

MANNING REGIONAL HEALTHCARE CENTER Connect

INFLUENTIAL VISITS PAVE THE WAY for Behavioral Health Initiatives in Rural Iowa



Senator Chuck Grassley



Attorney General Brenna Bird



Governor Doug Burgum

➤ In a significant development for Iowa, influential lawmakers are turning their attention to the critical needs of behavioral health across Iowa, particularly in rural areas where access to comprehensive services and reimbursements remain a challenge. Recent visits from prominent figures underscore a renewed commitment to addressing the root causes of substance abuse and promoting mental health support in communities throughout the state.

On National Rural Health Day (November 16th), Iowa Health and Human Services Director, Kelly Garcia, and State Epidemiologist, Dr. Robert Kruse, visited MRHC and the Recovery Center. Their presence underscored the critical need for integrated behavioral health

services, with a focus on mental health and substance abuse. Engaging with healthcare professionals, community leaders, and the hospital's board and senior leadership team, Director Garcia and Dr. Kruse discussed collaborative solutions to improve statewide healthcare and to also address the unique needs of rural communities.

During her visit to Manning on September 12th, Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird highlighted the importance of tailoring initiatives to the unique challenges faced by these areas stating, "Rural communities often encounter barriers in accessing quality healthcare and addiction treatment services. The opioid settlement funds are one-time funds that could provide an opportunity to bridge those gaps and make

a lasting impact on the lives of those affected by opioid addiction in our rural communities."

Earlier this year, agreements were reached with manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies to provide nearly \$50 billion in payments for state and local governments across the nation. Funding was distributed to each state, and in Iowa a portion of those funds were distributed to each county for the county supervisors to disperse locally. The rest of the funds are currently held at the state level with the anticipation that lawmakers will determine appropriations in the next legislative session.

Continued on pg 3 >>

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THRIVE *Close to Home*

Finding Hope in Recovery and Joy in Helping Others

"We save lives here and I'm grateful to be part of that," shared Dalton Lytle, who works at the MRHC Recovery Center as a counselor. "The Recovery Center has changed my life for the better. I am proud to be an employee here and represent what recovery can do for someone."



Lytle attended college for a short time before beginning his career in bridge construction for eight years. He never intended to return to college, let alone work in an office as an addiction counselor, but after personally receiving treatment at the Recovery Center, he moved to Manning and took a job opportunity as a part-time tech at MRHC. Lytle shares how his personal experience with addiction and recovery helps him relate to his clients on a personal level.

"After working at the Recovery Center for a while it was clear to me that this is what I want to do for a living - help suffering addicts find hope in recovery," explained Lytle. "Going through treatment here myself, I know the pain and struggles that our clients are going through. Being able to relate and help them through it is very rewarding and I want to continue doing that."

The biggest issue Lytle wants to bring to light is that addiction happens everywhere, including rural areas. "The Manning Recovery Center is unique. There is something special about this place. Many have said that this is the best treatment center in the state and other surrounding states," explained Lytle.

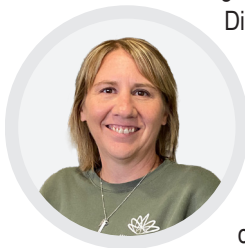


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Although the Recovery Center at MRHC may be rural, Lytle believes that to be an advantage. "I think we stand out because we care about our clients. The groups are smaller here compared to other treatment centers and that makes for a more personal experience. I think we all do a great job making them feel at home and that provides the best environment for healthy growth."

Hands-On Experiences Spark Passion for Emergency Medicine

"Two unique opportunities early in my career made it clear to me that I wanted to be an emergency room nurse," shared Lisa Hartwigsen, RN, and current Emergency/Med Surg Director at MRHC. "I have always been interested in healthcare but I wasn't sure



on what specific career to pursue. My junior year of high school I joined the Army National Guard as a combat medic. Then, the next year as a senior, I interned with Carroll County EMS." These were two immersive career experiences Hartwigsen was grateful to have before attending nursing school.

Hartwigsen also likes that MRHC prides itself on contributing to a positive work culture. As she grows as a director, her goal is to continue that within her department with a focus on personal development.

Hartwigsen attributes her ability to grow in her career to MRHC administration and appreciates how they have built a positive work culture and model constructive leadership. "MRHC's administrative team is very transparent and keeps staff updated on the facility's financial performance and plans for growth," she shared.

For any student who may be considering a career in healthcare, specifically in nursing, Hartwigsen recommends that students, "job shadow different healthcare careers. You never know what might interest you."



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From Executive Chef to Healthcare Support Services

Dan Grove's culinary journey was sparked by his passion for cooking. Throughout his career he held roles as an executive chef in renowned hotels and local restaurants.



Despite leaving his mark in the culinary world, Grove desired a better work-life balance due to demanding hours. In 2007, he joined MRHC as the Dietary Manager, a role that allowed him to balance his love for cooking with family responsibilities.

Over time Grove's role expanded, incorporating additional management skills as he transitioned into the support services director. Managing both nutrition services and environmental services, Grove emphasized the importance of his role in both departments, "Proper nutrition and maintaining a safe, sanitary, and clean environment plays a crucial role in healing and patient well-being."

Although there are times that he misses the restaurant atmosphere, he shares that his current job provides a perfect balance, allowing quality time with family and friends. His commitment to MRHC spans an impressive 16 years, showcasing the supportive environment and the organization's dedication to employee well-being.

Grove's culinary career at Manning Regional exemplifies the power of passion, dedication, and commitment to making a difference in people's lives. His journey illustrates the shift from orchestrating fine dining experiences to nurturing an environment conducive to healing, one plate and one sanitized surface at a time.



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MEDICARE INFO SEMINAR

Free Medicare Information Seminar at MRHC on November 28

Medicare open enrollment is going on now until December 7th. Keep in mind that Medicare plans can change coverage, premiums, co-payments, co-insurance, and provider networks every year. Ensure your plan meets your needs and is the most affordable option by attending the free "Welcome to Medicare" seminar on November 28th from 7-9pm at Manning Regional Healthcare Center.

Interested individuals must call (712) 655-2072 to register. Attendees should enter through the Emergency entrance and follow the posted signs.

This free seminar, offered by MRHC and the State of Iowa's Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), a free and confidential service, will cover Medicare Parts A & B benefits, Prescription Drug Benefits

(Part D), Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare supplement insurance, as well as share tips to help individuals identify Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

Even if you do not yet qualify for Medicare, MRHC's volunteer SHIIP Counselor, Nancy Danner, recommends that "the best time to start getting information is before you actually need it, so I advise thinking about it at least 6-12 months before someone turns 65 years old."

If you are unable to attend the seminar, Danner is available every Wednesday at MRHC to meet with individuals by appointment. She can provide information to aid in Medicare decision-making and answer questions related



to Medicare itself, benefits, plan options, claims, and how to guard against becoming a victim of Medicare fraud. She will not provide recommendations for plans or agents but can answer questions and provide impartial information to help individuals make educated decisions and assist people who have a limited income.

Anyone interested in making an appointment with Danner can email shiip.counselor@mrhcia.com or call MRHC at (712) 655-2072. If a client is only wishing to talk on the phone, they may leave their phone number and Danner will return their call.

<< Continued from pg 1 Senator Charles Grassley as well as Republican presidential candidate and North Dakota Governor, Doug Burgum, accompanied by his wife, Kathryn, also visited MRHC earlier this fall to gain a better understanding of the healthcare needs affecting rural areas and the unique position of MRHC and the Recovery Center.

These visits provided lawmakers with a firsthand look at the Recovery Center's efforts to support residential and outpatient recovering addicts. MRHC, serving as a model for rural healthcare services, became a platform for discussions on comprehensive strategies to address behavioral health challenges, reimbursements, and access to care in rural Iowa.



Director Garcia emphasized the importance of addressing behavioral health needs, stating, "By understanding the challenges faced by the communities across our state, utilizing research-based methodologies, and taking a comprehensive approach to address the most critical health needs, we can develop targeted and effective strategies to improve our overall health outcomes."



Director Kelly Garcia

These visits reflect a broader, bipartisan commitment to address rural healthcare challenges in a unified and strategic way. This holistic approach starts with a grassroots understanding of the challenges affecting rural hospitals accompanied by discussions to adjust policies at the state and federal levels. These collaborations reflect an aligned dedication to build healthier and more resilient communities across the state.

As Iowa takes a significant stride forward in the battle against opioid addiction, the opioid settlements stand as a beacon of hope for rural communities. MRHC Administration and the leadership of the Recovery Center are taking this opportunity to educate local county supervisors as well as statewide leaders to better understand the services that already exist, their vision for addressing this epidemic, and the potential for MRHC and the Recovery Center to serve even more clients and their families.

Advancing IN THEIR CAREERS

Blackwell Focused on MRHC's Quality Improvement & Patient Experience

Jackie Blackwell recently completed her MBA, creating an opportunity both for herself and MRHC. As MRHC's new Chief of Quality and Patient Advocacy, Blackwell's role will help the organization focus even more fully on quality and quality improvements.

"Quality is one of our five key results and at the forefront of all our decisions. We want to provide the best quality care for each patient encounter," shared Linn Block, CEO of MRHC and Blackwell's mentor throughout her MBA process. "Jackie's prior experience as a nurse, combined with what she's learned through her MBA program has provided her with the tools we need for this key role."

Blackwell's new responsibilities include laboratory, quality, utilization, and risk functions, along with clinical analytics, patient experience and advocacy, HIPAA, and privacy. She will also coordinate objectives to achieve compliance with regulatory and accrediting agencies.

She completed several quality projects while working on her master's degree, one of which is already helping improve MRHC. Blackwell's capstone project evaluated fall prevention and how staff play a vital role in preventing patient falls.

She hopes the impact of her degree will help staff develop improvement opportunities at all levels of the organization and establish processes to prioritize projects based on MRHC's organizational goals.

Blackwell's desire to further her education and career comes from her devotion to serve others. "I have always had a passion for helping

others, whether that be patients, co-workers, friends, or family. Pursuing my MBA helped me to learn more management techniques and how to lead staff. The MBA program has also provided me with ideas on how to offer a compassionate approach to administration when we face future challenges in healthcare."

Blackwell's career path up to this point began at the Manilla Manor as an Environmental Aide in 2007. She earned her CNA in 2008 and worked at the Plaza while obtaining her RN degree in 2012. She then went on to achieve her BSN in 2018 and MBA in 2023.

"Linn Block encouraged me to pursue my career goals and was my mentor throughout the MBA program. My career has always meant a lot to me, and we were raised to be hardworking children," shared Blackwell. "I told Linn my goals and she was supportive of them and helped get me to where I am today. All of the senior team members played a part in this process, and I learned a lot from each of their management styles."

After her recent educational experience, Blackwell offers this encouragement to someone considering furthering their degree and career, "If you have a goal, go get it!"

MRHC offers tuition reimbursement for employees wishing to advance their careers. Visit www.mrhcia.com/careers or call (712) 655-2072 for more information.



MRHC Welcomes Lucas Schwery, Physical Therapist

The therapy department at MRHC is excited to welcome an additional physical therapist, Lucas Schwery, DPT. Schwery joins Taylor Nelson, DPT, in offering physical therapy services to address a variety of impairments including musculoskeletal, neurological, cardiovascular, balance, gait, and post-surgical impairments and injuries.

"I chose to work at MRHC because my wife and I live just outside of Manning. We are looking forward to planting our roots and starting our family here," said Schwery.

After needing treatment for an ankle injury in high school, Schwery became interested in the physical therapy field.

"My injury inspired me to pursue an athletic training work study job in college," said Schwery. "It was at this job that I found my passion for helping others return from injury to do the things that

they love and achieve their goals. In many cases, physical therapy is a conservative way to improve a variety of our patients' impairments."

Signs and symptoms that indicate someone would benefit from physical therapy include any pain associated with the movement of a body part, frequent falls, dizziness, the inability to complete daily activities, and chronic pain.

Schwery grew up in Kimballton and attended Exira EH-K High School. He completed his undergraduate schooling at Morningside College where he worked with the athletic training staff helping provide sideline coverage for athletic events. He then graduated from Briar Cliff University in their Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

To schedule a physical therapy appointment, call (712) 655-8100. Referrals are not needed.



CEO Linn Block Attributes Staff & Community for MRHC's Success

Over the past few years, our collective journey at MRHC has been nothing short of transformative. United by a shared commitment to patient safety, quality care, and team engagement, we have implemented a strategic plan that not only elevated healthcare standards but also garnered attention and respect from the broader healthcare community.

At the heart of MRHC lies its people – our exceptional staff, providers, and the communities we serve. Your unwavering dedication to our shared mission has resulted in numerous notable accomplishments in patient care, expanded service offerings, and financial resilience. This is a collective achievement, and I take immense pride in being a part of this remarkable team.

I want to express heartfelt acknowledgment for the extraordinary resilience and strength demonstrated by our community in the face of the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. These past couple of years have tested us in unexpected ways, and yet, together, we navigated uncertainties and overcame obstacles. Your commitment to safety protocols, mutual support, and unwavering trust in our healthcare team has been truly inspiring.

The way our community rallied during these trying times exemplifies the true spirit of unity and reinforces the vital role that rural healthcare plays in times of crisis. Your collective efforts not only safeguarded the health and well-being of our community members but also showcased the resilience that defines the heart of Manning Regional Healthcare Center.



Our ongoing community engagement initiatives, from local partnerships to the implementation of a new electronic health record system in collaboration with St. Anthony Regional Hospital, have further strengthened the bonds between MRHC and the communities we are privileged to serve.

The success of our capital campaign, raising nearly \$1 million for the obstetrics wing's renovation, and the recognition with the Press Ganey Guardian of Excellence Award for Employee Engagement underscore the incredible teamwork and passion that define MRHC. Your dedication has made our hospital a beacon of excellence in the face of financial challenges and changing landscapes in rural healthcare.

As I transition to the next chapter in my career, I carry with me the valuable lessons and memories from MRHC. The growth of our specialty clinics, the addition of same-day appointments, and the success of the substance abuse recovery center are all reflections of your hard work and dedication.

To our exceptional team, thank you for making MRHC not just a hospital but a family that cares for one another and for our community. To our patients, thank you for entrusting us with your healthcare needs. Your trust is our greatest honor, and we remain committed to providing you with the highest quality of care. The journey ahead for MRHC is exciting, and I am confident that, with your continued dedication, MRHC will continue to thrive and be a beacon of healthcare excellence in rural Iowa.

Linn Block

DIFFICULT BUT NECESSARY *Crucial Conversations during the Holidays*

As the holiday season approaches and families come together, MRHC stresses the importance of discussing advance care directives amidst the celebrations. While these conversations may feel challenging, addressing them during the holidays can unite families and safeguard everyone's well-being.

Advance care directives are legal documents enabling individuals to specify their healthcare preferences, guiding medical decisions when they cannot communicate due to illness or incapacity. They empower individuals to maintain control over their healthcare choices, ensuring their wishes are respected even when they can't express them.

MRHC Education Coordinator, Julie Hodne, R.N., emphasizes, "Advance directives help protect your right to make medical choices that can affect your life. They help your family avoid the stress of making difficult decisions on your behalf and help your physician by providing guidelines for your care."

These directives include living wills, healthcare powers of attorney, and do-not-resuscitate orders. They cover essential medical decisions, including life-prolonging measures, pain control, and comfort care.

The holiday season offers an ideal setting for families to delve deeper into these discussions. Consider what is important to you and discuss your feelings with your family, friends, and physician. Hodne advises seeking legal or healthcare counsel for assistance in preparing these directives, emphasizing the importance of planning to protect one's rights.

To formalize these directives:

- Obtain forms from the Iowa State Bar Association.
- Express your wishes in writing, being as specific as possible.
- Review and share these directives with family, friends, and healthcare providers.
- Keep copies in secure locations and update them as needed.
- Talk to your provider about IPOST form.

PREGNANCY, BIRTH, & BEYOND

Care at Manning Regional Healthcare Center

Are you planning a pregnancy, expecting a baby, or a new parent?

➤ If you answered yes to any of those questions, the decision about where you and your child will receive medical care is likely one of your top priorities.

For Crisentia Blazek, a mother of two and resident of Denison shared that she “considered the provider’s experience in OB, the experience of my friends with providers, and the location of the facility” while determining where to receive prenatal and postnatal care.

Blazek chose to see Dr. McLaws at Manning Regional Healthcare Center, a decision she has been very satisfied with. “It is convenient to have appointments at MRHC, and I trust Dr. McLaws and MRHC to provide excellent, comprehensive care,” said Blazek. “Dr. McLaws listens to my concerns and answers my questions. He communicates with me about the treatment plan and respects my decisions.”

And while MRHC does not deliver babies at their facility, the hospital has a partnership with St. Anthony Regional Hospital and McFarland Clinic in Carroll to provide a seamless pregnancy, delivery, and newborn care experience close to home.



“Here at MRHC, we continue to offer prenatal care to those in our rural areas even though we aren’t delivering babies in Manning. It gives our patients an opportunity to stay close to home and still receive quality care,” shared MRHC Clinic Director, Shelby Dickson, RN.

The partnership with St. Anthony allows mothers to receive prenatal care at MRHC, deliver at St. Anthony with Dr. McLaws, and then continue to receive postnatal and newborn care in Manning following delivery. Thanks to newly enhanced records systems, the med staff teams at both locations can easily access a patient’s chart as necessary to ensure seamless care.



“It works really well to come to MRHC for my appointments since I work in Manning, and I am usually able to come over the lunch hour so that I don’t miss any work,” said Blazek. “I love the fact that I don’t need to drive far away to the big city for my care. When my family needs to have a checkup, it is easy to schedule and go to the appointment. Plus, everyone at MRHC treats my family and I with respect. Every staff member I have encountered during my prenatal or postnatal care is friendly, caring, and keeps me in the loop of what’s going to happen.”



Call MRHC at (712) 655-2072 if you have any questions about pregnancy planning and prenatal/postnatal care at MRHC; the birthing experience at St. Anthony; newborn care, infant safety, and sibling adjustment; infant feeding and nutrition; wellness and specialty care as your child develops; or local support resources for new parents.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Now - December 7

Get help with your Part D or MA plan comparison!

Appointments available with MRHC SHIIP Counselor, Nancy Danner, every Wednesday from 8-5.

Call (712) 655-2072



MRHC WELCOMES Dedicated Mental Health Counselor

Hollie Schechinger, LMSW

Services available three times a week for patients age 12+



Call (712) 655-8100
to schedule an appointment.



Building Healthier Communities THROUGHOUT IOWA

Adapted from article by Richard C. Lewis with the University of Iowa.

It was a grisly scene. A 24-year-old male riding without a helmet had crashed his bicycle into a parked car. The man lay unconscious on the pavement, his right leg splayed at an unnatural angle. And his rescue hinged on a group of untrained adolescents.



Although they were participating in a simulation, the students took their responsibilities seriously. Each sprang into action to attend the wounded individual—a life-sized mannequin—guided

by professional EMT personnel. Tatum, an eighth grader who goes to school in Manning, gently took the head and held it steady while a fellow eighth grade student, Audrey, cut the pants from the man's wounded leg and applied a vacuum sling to immobilize the limb. They and three others then lifted the patient in unison onto a stretcher and securely loaded him into the ambulance.

The rescue scene was one of several scenarios staged at the Health Care Career Camp this fall in Manning, where middle and high school students from school districts in Manning and Coon Rapids learned about potential careers in the medical and health care fields. The students rotated among several stations, learning what happens on the front lines of the 17-bed critical-access hospital, which serves patients in Carroll and three surrounding counties in west-central Iowa. It was the fourth time MRHC had hosted the camp.

At the emergency room station, the students intubated a mannequin, their eyes wide as they watched on an overhead screen their progress in guiding a breathing tube into a trachea. At the laboratory stop, they practiced drawing blood; at the surgical and anesthesia center,

they took turns stitching a wound and using a bone saw; in radiology, they looked awestruck at X-rays of children with broken arm and leg bones and a little boy who had swallowed a quarter; at the physical therapy unit, they learned balance techniques and how to use electric stimulation to help patients regain muscle function, among other activities.

"What makes a difference is the dedication of the people who work here; they show the next generation all the great employment choices that exist here," says Michelle Andersen, chief nursing officer at MRHC who conceived the idea for the career camp.

The whirlwind tour made an impression on Audrey, who attends school at IKM-Manning, and says she wasn't sure what to expect—other than getting out of school for the day.

"It has changed the way I thought health care would be," she says, adding the tour presented a far different picture of a hospital setting than television shows like *Grey's Anatomy*. "It's not always that people are stressed out. There are personal connections with patients, personal connections with your co-workers. It's more of a people-based job."

Summer, a sophomore at Coon Rapids High School, was in the same group as Audrey. She says she's been interested in health and medicine since she was a child when she regularly accompanied her grandfather to the hospital for his cancer treatment appointments.



"I just like the idea of helping people and trying to make people feel better," Summer says.

The tour not only solidified Summer's interest in health care and medicine, it seemed to



crystallize her desire to become a nurse anesthetist—and, hopefully, to work at a smaller hospital, such as MRHC.

"I would like to keep it close to home," she says, "because I'm planning on having a family. I grew up around here, and I'd like my kids to also grow up around here."

The Health Care Career Camp, organized by staff at MRHC, was funded in part by the Business Leadership Network, an initiative from the University of Iowa College of Public Health to promote and empower health and wellness in communities throughout Iowa.

Since launching in 2011, the BLN has coordinated 44 health and wellness efforts in 38 small to mid-sized communities in Iowa. With funding from the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation for the past eight years, the BLN teams up with local businesses and civic and nonprofit agencies. The focus varies, depending on each community's need. The BLN has spearheaded community public health initiatives that address a broad range of needs with particular emphasis on issues of concern in rural areas, including aging, agricultural health and safety, cyberbullying, immunizations, nutrition and physical activity, substance use, and mental health, among many others.

The goal, explains Edith Parker, dean of the College of Public Health, is to match the college's resources and expertise with each community's identified priority. "In public health, it's critical to listen to local voices and engage communities in health solutions," Parker says. "When we meet communities where they are and bring resources to support local priorities, there's a much better chance of improving health outcomes."



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MRHC PROVIDES TOP NOTCH Surgical Services to Rural Patients

When most people consider services offered by rural, critical access hospitals, surgical care is not always a standard service. However, in Manning, general surgeries have continued and most recently they have started offering total knee-replacements and hip surgeries thanks to a visiting specialist.

Dedham resident, Julie Danner, recently received a total knee-replacement under the care of Dr. Stokesbary, M.D., FAAOS, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon at MRHC. She had her first knee replaced this January and her second knee replaced last month.

"I had a great experience with Dr. Stokesbary," said Danner. "He has fantastic bedside manners; he is personable and easy to talk to."

"He listened to my questions and concerns, and he truly advocated for me."

Julie Danner

Danner said she was scared to get her first knee replaced but the surgery went so well that it encouraged her to get her second knee replaced. After a recent follow-up appointment

with Dr. Stokesbary, Danner shared, "I am very blessed. I was able to ditch my walker one week post-surgery. Dr. Stokesbary said he is proud of me. He made me feel so special and taken care of."

Danner shares that she has also had a positive experience recovering from surgery. "After the surgery, I stayed overnight and then they sent me home with exercises to do on my own," explained Danner. "I now go to physical therapy three times a week in Manning and the PT team makes me feel right at home."

Julie has been a patient at MRHC since the hospital was in its previous location on Main Street. "I like coming to MRHC because it is a top-notch facility, in my opinion, that is close to home," shared Danner. "It is the best of both worlds. My primary doctor is there, and every staff member has treated me well during my visits."

Besides the friendly staff, Danner mentioned how the hours of operation and billing processes are convenient. "They were able to schedule me in pretty quickly," said Danner.

"Other people that I have recently talked to didn't even know that MRHC offered services like knee replacement surgeries. I highly recommend this facility for these surgeries."



The ability to receive high-quality specialty services close to home is very important to Danner. "MRHC is a really great facility. The doctors are very professional and great at their jobs," explained Danner. "At MRHC, you don't feel like just another number. I am so grateful we have this rural facility at our fingertips."

In addition to orthopedic care and surgery, MRHC provides surgical services for hip surgeries, ear, nose and throat issues, OB-GYN, podiatry, urology, and general surgeries such as abdominal surgery, appendectomy, gallbladder removal, colonoscopy, hernia repair, hysterectomy, vasectomy, and more.

ECHOCARDIOGRAMS AVAILABLE AT MRHC

Appointments available on the fourth Thursday of the month.

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