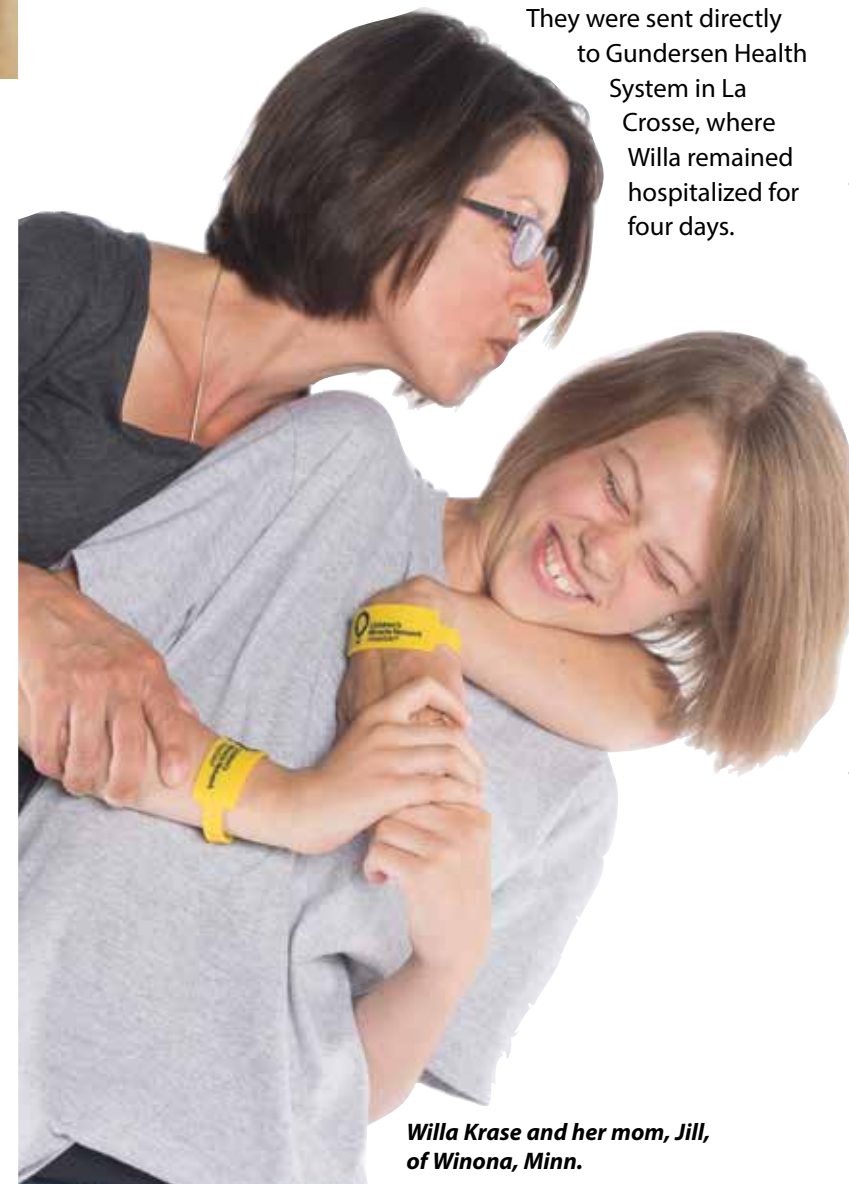
"Willa's dad and I were so bad at doing finger-pokes to test her blood sugar levels that Willa soon started doing them herself. Willa also insisted on telling her class at school everything she knew about diabetes. It was very brave of her," recount her parents proudly.

The first several months following her diagnosis were stressful as Willa and her family learned to adapt to a disease that requires a lot of attention. They returned to Gundersen many times for follow-up care and to begin insulin pump therapy. The insulin pump delivers steady doses of insulin, rather than depending on frequent insulin injections. Now 13 years old, Willa is living well with diabetes and manages her daily diabetes tasks, needing little help from her parents.

For the past three years, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®, a service of Gundersen Medical Foundation, has helped Willa attend diabetes camp. "It's the only sleep-away camp Willa can safely attend, and there she can do all the things other kids do without being too distracted by diabetes," Jill explains.

The Kruses say, "Having children with serious chronic diseases is stressful, especially when the diseases need to be managed every day with no breaks...ever. Having CMN Hospitals reach out with help has been very uplifting."

Grateful for the support, Willa is now a 2016-17 CMN Hospitals Hero, raising funds and awareness to help other children struggling with illnesses and injuries. You can help too—visit gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals or call (608) 775-4424.



Willa Kruse and her mom, Jill, of Winona, Minn.

Lose the weight and keep it off with ORBERA™



If you struggle with your weight and are frustrated by other weight loss options, Gundersen Health System has an alternative to consider.

We offer the ORBERA™ Intra-gastric Balloon, an FDA-approved, non-surgical solution for adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 to 40 who have tried other weight reduction methods.

The two-part program includes:

- Portion control through the insertion of a durable balloon into the stomach, which is removed after six months.
- 12 months of coaching from a team of specialists to help you sustain healthy habits and keep the weight off.

Learn more, including taking the first step with a weight management seminar, and schedule a consultation at gundersenhealth.org/bariatrics/orbera.

Be in the know...on-the-go

Get cosmetic product sneak peeks, members-only offers and much more delivered to your mobile device. Sign up for Glamour Text Club today.

Text GLAMOUR to (608) 881-3743.

Note: By giving us your mobile number you're opting-in to receive recurring offers and alerts from Gundersen Plastic Surgery and Aesthetics. Message and data rates may apply. You may ask us to stop at any time.

Peace of mind for heart patients with CardioMEMS®

Gundersen is the first and only medical center in our area to offer CardioMEMS™ to some patients with heart failure. In a clinical study, CardioMEMS reduced hospital readmissions by 37 percent and mortality by 57 percent.



A dime-sized, wireless sensor is implanted in your pulmonary artery using a minimally invasive procedure. Daily readings taken at home are transmitted to Gundersen for review. CardioMEMS spots an early indication of worsening heart failure, even before symptoms appear, to help you avoid serious illness or hospitalization.

CardioMEMS is easy to use:

- No special technology needed at home
- Portable monitor makes travel easy
- Implanted sensor does not need batteries or replacement parts
- Your primary care provider can access information for ongoing care close to home
- No restrictions on imaging services

For more information on the CardioMEMS monitoring system, contact our Heart Failure Clinic at (608) 775-2150.

New ratings put you in charge of better care

You can't open a magazine or go online without seeing a rating for a product or service. Why should healthcare be any different?

We agree, which is why we are putting the most accurate and current information in your hands by adding clinician ratings on gundersenhealth.org. Ratings are based on surveys sent to patients after clinic visits and use a star format – five stars is the highest rating and one star is the lowest. Patient comments are also included.

To see clinician ratings and comments, visit gundersenhealth.org/physicians.

The new look of family medicine



**Paul Klas, MD,
Gundersen Family
Medicine**

Gundersen Health System's new Family Medicine Residency Clinic is open and ready to serve patients of all ages. You and your family can receive excellent comprehensive primary care from enthusiastic, highly motivated resident doctors, while they gain practical, hands-on experience.

Earlier this year, Gundersen opened the new Family Medicine Residency Clinic on Level 2 of the Founders Building in La Crosse. The Clinic delivers patient-centered care in a robust learning and teaching environment as part of Gundersen Medical Foundation's new Family Medicine Residency program. This is a three-year, post-graduate program for doctors who are interested in practicing in family medicine.

According to Paul Klas, MD, medical director, the Family Medicine Residency Clinic offers patients a great experience.

- Caring for patients of any age needing primary care services, including:
 - Annual checkups and preventive care
 - Gynecology and contraceptive services
 - Family-centered pregnancy care with your physician making every effort to follow you through delivery
 - Care for your baby from birth, including well baby and pediatric visits and immunizations
 - School and sports physicals
 - Care for chronic health conditions
 - Care when you are ill or injured
- The Clinic is in a newly renovated space with the latest high-tech equipment.
- Patients have good access, often with same-day appointments available.
- Pharmacy and behavioral health services are available right in the clinic.
- Care is delivered by resident doctors in partnership with attending physicians, so you have two medical professionals overseeing your care.
- Parking is generally available right outside the Founders Building or you can use free valet parking.



Family Medicine patients get excellent care while resident doctors gain real-world experience under the supervision of an attending physician.

In July, the Residency Clinic welcomed its first doctors who began their three-year residency. The training and real-world experience they gain through the residency program and clinic will lead to independent practice and board certification in family medicine.

"All of our family medicine residents were exceptional medical students and have ties to Wisconsin," Dr. Klas is proud to report. "All of them have expressed interest in being doctors in rural community practices where, in recent years, there has been a shortage of doctors. In addition, our resident doctors either grew up on dairy farms or in small towns, so they understand the people and healthcare needs of the communities they will serve."

The Family Medicine Residency Program and Clinic are part of Gundersen's continuing efforts to address the need for more primary care physicians, especially in rural clinics and hospitals throughout the Tri-state Region.

If you don't have a primary care provider and would like to schedule an appointment to be seen in the Family Medicine Residency Clinic, please call (608) 775-0375.

'Hospice truly cares about the entire family'



Jean Bruder (left) is pictured in this family photo with her son, Dylan, and daughter, Jan. Jan says Hospice gave her mother peace of mind.

Proud, strong and independent, Jean Bruder worked hard her whole life. She took care of people – in nursing homes and as a home healthcare worker – and instilled that compassion and autonomy in her children.

Jean didn't know she was sick until after a car accident when X-rays revealed a large mass on her lungs. It was lung cancer, and she was given six months to live. At 52, Jean was determined to live the rest of her life her own way. That meant no chemotherapy, no surgery, no hospitals.

Gundersen Health System Hospice helped her make it happen. Jean would have never dreamed how important hospice would be in her life and the lives of her family.

Jean's daughter, Jan Bruder, has made a career of helping other women and their families through the wounds of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Jean, as a home healthcare worker, was sure she could take care of herself, in her own home. Jan was equally sure she herself could handle all the rest.

"I thought, 'I run a crisis center. I don't need help,'" says Jan. "Now I tell people to seek that help from Hospice, and to do it now."

Gundersen Hospice provides home nurse visits, medication management, resources for caregivers, 24/7 telephone

support, social work and personal needs such as bathing. But more, hospice support could be something as simple and cherished as one last horseback ride, which Hospice helped coordinate for Jean and her family. "We were very blessed to do so many fun things in the time she was given and hospice was a huge part of that," says Jan.

Jan says because their family began hospice services soon after Jean's diagnosis, the family bonded with their in-home care team and counselors. They built the trust and acceptance that allowed Jean, Jan and brother, Dylan, to not just accept, but to embrace, hospice. Because of these bonds and trust, Jean accepted the intimate care she eventually needed at the end, which came in August 2015.

Gundersen Hospice respected Jean and her family's choices and made sure Jean's choices were honored. She hoped only to see Dylan graduate and to attend his graduation party. She prayed to leave this world in dignity – in her own Sparta home – knowing her children would be OK.

"Hospice taught us how to celebrate our mother's life and the person she was. The fact that Hospice staff still contact us – a year later – is beyond amazing to me," Jan says. "It shows that Hospice truly cares about the entire family, and that my mom wasn't just a number or a statistic."

"Many people don't understand grief or death...so it's very comforting getting a call to see how we are. The kind words on the other end of that phone call mean a lot."

Gundersen Hospice serves patients and their families in:

- Wisconsin—Jackson, La Crosse, Trempealeau and Vernon counties
- Minnesota—Houston, Winona and Fillmore counties
- Iowa—Contact Gundersen Palmer Lutheran Hospital and Clinics at (563) 422-6267.

To learn more about Gundersen Hospice, call (608) 775-8435 or visit gundersenhealth.org/hospice.

A permanent, pill-free solution to chronic acid reflux



Shanu Kothari, MD, FACS, Gundersen General Surgery

"Now I can eat just about anything," Bill Becker says. But it wasn't that long ago that eating and drinking just about anything—including water—would often give Bill uncomfortable, unhealthy acid reflux.

For 15 years, Bill took esomeprazole (Nexium) to reduce stomach acid. This is one of a group of drugs called proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs) designed to reduce production of stomach acid. Despite the drug's proven effects, over the past five years, Bill's symptoms continued to plague him requiring a double dose daily often supplemented with over-the-counter antacids.

"I couldn't lie down and had to sleep in a recliner," remembers Bill. "I work in heating and air conditioning. Working outside and in tight quarters, or bending over would often trigger reflux. I like to hunt, but the last few years I limited my hunting because I didn't feel good and didn't want to worry about hauling around all my pills."

Bill heard about an innovative procedure offered at Gundersen Health System called LINX. It's a minimally invasive surgical option for those who:

- Have severe heartburn not helped by PPIs
- Have incomplete control or increasing symptoms with PPIs
- Experience significant side effects with PPIs
- Are concerned about the effects of long-term, high-

dose use of PPIs such as increased risk for fractures, chronic kidney disease, heart disease and other issues

How LINX works

The LINX system uses a ring of titanium beads magnetically interlinked. The device is placed around the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) located between the stomach and esophagus. The LES is the body's natural barrier to reflux. In a person with a weakened LES, the ring enhances the function to prevent reflux.

In January 2016, Gundersen surgeon Shanu N. Kothari, MD, FACS, performed the LINX procedure on Bill. "Immediately after surgery, I felt so much better," recalls Bill. "I have no dietary restrictions. I find that I'm eating better, I have more energy and I'm off 100 percent of my medications."

Benefits of LINX

As Bill discovered, LINX offers patients many benefits, including:

- Unlike the more traditional Nissen fundoplication surgery, there's no anatomical alterations to the stomach, patients can eat solid foods right away and it minimizes gas-bloat syndrome.

- For most patients LINX is a same-day, minimally-invasive procedure.
- Unlike PPI therapy, it addresses the primary source of this disease, an ineffective LES.

"The LINX procedure is not for everyone," says Dr. Kothari, "but for the right patient LINX offers lasting relief for a condition that can significantly impact quality of life."

To see if LINX could be right for you, call the Gundersen Surgery Clinic at (608) 775-2331 to schedule an appointment with one of our reflux specialists.



After LINX for his chronic reflux, Bill Becker is happy and back doing the things he enjoys.



Love helps heal all wounds

What's blue and has a big nose? Just one of the many faces of Love + Medicine. When it came time to change the bandage over little Eddie's wound, he was having none of that. Clearly, the medical staff needed an extra hand. This clever distraction made it possible to get the job done and made a little boy happy.

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